



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

Testimony for Special Meeting 03.18.21

1 message

Lois Yamauchi <loisyamauchi@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 9:17 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Kashmira Reid <kmreid808@gmail.com>, Ernestine Enomoto <enomotoe@hawaii.edu>, Erin Yagi <mseyagi@gmail.com>, Deborah Bond-Upson <dbondupson@gmail.com>, Mary Weir <mary.e.weir@gmail.com>, Kay Fukuda <klfukuda@hawaii.edu>, Susan Wood <susan@hilopaa.org>, hnmoselle@gmail.com

March 17, 2021

To: Hawai'i Board of Education

From: Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i Board Members: Lois Yamauchi, Kashmira Reid, Erin Yagi, Ernestine Enomoto, Deborah Bond-Upson, Kay Fukuda, Heather Mosselle, Mary Weir, and Susan Wood

Re: Comments regarding the selection of a new and interim Superintendent

We are writing as the Board of Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i (PPS Hawai'i), We are submitting testimony regarding the selection of the next Superintendent of Hawai'i schools. PPS Hawai'i is a non-profit organization with over 1,200 family and community members across the State who seek to support and improve public education through family engagement.

We believe that it is a priority that the Superintendent be a good communicator. This requires listening to families and teachers, and responding to their concerns. We encourage you to select someone who is willing and able to collaborate with multiple stakeholders to lead us toward a shared vision that includes family and community feedback, not just engaging in a process to make it appear as if our concerns were included. We need someone who is transparent about the situations in which we are in and how decisions are made. Communication from the DOE to families through press releases or other direct means is very important.

Our school system is large in number and geography. We appreciate giving the schools and complex areas autonomy to make decisions about curriculum and programs at the local level so that they can tailor education to what is needed in their area. At the same time, it is important for the new Superintendent to recognize decisions that should be made across the system, as is the case regarding health and safety.

PPS Hawai'i will appreciate a Superintendent who is open to new ideas and allows teachers and principals to be creative. We do not want someone who is fixated on test scores, but on the development of children's learning and well-being, as measured in multiple ways, not just by standardized tests.

PPS Hawai'i members have stated that what they most love about public education are their teachers. We need a Superintendent who supports teachers and their growth and development. Please prioritize someone who will work with teacher leaders to advocate for educators receiving adequate pay so that they stay in their jobs and do not need to work part-time to make a living.

We look forward to families being involved in choosing the next Superintendent. There is much at stake, and we need a person with many important qualifications. We recognize the need to take time to hear from families and community members regarding what they would like to see in the new Superintendent and to recruit the right person. Given this, finding an Interim Superintendent is also important. We suggest that this person be someone who knows the system well and is trusted by existing educational leaders and teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback on this important issue.



Testimony to BOE re Supt 03.17.21.pdf

187K



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Mary Weir

Susan Wood

Testimony for Board of Education Special Meeting

March 17, 2021

To: Hawai'i Board of Education

From: Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i Board Members: Lois Yamauchi,
Kashmira Reid, Erin Yagi, Ernestine Enomoto, Deborah Bond-Upson, Kay
Fukuda, Heather Mosselle, Mary Weir, and Susan Wood

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback on this important issue.

Parents for Public Schools Hawaii (PPSHI) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization of parents, community members, and educators working to improve and support public education through family engagement. We are committed to ensuring all children in Hawai'i have access to a quality public education.



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

Testimony IIA

1 message

Anita Soldwisch <soldanita968@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 9:27 AM

Aloha e Board of Education,
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on agenda item IIA.

I pray the board considers finding an interim and a permanent superintendent that is focused on cleaning up the DOE, values students over political gain, and is competent enough to surround themselves with highly competent and ethical people. The current leadership will not do.

Far too long, the DOE has perpetuated a toxic environment by hiring individuals that are ill qualified for the job, but compliant. You have ASs and CASs that sweep issues under the rug and are complicit in illegal or unethical behavior, often paralyzed with indecisiveness. Something simple as drinking during work hours while online or having possession of alcohol in your work desk at the most basic level needs to stop. Let's reset with professionalism.

If the DOE begins with expecting competence versus a warm body, public trust may be able to increase, and Hawaii's public school keiki may be able to compete internationally. Educational officers making six figure salaries should be producing exemplary results for Hawaii's keiki, especially with Hawaii's weighted student formula funding that provides an abundant amount of money to schools not based on property tax like mainland school districts. Christina Kishimoto's team has touted tri level supports repeatedly while surrounding themselves with employees that have not led a school. Most school districts recruit high performing employees with track records of student success, however, Hawaii settles for no track record, no principal experience, but highly connected people with social capital or compliant.

A deputy superintendent justifying the use of non-rigorous and biased curriculum should do her homework before addressing the board of education, especially when proclaiming she is a curriculum expert. The disrespect to the people of Hawaii is unforgivable. The money wasted and the severity of the negative impact this curriculum has had on shaping our keiki is outrageous. Additionally, the amount of course credits awarded to high school students making up courses through Acellus that ruin the integrity of Hawaii's high school diploma. Pass them along, Hawaii doesn't deserve better attitude.

I pray you will take advantage of this opportunity to find highly qualified candidates with a basic expectation of achievement, a vision of a high performing society, and clean up the opala.

Me ke aloha pumehana
Anita



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

HE`E Coalition Testimony Special Meeting, March 18, 2021

1 message

Cheri Nakamura <cheri.nakamura@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 9:27 AM

To: Board of Education Testimony <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Please find attached HE`E Coalition's testimony for the Special Meeting, March 18, 2021, Item II.A.

Regards,
Cheri Nakamura
HE`E Coalition Director



HE`E Testimony 2021 3 18 Sup Search.pdf
167K



March 18, 2021
Special Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Committee,

II. A. Board Action on Investigative Committee investigating issues relating to the search for a superintendent, including transition timeline and process, recommendation for an interim superintendent, search timeline and process, and composition of group conducting search

We support the BOE's recommendation to establish an investigative committee to address issues relating to the search for a superintendent. We think it is appropriate for the Board chair and committee chairs make up this investigative committee.

We also agree with the BOE's recommendation of an interim superintendent, and we think that the interim superintendent's objective should be to stabilize and give confidence to the system to first get the schools through transitioning back to a "new normal" of in-person instruction, and second, to establish a stable foundation for the school system, building on the assets of the current school infrastructure to improve student outcomes. Perhaps requiring that the interim superintendent only be an "interim" superintendent and not be considered for the permanent superintendent position would narrow the interim candidate pool down to those who would be focused on this mission.

We think that if the investigative committee sets clear guidance for the timeline and process, finding an interim superintendent can be done rather quickly. Regarding the composition of the group that will conduct the superintendent search, we recommend including a member that represents the community voice.

We would like to offer our ideas about what kind of superintendent, both interim and permanent, would be beneficial for our system. We learned a lot from the recent principal survey commissioned by The Learning Coalition and administered by Ward Research.¹ We need leadership that gives clear direction to the system, someone who can create a strategic plan with clear and easy to understand metrics to define what success looks like and to establish goals for principals to achieve. There also needs to be support and implementation plans that are consistent with the strategic plan.

In addition, we need a superintendent who is an effective communicator, someone who can provide clear, logical and timely information to the schools and to the community. Principals indicated that timely communication was critical for the support they needed. "Better communication (more guidance/coordination, 24%) was among the top responses when principals were asked what specific services and support they need to properly support their teachers and staff, and was the top response (32%) when principals were asked what lessons from the current crises should be retained by HIDOE to react to future crises."²

¹ bit.ly/HIDOEprincipal

² bit.ly/HIDOEprincipal

Finally, we believe that a superintendent who understands the challenges facing our unique education system and can work effectively with committed stakeholders would be beneficial to the system.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.
Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

After-School All-Stars Hawai'i

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

*Castle Complex Community Council

*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS

*Education Institute of Hawai'i

*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

*HawaiiKidsCAN

*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and
Economic Justice

*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Hawai'i P-20

Hawai'i 3Rs

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

*Parents and Children Together

*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Special Education Provider Alliance

*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

Voting Members () Voting member
organizations vote on action items while
individual and non-voting participants may
collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*



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

Testimony

1 message

Naomi Matsuzaki <nmatsuzaki@hawaii.rr.com>

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 9:33 AM

Reply-To: Naomi Matsuzaki <nmatsuzaki@hawaii.rr.com>

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

Aloha,

Please see attached Hawaii Elementary and Middle School Administrators Association (HEMSAA) testimony for the BOE meeting on March 18, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration,
Naomi Matsuzaki,
HEMSAA Executive Director and
retired Principal

**BOE testimony.3.17.21.pdf**

117K



Hawaii Elementary and Middle School Administrators Association

March 17, 2021

To Chairperson Catherine Payne and members of the Board of Education:

As a collective voice for Hawaii school leaders, the Executive Board members for the Hawaii Elementary and Middle Schools Administrators Association (HEMSAA), a local affiliate of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), with a membership of over 250 Hawaii school leaders and school supporters, stand ready to offer assistance in the quest to fill the school superintendent vacancy.

We are mindful that you value the voice of school leaders and we are prepared to offer our support in providing excellence in education for our keiki. Please feel free to contact any of us as we eagerly await your response.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Naomi Matsuzaki
on behalf of:

Dr. Dale Castro, School Renewal Specialist, former principal of Mililani Waena Elementary, Central District and HEMSAA Hawaii State President

Ms. Wendy Matsuzaki, Principal of S.W. King Intermediate School, Windward District and HEMSAA President-Elect

Mrs. Laurie Luczak, Principal of Hokulani Elementary School, Honolulu District and HEMSAA/NAESP State Representative

Mrs. Naomi Matsuzaki, former Principal of Kahalu'u Elementary School and HEMSAA Executive Director

Ms. Susan Young, former Principal of He'eia Elementary School and HEMSAA Treasurer

c: HEMSAA District Board Members



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

TESTIMONY BOE MARCH 18, 2021

1 message

Susan Pcola-Davis <Supcola@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony_boe <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 12:23 PM

Testimony: Support with comments

I would like these 3 documents to be part of my testimony. I know the two attachments are long, but could be considered important.

MAHALO

SU

Additionally, I submitted two attachments as part of my testimony.

These attachments are to remind the Board of the chronology of events leading to the current superintendent search.

I have provided them, first to remind current board members who were on the board at that time, contents of the minutes from their board meetings and also consider how they shaped the public concern and media attention.

Attachment (1) Board of Education Minutes re: superintendent search

For the members who were not part of the past search, you cannot walk away and use the excuse that "I wasn't here when the superintendent was searched and selected." You have an obligation to know how the process occurred and read the attachment.

Attachment (2) Press Coverage

The attachment "full of the press" coverage, also will remind the Board of the chronology of events and content the public was reading.

Susan A. Pcola-Davis

3 attachments**March 18 PIG Special Meeting.pdf**
146K

3/17/2021

Dell Marketing LP Mail - TESTIMONY BOE MARCH 18, 2021



BOE Minutes Superintendent Search.pdf

232K



News Stories Superintendent.pdf

354K

Board of Education Special Meeting
March 18, 2021
SUSAN A. PCOLA-DAVIS
Testimony:

II. Action Items

A. Board Action on Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1) investigating issues relating to the search for a superintendent, including transition timeline and process, recommendation for an interim superintendent, search timeline and process, and composition of group conducting search.

Testimony in Support with comments:

I do support the Board of Education with establishing an Investigative Committee for the following;

INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Student Achievement Committee ("SAC") Chairperson Margaret Cox,
Human Resources ("HR") Chairperson Dwight Takeno,
Finance and Infrastructure ("FIC") Chairperson Bruce Voss,
Board Chair Catherine Paine as the committee chairperson.

1. Investigating issues relating to the search for a superintendent
2. Setting a transition timeframe and developing a fair process

Comments: A fair process that doesn't include a consulting search firm paid for by an outside entity (i.e. influence), as in the last superintendent search. I am attaching the timeline of events from the minutes of the Board of Education during its last superintendent search. It bares reading so those currently on the board that weren't part of it, cannot say they weren't here therefore they don't know.

3. Providing a recommendation for an interim superintendent

Comments: Does an interim superintendent need to be identified now, since we have our current superintendent until the end of July?

I suggest the Board have a meeting closer to the end of the superintendent's contract to make a decision on an interim superintendent.

4. Creating a search timeline and developing a process
5. Developing the group who will be conducting the search.

Comments: Investigative Committee for the Search:

Defining the group who will be conducting the search will take some thought. The board needs to consider inclusion of stakeholders. These should include HSTA, Principals from each complex, teachers from each complex, parents from each complex and student from elementary, intermediate and high schools by complex. This is quite a large interest group. It is imperative that this process be transparent.

This group will need to be provided clear instructions of the desired process.

Additionally, I submitted two attachments as part of my testimony

These attachments are to remind the Board of the chronology of events leading to the current superintendent search.

I have provided them, first to remind current board members who were on the board at that time, contents of the minutes from their board meetings and also consider how they shaped the public concern and media attention.

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**Board of Education Special Meeting
March 18, 2021
Susan Pcola-Davis
Attachment 1 (What happened the last time?)
Chronology: Board of Education Meeting Minutes re: Galera**

March 7, 2017

C. Board Action on Superintendent job description and characteristics

Board Member Patricia Bergin provided the following statement on behalf of the Superintendent Search Investigative Committee ("Search Committee"):

"In light of the recent events regarding the resignation of Board Member Darrel Galera and his expressed interest in applying for the Superintendent position, the Board's Search Committee wants to assure the public that the Board is going to continue conducting a search for candidates. While we are encouraged that a candidate like Mr. Galera, with his wealth of experience, would be interested in applying for the Superintendent position, we know that there are many qualified candidates out there, and we hope that they are encouraged to consider applying. Mr. Galera will have to go through the same screening process as all other applicants, and every applicant will be considered on an equal playing field."

March 21, 2017

D. Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1)) investigating the Superintendent search: status report

Board Chairperson Mizumoto noted that the resignation of, and announcement made by, *former Board Member Darrel Galera was a surprise and stated that once an intent to apply is made public, it discourages others from applying and creates an unfair situation.*

Board Chairperson Mizumoto stated that when the Governor *asked Galera to serve on the Board, the Governor asked Galera whether he intended to apply for the Superintendent position. Galera told the Governor that he did not intend to do so. Since that time, Galera changed his mind.*

Board Chairperson Mizumoto stated that he respects Galera's credentials, past experience, and contributions *but noted that the process was compromised by the public announcement.*

Board Chairperson Mizumoto noted that the Search Committee was notified **by the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation ("Castle Foundation") that its grant funding to the Board would be suspended and stated that the process could not continue without this funding.**

He highlighted that the Castle Foundation has been a strong supporter and funded the process because it wanted to ensure that the process was transparent and fair. **Board Chairperson clarified that the Castle Foundation does not have anything to do with the selection of the new Superintendent.**

Board Chairperson Mizumoto stated that he was happy events resolved themselves and expressed appreciation for Galera's reconsideration and withdrawal of his intent to apply.

Board Vice Chairperson De Lima highlighted **public perception regarding external influence** and stated that Board Members have demonstrated integrity and are not rubber stamps for anyone.

Board Member Bruce Voss that the Search Committee has not been influenced in any way. **He stated that the search firm was selected because it was the most qualified and cost-effective.**

Board Member Hubert Minn He highlighted Galera's work within public education and stated that it is unfortunate that he was unable to go through the process of applying, and he would have liked to have seen Galera apply.

April 26, 2017

A. Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1)) investigating the Superintendent search: findings and recommendations.

Board Members Patricia Bergin and Kenneth Uemura were thanked for the time and effort they put into the Superintendent search process.

The search firm, Ray & Associates, received and screened 92 applications.

The number of candidates to interview was narrowed down to eight.

The Search Committee reviewed backgrounds when deciding on candidates and emphasized that candidates went through a full background check, including civil, criminal, financial, and educational checks.

References were contacted, and any issues that were uncovered were reviewed further to determine whether there was any truth to allegations that were made.

The Search Committee is satisfied with the background searches and is comfortable with recommending the final candidates: Linda Chen and Christina Kishimoto.

May 2, 2017

E. Board Action on findings and recommendations of Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1)) investigating the Superintendent search

Board Vice Chairperson De Lima stated that the Board should go into executive session to discuss the findings and recommendations of the investigative committee investigating the Superintendent search ("Search Committee") before taking action.

VII. Executive Session

This portion of the meeting was closed under Section 92-4 and Section 92-5(a)(2), (3), and (4), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

C. Update on the final candidates in Superintendent search

ACTION: Motion to move into executive session to consult with the Board's attorney on matters listed on the agenda, deliberate on matters concerning the authority of persons designated by the Board to conduct labor negotiations, and consider the hire of an employee (Uemura/Cox). The motion carried unanimously with all members present voting aye.

The meeting recessed at 2:09 p.m. and reconvened at 3:48 p.m.

Board Chairperson Lance Mizumoto entered during executive session.

Board Chairperson Mizumoto asked if there was any public testimony. There was no public testimony at this time. *(There isn't any testimony accepted for executive session)*

ACTION: Motion to adopt the recommendations of the Search Committee, as described in the Search Committee's report dated April 26, 2017, to consider Dr. Linda Chen and Dr. Christina Kishimoto as final candidates for the position of Superintendent and to interview each of them on May 11, 2017 (De Lima/Chun). The motion carried unanimously with all members present voting aye.

May 11, 2017

III. Discussion Items

B. Statement from Superintendent Final Candidate Christina Kishimoto

Board Chairperson Mizumoto invited Dr. Christina Kishimoto, final candidate for Superintendent, to make a statement.

Kishimoto entered at 9:50 a.m.

Kishimoto highlighted three common questions that arose in conversations during her meetings with constituent groups.

1Q. She noted that the first question centered around **how to deliver education** that keiki need to be college and career ready.

1A. Kishimoto stated that students have a variety of readiness levels, language, and experience and that delivery models require that all individuals work together to support classroom teachers and principals in designing engaging instruction models based on the child and the community.

2Q. The second question that was common in discussions was in regards to what an **empowered** system looks like.

2A. Kishimoto highlighted that this question seems to be at the heart of various documents that have been created.

- She noted that questions that need to be asked regarding empowerment are how will an empowered system function,
- what components are essential,
- and what work is currently being done that is not essential and needs to be put aside so that the focus can be on having the greatest impact on the classroom.

Kishimoto stated that design and implementation work that lies ahead will be guided by the Blueprint and the Strategic Plan.

She highlighted transitions to new guidelines under the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") and the opportunity to focus on closing the achievement gap and maximizing funds for students who need it the most.

Kishimoto highlighted how Kathryn Matayoshi, Superintendent, led during the difficult time of Race to the Top, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and centralized authority.

Kishimoto noted that the federal government's intention was good and that the idea that no child should be forgotten matters. However, transitioning to ESSA reengages and reauthorizes the State, Board, and classrooms to make decisions, and **decision-making belongs closest to the child.**

3Q. Kishimoto stated that the third question was in regards to collective readiness

3A. and highlighted that she is ready to execute on the vision of keiki in Hawaii across all islands and classrooms.

- She noted that the work will require hyper-tensional focus, culturally rich and engaging activities, and standard design.

- She stated that she understands tremendous and collective work needs to be done, and she is ready to be part of a great team to get this work done.

Kishimoto exited at 9:55 a.m

NEWS STORIES RE: SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH AND OTHER INFO

2021

February 21, 2021, By Civil Beat Editorial Board

The Civil Beat Editorial Board Interview: DOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto

The leader of the Hawaii Department of Education talks about how schools are weathering COVID-19, bills at the Legislature and the struggle to innovate.

Editor's note: The Civil Beat Editorial Board and reporters spoke with Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent Christina Kishimoto via Zoom on Feb. 17. Here are some of the highlights from our interview, which has been edited for length and clarity.

Civil Beat: If you have any opening remarks, Dr. Kishimoto, we would welcome those.

Kishimoto: Thank you for your interest in having this conversation and continuing to cover what's happening in our schools and what's impacting kids and families.

I will start off by saying I don't think it's any surprise that this has been a very challenging period, if not the most challenging period I've had since coming to Hawaii. But as a superintendent, this is what we do. We deal with all the unknowns that hit us constantly. And sometimes they are short-lived; seldom are they as long-lived as this pandemic has been and will continue to be for a while, which really exacerbates kind of the situation and impact and how we lead here and (what we have) to deal with during this time period.

When I came in four years ago, there were a lot of meetings held as part of my interview process and as part of the first few days on the job. And without a doubt, the number one thing everyone talked about was the need to have empowerment of schools, to really innovate and do things differently, to really lead in this innovation space. And we have been in the past few years really focused on that school-based empowerment, making sure the schools have the resources they need, that they can authentically design, but that they can also uniquely kind of design so that you don't have one size fits all in the public school system, which makes no sense.

All the research says you have to have the design for community schools belong to the community. You need to have student, teacher, parent, voices and so forth and that one demand from community has also been the most difficult part of my job.

And I think as we went into the pandemic, it became even more obvious that the demand for empowerment means different things to different people and that the demand for innovation also exists within a box.

And if you look at just the bills being introduced right now (at the Hawaii Legislature), very traditional — what to teach, where to teach, how to teach it. That's not about innovation. Some of the legislators are the same folks that were demanding this innovation. If you look at how I spend my time between the Board

of Education and the Legislature, in many ways it's like having two boards of ed that I report to.

And so we have a governance structure that's not quite empowering. And often it keeps me short of being able to truly empower schools to be able to design. We get questioned on everything from a hire to a curriculum to why we're not all marching to the same drumbeat throughout the week.

And yet we know students are learning in urban centers and rural communities. Each community has some unique history. We have teachers that come in with this wealth of experience and they should be able to bring that to the classroom and so forth. And so I do think we're at this important turning point and I've been talking to lots of folks about this important turning point; we either are going to wrap ourselves around coming out of this pandemic, really pushing into this innovation space and into this empowerment, or we're going to remain — we're going to come out really going back to what's the old normal and what I would consider a mediocre expectation of the department as part of that normal.

So I would say four years in that's my number one thing. Do we really, as a state, want a great public school system for kids or are we very, very comfortable where we are right now? ***And I would say that there's a lot of action that says we're very comfortable where we are right now.***

Civil Beat: That sounds a little frustrating, just hearing you say you wish we were not so comfortable.

Kishimoto: I think we should be very uncomfortable about where we are. I shared recently that we have 23,000 students, the majority of them in the middle grades, and the majority of them have never met grade-level expectations. And they've been part of the DOE for their education path. We own them. We own that lack of success. And we want to do the same thing with them. And we don't want to talk about how we change education for them. So that means that we're comfortable where we are. We are comfortable that some kids would do well, some kids won't.

We've got to be really, really willing to say that's not good enough and we've got to do it collectively.

Civil Beat: Not too long after your hire, you went on a tour of the state. There are over 260 schools and multiple islands, varying terrain. Are you still trying to get on a plane, get your COVID-19 test first and then go to schools to see how things are going?

Kishimoto: I don't think it's fair for me to be on a plane being in the space that really principals need to have full control of. And so, no, this year I've grounded myself. No travel. We're doing everything digitally. We're online. We can see each other. We can still work with one another. We have a lot of meetings all day long, all week long, staying connected with one another.

But the first three years that I was here, I hit almost every school with a visit. And what that allows me to do is see the things that are the same. There are consistencies. We are the Hawaii Department of Education and we're a community that's consistent on some things. And it also allows me to see all the differences. You know, if I'm in Pahoa, that's very different from being here at Campbell High and in the Central District. Our schools have different access to resources and communities that voice in some different ways.

And that's really important to me, because one thing you've heard me consistently say is that public schools belong to their communities, which is why a public school is impacted,

whether it's a volcano or whether it was on Kauai with the flooding that shuts down access to some of our schools.

Civil Beat: We've been hearing a lot of national news stories about conflicts between unions and school districts about reopening. Can you talk to us a little bit about your relationship right now with the HSTA and whether or not their efforts are causing any sort of roadblocks for what you think should be happening with school reopening?

Kishimoto: I don't think that we've had roadblocks to reopening. We haven't always agreed on all the steps or the timing and so forth.

There are other states that have real roadblocks. I mean, just look at the whole Chicago situation, all over the news and just not showing up to work. We don't have labor organizations that are telling their employees, "Don't show up to work."

What we have is we don't agree with you on this or we agree with you on that. And I think that that's important. And I think that's been very helpful. I don't think we all need to agree all the time, but we do need to be willing to make sure that students are first, that schools are open, that we're paying attention to what's happening with kids.

Again, the concern about kids being home alone, the concern about kids being isolated, kids who are saying they feel sad more often. We have all this data and we keep trying to lead the conversations by having the data front and center to have these conversations.

Civil Beat: To pivot from that a little bit, to hear you talk at the beginning about sort of these barriers to innovation and being comfortable with the way public education is in the state. What do you see, as we come out of this pandemic, as the real barrier to a turning point? What will let the school system move in a direction that you think is really going to be in a positive direction?

Kishimoto: That's a great question. I think if we look exactly the same as when we closed down back in March, then we should be asking ourselves some questions about why we're not using what we learned during this time period.

One thing that's come out of this from the positive perspective is that prior to the pandemic, this question about whether we could do blended or distance learning at some scale was a hard conversation to have. Is that something that you negotiate in the contract? And does that change teacher time? Does that change how much training we need?

Well, we were forced into the situation of using and leveraging technology that already exists to try to figure out how we educate during the pandemic. And I think it's just forced us to go into areas that we may not have been comfortable with. And to say we can do this, especially if we're planning, we have more planning time.

We can put in place the training and we can start thinking differently about how we teach, where kids learn, what the school day looks like, that we start to think about the classroom beyond just the walls of the classroom. There's been a desire to do that. Now we have lots of additional tools to start thinking differently about it. So that's certainly one.

The other is even the conversation around teleworking and how do we run this organization in a way that there are certain jobs within the DOE because our jobs are not just teachers. We have engineers and we have electricians and we have financial experts and we have our experts. Can we hire someone from anywhere in Hawaii? And they have their choice of where they're going to live. We often talk about being Oahu-centric, but can we think differently about where our workforce is, which allows for, again,

attracting and retaining talent here in Hawaii by providing this flexibility in our workforce design?

So I think there's a lot of things that have come out of this pandemic that has allowed us to think differently about the work, the business side of the house, as well as the education, teaching and learning structure of our work.

Civil Beat: This goes to infrastructure and to broadband. There are many households in Hawaii that don't have internet capabilities and so forth. These are the kinds of things that are going to have to come into play in order to move in that direction — more telework, more remote engagement.

Kishimoto: Yeah, absolutely. From the moment we shut down, we were trying to figure out how to break apart and make sure those laptops have cameras and do homes have enough bandwidth.

And we started out with more parents saying, "Yes, we're OK, we got this." And then as they started to have multiple folks doing video streaming say, "No, we don't have this, we don't have enough bandwidth, we don't know what to do. We're interrupting each other's work."

So I think there's this opportunity for the state to think about how it provides equity of access through technology. And one of the examples I often give is not just in instruction. What really hit home quickly was when I was asked by several legislators in a very, very early COVID hearing, "By the way, all these devices you're handing out to kids, can mom and dad and auntie use it for telehealth because they're afraid to get to hospitals?" Right. Or to the doctors and we don't want them not to go to their appointments. And I said we're not monitoring other than the safety side of it, whether they're using it for something positive.

But at the same time, that's not a question for me. That's a question for you, Legislature. What is our vision in the state? And so there's been a broadband hui that's been meeting and that's great.

I think it goes even beyond education — it is an equity issue for health care, for even being able to check in with whoever's home. It's an equity issue for us. When we did the parent help desk, we had to work with a partner to hire on the help desk folks who spoke different languages and had the technical knowledge to be able to use in those other home languages. And we needed also individuals who knew how to work with a kupuna, someone in that age group who's home with their grandchild and hasn't used technology. And now they're the ones trying to solve this.

So we've all had to learn and grow very quickly and learn how to do our school work differently. That's a good thing for modernizing and advancing Hawaii.

Civil Beat: Speaking of the Legislature, some of the proposals you've seen are kind of mundane and not innovative. What kind of things would you like to see the Legislature do?

Kishimoto: I would say on an annual basis there are more bills I want to stop than I want to support. We have over 600 bills that touch education. We don't need 600 bills every year.

What we don't want is ***we don't want the Legislature legislating work that belongs at the Board of Education level — what to teach, how to teach, when to teach it. That really by statute belongs at the Board of Ed level.***

We also don't need to put in statute work that's already happening, especially when it's related to the core work of a coalition of the Board of Education.

We have a couple of bills that we are certainly supporting. Our number one bill is the maintenance of effort bill that's been introduced both on the House and the Senate side. That's a bill that says there needs to be stability and predictability in the base budget for the department. And year over year, we can't have these ups and downs. It's very destabilizing. We think it's a great bill. Technically, it probably has some things that someone from the legal perspective has to clean up, and that's fine. But it's a sound bill and it's a great complement to the weighted student formula statute that says we have to have equity and funding now.

And on (Feb. 12), there was a press conference and (Tuesday) I get to testify about it on the House side, a requirement to use federal funding for positions. ***Well, I'm in opposition of that.***

Funding for positions should come from, again, that base guaranteed funding that stabilizes the district. If you're going to ask us to use one-time funding, then I'm going to have concerns with that, because it means that by the fall, not even a year from now, several months from now, I'm going to be back at the seat with legislators, saying, "Hey, by the way, are you going to backfill now with permanent funding?" So it's bad practice to use temporary funding to do this.

Now, that being said, you know, if at the end of the session we can't figure out how to fund our base budget, then we're going to have to go back to that federal funding. But that should be a last resort.

Civil Beat: The Board of Education is in charge of hiring you and evaluating you. During the pandemic, we have noticed that the dynamic has shifted a little bit between the board and you and your interactions during these very long meetings that happen monthly. Can you comment on just sort of that shifting dynamic between you and the board?

Kishimoto: Yes, you notice a change in the dynamic, but so have I. So I would not say that I think it is an ideal dynamic. But I do think it is a reflection of (the fact that) we are in a very difficult situation. We're trying to educate in a way we're not designed for and doing distance (learning).

We're trying to figure out how to pay bills, basic bills to run the organization. We're trying to figure out how to get ready for summer school and learning beyond this year and how we get successfully through this pandemic with kids getting the kind of support they need. And I don't think there's anything easy about this decision-making. And I think everyone needs to shift how decisions are made, how we're engaging. I think it's been especially difficult for me that items are introduced at the board level and there's been a change where I can't introduce the item.

So I'm getting feedback from communities saying we don't like what the superintendent is doing and they haven't even had a chance to hear from me on an item. I think that is problematic. There are things that happen that have to happen logistically, but also legally. I have a fiduciary responsibility as a superintendent and so does the board. And there are things I have to present to the Board of Ed that may not be popular and may not even be what I want to do, but I have to do it because they have to make the decision and they have to have the hard discussions.

Civil Beat: A lot of parents are taking their kids out of the schools, going to home schooling, going to private school or some other education pathway. How do you make

public education viable and attractive? Is it possible after the pandemic you'll get those students back?

Kishimoto: I do think we're going to get the majority of students back. Our data doesn't look any different than every other state's data that the trend is, especially pre-K families with the youngest kids, opting out because they're working at home or they have grandparents at home to leave the youngest ones at home. They feel safer.

And so we're seeing the big drop in kindergarten. And pre-K has been impacted tremendously. We don't have a good read on that yet because we don't have universal pre-K here. But certainly in kindergarten and the trends that we've seen where families have kids in the public school system through middle school, and then they're going and opting for a private high school, for example, that's trending the same way. So our data doesn't look alarming from that perspective. That doesn't look any different than the other COVID-19 impacts that we're seeing across the nation.

We also have families who wanted only distance learning who are now saying we want to be back on campus. I'm more concerned about those that we need to catch and make sure that they are being educated somewhere. So in answer to your question, I'm less worried about where they're being educated than that they're being educated right now. And that they have adults who know them and are connected with that family or with that child.

Civil Beat: Dr. Kishimoto, you talked in the beginning about how you would be disappointed if we return to schools the same way that they were in the past. Let's say it's August and September. The vaccines have been proliferating and kids are back in school. How is it different? Can you be a little bit more specific about your vision?

Kishimoto: Well, I don't want it to seem as if what we're doing all needs to be replaced. That's not true. We have some great models and designs. And so we want those things to continue. But where we see work that is not producing the outcomes that we would want to see, I expect that we're going to work differently.

I'll go back to the example I gave earlier, the example about the group of 23,000 students that we know they're getting instruction from a highly qualified teacher. They're getting wraparound services. And so their school day looks like everyone else's, but it doesn't work for them. If we're not doing something different for that group of students, I would be very disappointed because we know what the trajectory is if we don't mitigate that lack of access to learning.

And there are lots of reasons. It's not just academic, it's support for the families, it's connectivity for families. It's the empowerment of that young person to feel that they really can succeed and can do something different. It may be getting them onto college campuses and seeing that this is a place for them, getting them internships. We've got to make sure we are designing differently in the areas where it's not working.

Civil Beat: Is there a final point you'd like to make?

Kishimoto: I would just say that it's about a collective and also about a willingness to be at the table together. I hope that the politics of this time period, which we can't avoid, doesn't drown out the collective work. We have to do a little more, quietly at the table, together with our sleeves rolled up saying, what are the most important things we have to solve right now and let's figure it out. And so I'll end with that, because I think that's the harder work.

I think trying to drown each other out with political statements or one-up on one another, it's really easy to do. But I'm not here about the easy work. I want to get to the harder work. And we have some things we have to solve.

Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Civil Beat thanks you for joining us and thank you to your staff as well. We look forward to chatting with you again.

Appreciate the conversation today. Take care. Aloha.

2017

BoE: We Knew All About Kishimoto, And Picked Her Anyway

May 27, 2017, Hawaii Tribune-Herald: A total of 92 applicants applied for her job. Several people criticized Kishimoto in written testimony pointing to her previous controversies and critiquing her lack of experience leading a system as large as Hawaii's, and the lack of local candidates overall.

Hawaii Island BOE member Pat Bergin, part of the superintendent search committee, said Thursday the board is "very much aware of all the concerns raised" about Kishimoto and "we've completely vetted her."

"We've researched every single complaint that came through," Bergin said.

"Everything we've been hearing her say is very student-focused and supportive of teachers and she wants to do exactly what the board has been promoting."

Kishimoto did not respond to a request for an interview....

Board of Education selects next Superintendent

19-May-2017, News release from DoE.

Christina Kishimoto, Ph.D., signed a three-year contract (Just long enough for HSTA to regroup and try again) and will start on August 1, 2017. "I look forward to working hand in hand with Hawaii's teachers, leaders, staff, parents, community members, and student leaders to execute on this vision of high quality college, career, and community readiness."

HONOLULU –The State of Hawaii Board of Education (BOE) is pleased to announce it has selected Christina Kishimoto, Ph.D. as the incoming Superintendent to lead the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE). After a rigorous search process that spanned several months and 92 applicants, the BOE interviewed two final candidates on May 11, 2017 before making its decision.

"Because both finalists were *so highly qualified*, it was a difficult decision for the Board," said BOE Chairperson Lance Mizumoto who led the committee that conducted the search. "In the end, however, we felt that Dr. Kishimoto has the right combination of experience, knowledge, and focus to implement the strategic vision for educational change set forth in the Governor's Blueprint for Education and the BOE and HIDOE's newly revised joint strategic plan.

She will begin her transition out of her current role as Superintendent of the Gilbert Public Schools (GPS) district in Arizona.

"I look forward to working hand in hand with Hawaii's teachers, leaders, staff, parents, community members, and student leaders to execute on this vision of high quality college, career, and community readiness."

"We are excited to have someone *with a track record of reducing achievement gaps and a commitment to school empowerment* to lead our public school system," stated BOE member and former HIDOE teacher and administrator Patricia Bergin.

May 19, 2017, Civil Beat New Hawaii Schools Chief Selected

Christina Kishimoto will take over as superintendent on August 1 after leaving her current job as superintendent of an Arizona school district.
By Courtney Teague

Christina Kishimoto has been selected as the next Hawaii Department of Education superintendent.

Kishimoto will replace current Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, whose contract is up June 30. Matayoshi was criticized by educators for creating an overly centralized school system. Kishimoto begins her three-year contract on August 1, according to a Board of Education statement, and the board will pick an interim superintendent to serve during July.

Kishimoto currently serves as Superintendent of Gilbert Public Schools in Arizona. As Hawaii superintendent, Kishimoto will be responsible for the country's only statewide school district. The Department of Education oversees 256 schools with 175,000 students, 22,300 permanent employees and 13,500 casual hires.

"In partnership with Chairperson Mizumoto, the Board, and Governor David Ige, I look forward to implementing a vision of excellence for all students," Kishimoto said in the statement. "I look forward to working hand in hand with Hawaii's teachers, leaders, staff, parents, community members, and student leaders to execute on this vision of high quality college, career, and community readiness."

BOE Chair Lance Mizumoto said the decision was difficult for the board because "both finalists were so highly qualified." But Kishimoto had "the right combination of experience, knowledge, and focus" to implement Gov. David Ige's strategic vision for education and Blueprint, he said.

She beat out finalist Linda Chen, who started Baltimore-based Ikigai Educational Consulting last year, and has a background in teaching and educational administration.

In public testimony to the board, people overwhelmingly opposed both finalists and called for a local candidate. The Hawaii State Teachers Association told the board they didn't support either candidate.

Others testifying felt they lacked experience and gave vague answers in their statements at a press conference. Many questioned the candidates' performance in previous education jobs.

Neither candidate has served in a school district as large as Hawaii.

The Star-Advertiser first reported last month that Kishimoto was unanimously denied a contract extension for her job as superintendent in Hartford, Conn. The schools board previously gave her low marks on a performance review, **citing poor communication.**

She defended her performance at last month's press conference, saying she maintained good relationships with politicians and board members. Kishimoto called herself a "bold leader" who brought change to a high-poverty district that was in the midst of a state takeover.

Kishimoto also responded to criticism of her current performance as a superintendent in Gilbert, Ariz. at the press conference. The schools system was under pressure from a conservative right and a need for innovation, she said, and pointed to some of her achievements.

The statement said that Kishimoto passed a full background check. Mizumoto added that "district officials, former superintendents, and other individuals in the Gilbert district were contacted" and *"negative statements made about Dr. Kishimoto were either inconsequential or simply invalid."*

Kishimoto has served as superintendent in Gilbert since July 2014.

A news conference will be held next month to introduce Kishimoto, according to the release.

A Call For More Transparency

Jim Shon, director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Hawaii Educational Policy Center, said the search has been stressful for those who follow education in Hawaii and ***the finalists "leaped into the final arena in a cloud of smoke and not transparency."***

Candidates from the mainland might be more aggressive in their work ethic, he said, which is something Hawaii might not be used to.

Hawaii residents might be looking for more stability in a superintendent than mainlanders would expect, he said, and outsiders might have difficulty to adjust to the DOE's single district system and collective bargaining arrangements.

Shon said he doesn't know of anyone willing to "stick their neck out" and say recruiting candidates from outside the DOE is a positive thing.

"I think a lot of people are in the same situation. What is it about these folks that stood out from the 92 (original pool of applicants)?" he said.

Randy Roth, UH law professor, also complained of a lack of transparency in the superintendent search. ***There should have been an open forum so candidates could answer questions in public, he said.***

Roth also said he doesn't know of anyone who's vocally supported either finalist, but because ***there hasn't been an opportunity for public interviews, "people don't have enough information to form a valid opinion."***

It's conceivable the mainland finalists may do a good job, he said, ***but he hasn't heard them answer any questions about Hawaii's unique education community.***

He noted that Gov. David Ige has a lot of power over the DOE and can veto budget line items — plus, Hawaii is the only state with a single school district. In testimony, Roth suggested the board ask candidates questions about the governor's plan for "a schools-centered system" and his Blueprint for Public Education.

"Their resumes suggest (the candidates) are smart, hardworking people with an excellent formal education," Roth said. "Whether they're a good fit for Hawaii ... I think is anybody's guess."

Superintendent Position Posted

March 14, 2017, From Hawaii BoE

The position for Superintendent has been posted and is available here: <http://rayassoc.com/job-details.php?ID=371>. The deadline for the submittal of all application material is April 6, 2017.

March 13, 2017: Darrel Galera statement:

“Regarding my announcement last week to resign from the Board of Education and apply for superintendent, I have decided (to) withdraw my application so the search can continue without the distraction caused by my application. My overarching goal is to transform our education system to provide our students with educational opportunities that are second to none. My sincere apology to our Governor, the members of the Board of Education, and to everyone else affected by the timing of my actions.”

Superintendent Search Process on Track

March 13, 2017, News Release from Hawaii BoE

HONOLULU – The Board of Education’s (Board) Search Committee announced that, after a brief delay, it will be posting the Superintendent position on March 14, 2017. The next step in the search process was delayed due to concerns about the process resulting from a press release last week that announced that former Board member Darrel Galera resigned from the Board to apply to be Superintendent. These concerns were resolved after former Board member Galera made a public statement earlier today withdrawing his intent to apply for the Superintendent position. As a result, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation notified the committee that it would continue its financial support for the search through a grant it awarded to the Board.

“I appreciate that Darrel has reconsidered his decision to apply for Superintendent,” said Lance Mizumoto, chairperson of the committee conducting the Superintendent search. “The Search Committee continues to encourage all qualified candidates to apply and reiterates that everyone will go through the same screening process and every applicant will be considered on an equal playing field. All applications are confidential and no decision will be made until all applications are reviewed and appropriate interviews conducted.”

“The Search Committee appreciates the forthright statements of a public that is unafraid to speak up and who is passionate about the education of our students. As public servants, we have the same desire for a system that is transparent and have worked to develop a process that intends to provide this transparency and provides the public with the ability to provide feedback,” said Patricia Bergin, member of the committee conducting the Superintendent search. “We look forward to moving ahead in this process and completing one of the most important powers bestowed upon the Board of Education—appointing the Superintendent of our public school system.”

Last week the Board adopted a job description and characteristics for the Superintendent position to aid in the search for a new Superintendent. The Board released a survey to the public to get feedback from

parents, students, teachers, administrators, community members, businesses, and other stakeholders on the most desired characteristics for a Superintendent.

For more information about the Superintendent search, please visit the Board's Superintendent Search page here: [Superintendent-Search-2017.aspx](#).

University of Hawaii at Manoa's College of Education professor and a member of the advisory group to the search committee Patricia Halagao stated, "As a former public school teacher and someone who now trains teachers, I also appreciate how Dr. Kishimoto elevates teachers as educational experts and aims to create a system conducive for us to thrive and do what we do best—teach."

During the selection process, the BOE conducted a thorough background check, which included civil, criminal, financial, and educational verifications. Chairperson Mizumoto added, "In addition, district officials, former Superintendents, and other individuals in the Gilbert district were contacted. Various negative statements made about Dr. Kishimoto were *either inconsequential or simply invalid.*"

Delay of Search Process

March 10, 2017, From Hawaii Board of Education

The Search Committee is delaying the search process while evaluating the current situation and working to resolve issues surrounding Harold K.L. Castle Foundation's financial support of the Superintendent search process. As part of this, the position will not be posted today as originally anticipated under the search timeline. We appreciate the support of the foundation and are hopeful that the issues can be resolved and the foundation can continue its support of a fair and transparent search for the Superintendent. (March 10, 2017)

Superintendent Job Description

At its March 7, 2017 meeting, the Board approved a job description for the Superintendent position. The job description is available [here](#). The Board also approved a set of characteristics that it will look for in a Superintendent. This set of characteristics was developed based on data received via a public survey that was conducted in February and is available [here](#). (March 9, 2017)

Superintendent Search Process Remains Open and Transparent

The Board's Search Committee issued a statement in regards to Darrel Galera's resignation and the Superintendent search process. The press release and statement can be viewed [here](#). (March 7, 2017)

Superintendent Characteristics Survey Closed

The survey closed on February 27, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. Thank you to everyone that participated in the survey. The results will be discussed at the Board's March 7, 2017 General Business Meeting (February 27, 2017)

Superintendent Characteristics Survey

The Board wants to know what you think are the most important characteristics for a Superintendent. Access the survey [here](#). The survey will be open until February 27, 2017, 8:00 a.m. (February 6, 2017)

Advisory Group Established

The search process allows for the Search Committee to identify individuals to serve on an Advisory Group to assist the Search Committee with the identification of final candidates. The Search Committee has [identified the individuals and groups](#) that they represent and will [update the Board](#) at its January 10, 2017 general business meeting. (January 7, 2017)

Search Process Adopted and Search Committee Formed

On December 20, 2016, the Board adopted the search process recommended by its Search Process Committee. The search process is described in [this memorandum](#). The Board also

established a Search Committee to conduct the search process. The members of the Search Committee are Board Chairperson Lance Mizumoto and Board Members Patricia Bergin and Kenneth Uemura. (December 21, 2016)

Search Timeline

- **March 7, 2017** Board adopts Superintendent Characteristics and Job Description.
- **March 10, 2017** Position posted.
- **April 6, 2017** Deadline for all application materials.
- **Mid-April, 2017** Search Committee interviews no more than 10 candidates and Advisory Group and Students participate in interviews virtually (1st round).
- **April 26, 2017** Search Committee presents Final Candidates in report to the Board at Board Meeting.
- **Late April – Early May, 2017** Final Candidates meet with stakeholders.
- **May 11, 2017** Board interviews Final Candidates (2nd round) and selects Finalist.**

**Name of Finalist will not be announced until the Finalist is under contract.

COVERAGE:

- Big Q: [What do you think of Darrel Galera withdrawing as an applicant for schools superintendent?](#)
- CB: [Galera's decision to remove his name from consideration may disappoint the Hawaii State Teachers Association.](#)
- CB: [The Search For A New Hawaii Schools Chief Just Suffered A Major Setback](#)
- March 9, 2017: [Integrity: Castle Foundation Refusing to Pay for 'Unfair' DoE Superintendent Search](#)

HNN: [Fairness concerns delay BOE search for superintendent](#)

March 10, 2017

Integrity: Castle Foundation Refusing to Pay for 'Unfair' DoE Superintendent Search

Statement from Terrence George, president and CEO of the Harold K. L. Castle Foundation:

"At the request of the Hawaii State Board of Education, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation approved a \$50,500 grant to support a nationwide superintendent search that was fair, open, and transparent. Funds were to be used to cover the cost of a highly experienced search firm, hired by and reporting only to the Board of Education.

"Recent developments led the Foundation to have deep concerns that one candidate may have an unfair advantage over other applicants. Therefore, we have informed the Board of Education that we have suspended our grant payment. We remain hopeful that a solution can be found that restores the full integrity of the search process. Our students and our schools deserve nothing less."

Superintendent Search

The money to hire a search firm is pulled over concerns that a former school board member has the inside track to the job

March 9, 2017 By Anita Hofschneider

The Harold K.L. Castle Foundation has decided to pull its \$50,500 donation for Hawaii's search for a school superintendent out of concerns that the process is rigged in favor of Darrel Galera.

The money was supposed to be used by the Board of Education to hire a search firm to find an experienced candidate.

Galeria is a former principal who was appointed to the Board of Education by Gov. David Ige last fall and has been leading a special team organized by the governor to address the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

Galera resigned from his board position Monday to apply for the superintendent job. The decision sparked education observers to speculate he may have an advantage over other candidates due to his relationship with Ige.

That's worrisome to Terrence George, president and chief executive officer of the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, who said Thursday that the foundation has informed the Board of Education that it is suspending its grant.

"We have intended to support the search process and we hope that we can restore integrity to the process," George said, adding that he is hopeful a solution will be found to do so. "What that solution would be, I don't know."

Patricia Bergin, a Board of Education member who is part of a group conducting the search, said in a statement Tuesday that the committee "is committed to continuing to move forward with an open and transparent process."

"While we are encouraged that a candidate like Mr. Galera, with his wealth of experience, would be interested in applying for the superintendent position, we know that there are many qualified candidates out there, and we hope that they are encouraged to consider applying," she said. "Mr. Galera will have to go through the same screening process as all other applicants, and every applicant will be considered on an equal playing field."

Ige said at a press conference Thursday prior to the Castle announcement that he was surprised by Galera's resignation and wasn't aware that he was going to apply.

"I hope that many people will apply, and I do trust that the board will do its responsibility to select the best candidate for the job," he said.

And on Thursday after the announcement, Board Chair Lance Mizumoto issued this statement:

"We appreciate the support of the Castle Foundation (and) are hopeful that the situation can be resolved so they can continue their support of the search for the Superintendent."

Statement from Darrel Galera:

March 9, 2017

Open Letter Relating to Superintendent Search and Selection Process

The purpose of this letter is to respond to questions and concerns relating to my decision announced on March 6, 2017 **to resign from the Board of Education to apply for state superintendent position.**

Any claim suggesting that the process is anything less than fully transparent, fair, open, and inclusive is erroneous.

My decision to apply for superintendent was my decision alone. It was not discussed with the Governor nor any member of the Board of Education, until I had already made the decision. Learning of my decision was a surprise to the Governor and to Chairperson of the Board of Education. And I believe that both Chair Mizumoto and the Governor would have preferred that I instead continued to serve as a board member. To be clear, there was no plan involving anyone else.

Any perception that the process is “rigged” based on past events is also wrong and erroneous.

(1) The passage of the federal ESSA law took everyone by surprise as did the Governor’s decision to form an education task force. Although I served as the task force chair, **I was not the first choice nor the first person asked to serve as task force chairperson by the Governor.**

(2) Although I was appointed to the Board of Education in October 2016, the new vacancy on the Board of Education in October 2016 was a complete surprise. The Governor did not ask for any board member to resign. **And the rationale for my appointment was in large part to support alignment of the work of the BOE, DOE, and ESSA task force.**

(3) **Although I became a member of the board in October 2016, the discussion and decision to initiate a search for a new superintendent occurred before I joined the Board, before I was assigned to committees, and before I was a voting member of any board committee.** Subsequently, I was part of a small committee to **propose an overall process to be used with the key recommendations being that any such process be fair, transparent, inclusive, and involve a national search. This was preliminary and general planning that in no way provided any advantage.**

(4) I was not a member of the Search Committee. Only the three members of the Board of Education Search Committee were involved in the current search process. This is in compliance with the state Sunshine Law. **The remaining board members, including myself, were not involved in any decisions relating to the criteria, application and selection process prior to the time I announced my decision.** Board members were recently interviewed individually to provide input into desired characteristics for the superintendent position, but I did not participate in such an interview. **To be clear, there was no advantage as a result of my service as a board member.**

These are challenging times where we see national leaders jump to conclusions, make hasty decisions, or quick judgments without first having the important information. So, there are important lessons here on effective communication and for making decisions and forming judgments based on facts and accurate information. This is what an education system should model.

It is important to emphasize that we have a Board of Education comprised of board members with the highest levels of professionalism, integrity, and commitment for what is best for all students. They deserve nothing less than our full confidence, unwavering trust, and deep appreciation for their voluntary service. The search process has been designed and implemented by the Board’s Search Committee with fidelity and integrity. It is a process that ensures transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness. It is essential that we have the strongest pool of qualified applicants, locally and nationally, so that board members and the process set forward can result in the best leader for our public schools.

The vision set forth in the Hawaii Blueprint for Public Education by students, teachers, principals, parents, and community members across the state is a bold and inspiring one. To achieve this vision, it will be essential that we as a statewide community, come together and provide visionary and courageous leadership to provide our students with what they deserve – the best public education system in the nation.

Sincerely,

Darrel Galera

Former member, Hawaii State Board of Education

Mar 8, 2017 / 09:46 PM HST / Updated: Mar 15, 2018 / 04:51 PM HST

Did a Board of Education member who just resigned get an upper hand in his bid to become school superintendent?

How will his former colleagues manage recruiting and hiring for the top job now?

During a short stint on the board, Darrel Galera — who now says he's interested in applying for superintendent — weighed in on how to handle that job becoming vacant, and what steps should be taken in filling the position.

Critics are calling foul, while supporters say it doesn't dampen his qualifications nor the hiring process from here on out.

Gov. David Ige appointed Galera to the Board of Education last October, and by November, Galera was heading an investigative committee on replacing superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, whose term is up June 30, 2017.

Fast forward to this week. Galera now says he's interested in the top job and is stepping down from the board. That's a red flag for some.

"There are rumblings now coming forward in terms of, you've had this situation where this individual participated not only in the removal of the superintendent," said Sen. Jill Tokuda of the Ways and Means Committee, "but in the process of coming up with the prerequisites and qualifications for the selection of the new superintendent."

Galera's supporters see it differently.

"The Darrel Galera I know would never try to manipulate a system," said UH law professor Randy Roth, who has worked with Galera on education reform initiatives and co-founded the Education Institute of Hawaii with Galera. "His nature is that he is very honest, very straightforward."

Senators also have questions for Gov. Ige, who has yet to send Galera and hundreds of other board and commission nominees to the Senate for the advise-and-consent confirmation process, months into the legislative session.

"Nothing is overdue," the governor responded. "The deadline is March 31, and we anticipate getting all names to the Senate by that deadline."

Senators say it's customary to get the names sooner.

"The moment that session is back you should be advise-and-consented and confirmed so it does not cast a shadow of doubt," Tokuda said. "Use of the holdover position should never be abused. It's there so that government can continue to operate, but in the end provide the public as well with the opportunity to weigh in. What we see here though is a real blurring of the lines. You've seen it whether it's the PUC (Public Utilities Commission) or the Board of Education. He's got to answer some questions in terms of where are the nominations and why haven't they come down sooner, especially in light of what has happened over the last few days."

Always Investigating asked the governor, did he appoint Galera to the Board of Education with the intent of him replacing the current superintendent? Ige told us “No.”

We asked the governor when he knew about Galera’s interest in the job. “When Mr. Galera submitted his resignation,” Ige responded.

“Darrel Galera would be a strong candidate for a position like this,” Roth said, “certainly a qualified candidate for a position like this, whether or not he’d ever been on the Board of Education, whether or not he had led the Every Student Succeeds Act committee, whether or not he had served as executive director of the Education Institute of Hawaii, and I could go on. He’s got an impressive list of credentials.

“Frankly the fact that he’s been on the Board of Education for a short period of time I think is irrelevant in terms of his qualifications for this position,” Roth added.

Qualifications aside, some lawmakers have other questions.

“I think there’s a number of major concerns that have been raised here from an ethical perspective,” Tokuda said.

A 2013 ethics advisory says board members need to quit when they decide to apply for a position at their agency.

We asked the Hawaii State Ethics Commission, what does the advisory say as to what the timing should be?

“The commission recognizes it’s not always crystal clear when someone makes a decision to apply for a job,” ethics director Dan Gluck said. “In a case where you have someone who is on a board and is applying for a job with that board, the commission was concerned, there is an inherent conflict. There’s an inherent unfairness in that kind of situation.”

Always Investigating asked, if a candidate didn’t know or intend to apply for a job first, is there a point at which things have gone too far because of participation in key things that shaped the job opening and hiring process?

“I think the state ethics code does a really great job of setting out in broad strokes the kind of behaviors that are acceptable and the kind of behaviors that aren’t,” Gluck said. “We’d have to look into individual circumstances to make a determination.”

The governor told us he encourages Galera to discuss this issue with the Ethics Commission.

“I’m pretty sure that Darrel didn’t agree to be a member of the Board of Education with a goal of getting an advantage later in applying for the position,” Roth said.

Critics of the move, however, also question the board’s role going forward.

“For his former colleagues on the Board of Education, how do they now consider this? They will have to make the decision as to now considering him for the job on the Board of Education. Will they have to recuse themselves?” Tokuda said.

The board declined to answer Always Investigating as to whether they’ll be seeking guidance on recusal, but said of the hiring from here on out: “Mr. Galera will have to go through the same screening process as all other applicants, and every applicant will be considered on an equal playing field.”

The Board statement also said they are “going to continue conducting a search for candidates... with an open and transparent process.”

The governor told Always Investigating: “We are looking for the widest pool of applicants for the superintendent position.”

“A lot of really good visionary educators across the country that would recognize this as the opportunity of a lifetime to turn the entire system right side up in a way that would benefit almost immediately the children of this state,” Roth said. “I would expect a deep pool of applicants for this position.”

We reached out to Galera for comment, but have yet to receive a response.

Oct. 17, 2016 – Darrel Galera appointed to Board of Education; attends first BOE meeting on Oct. 18, 2016.

Oct. 26, 2016 – [BOE considers initiating superintendent search](#), adds item to Nov. 1 agenda.

Nov. 1, 2016 – Decision not to renew Matayoshi confirmed. Galera makes motion to create Investigative Search Committee Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) and volunteers to chair it. ([View the minutes here.](#))

Dec. 6, 2016 – Galera gives [PIG report on superintendent search and process outline](#).

Dec. 20, 2016 – PIG’s recommendations are adopted. Search Committee is created, chaired by Lance Mizumoto, members Patricia Bergin and Ken Uemura.

Jan. 10, 2017 – [PIG submits status report](#).

March 6, 2017 – [Governor announces Galera’s BOE resignation](#), intent to apply for superintendent.

March 7, 2017 – [Board adopts superintendent job description](#) and characteristics. ([View the minutes here.](#))

March 6, 2017

Darrel Galera Resigns From Board Of Ed, Plans To Apply For Superintendent Job

News Release from Office of the Governor, March 6, 2017

HONOLULU – Board of Education member Darrel Galera submitted his resignation to Gov. David Ige on Monday, following Galera's decision to apply for the job of State Superintendent of Hawai'i's public schools.

Gov. Ige appointed Galera to the BOE in October 2016. Galera has also served as the chairperson for the Governor's ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Team since its inception in April 2016.

Galera said he made his decision **to step down from his seat on the BOE after deep reflection**. "It is essential that the BOE's search/selection committee be presented with as large a pool of experienced, qualified and committed applicants as possible, as it makes one of the most important decisions for the future of public education in Hawai'i."

Galera has also requested that he remain as chairperson of the Governor's ESSA Team, as it wraps up its work finalizing the blueprint for Hawai'i's public education and looks toward implementation.

Galera's resignation is effective immediately.

Ige pick quits schools board to seek superintendent's seat

SA: ...Gov. David Ige appointed Galera to the school board in October to fill a vacancy. The governor also tapped Galera last year to lead a 19-member advisory team he tasked with developing a "blueprint" to overhaul the state's public school system.

Galera said his work with the governor's task group helped guide his decision to seek the superintendent post. The plan envisions a school system that better prepares students for an innovation-driven economy and better supports teachers while empowering school leaders and targeting resources at the school level.

"The most asked question we got was, How will we make the vision of the education blueprint a reality? It's clearly on the top of everyone's mind in terms of whether we're just going through an exercise," Galera told the Honolulu Star--Advertiser. "I hope as many people apply as possible who want to help make the vision real."

Before joining the Board of Education, Galera had been an outspoken critic of Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, whose term ends June 30. In 2014 he criticized the department's leadership after a survey he helped conduct of more than 100 DOE principals showed widespread discontent with the state's centralized system of governance....

2016

Superintendent's *Inappropriate Relationship* with Subordinate Becomes a Public Scandal

Jan 27, 2016, Published: A citizen of The Town of Gilbert, AZ addresses the Governing Board of Gilbert Public Schools (GPS) about [a letter from a teacher](#) describing Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's inappropriate relationship with her subordinate, Charles Stevin Smith, Executive Director of Technology, who resigned two days after the letter was published online. The teacher described fear of retaliation as the reason for anonymity. GPS policies prohibit relationships between employees, students and others. This citizens asks, given this situation and breach of public trust, how will the superintendent enforce GPS policies against other employees?

School Sup't Christina Kishimoto Responds to Criticism

Published on Jan 1, 2016:

Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, Gilbert Public Schools, AZ, responds to criticism that she abused her authority by staging repetitious public comments in favor of her Chromebooks initiative when speakers were requested to attend by their GPS supervisors. Kishimoto denies that those comments were coordinated. Kishimoto's emotional outburst included that she felt badgered and attacked. Kishimoto urged board members to get behind her as superintendent, "Unless you want the chaos to continue. We have to walk to a common beat in terms of what you want to see happening...I don't want to sit here and feel like I am being badgered as the leader of this district."

Judge Denies Kishimoto Restraining Order Against Gilbert, AZ resident who was seeking public records

Published on Feb 23, 2015:

Gilbert Public Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto gave false testimony in an ex parte hearing on January 20, 2015. Kishimoto sought to achieve what she could not legitimately do otherwise: retaliate against citizens, shut down public criticism and thwart access to public records. Judge Bruce R. Owens denied her petition.

Not Just Arizona: Hartford, CT Refuses to Renew Kishimoto Contract

Published on Jun 19, 2013 (WTNH) –

The Hartford Board of Education had voted not to renew the contract of school superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto. The Mayor says he is happy with the decision.



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

Testimony II-a

1 message

Sly Clutch <SlyClutch@mail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 1:35 PM

Testimony for agenda II-A

Dear Board of Education,

Please find a competent superintendent that first and foremost, is ethical.

Cynthia Covell, the assistant superintendent for Talent Management covers up illegal misconduct by fellow assistant superintendents and complex area superintendents at all costs.

The covering up in the DOE needs to end.

Mahalo.



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

Testimony

1 message

Elynne Chung <elynn.chung@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 2:30 PM

Testimony regarding agenda item of selection of an interim superintendent for March 18, 2021 Board of Education meeting.

Subject: Testimony**Name, Position, and Organization:** Elynne Chung, Principal, Mililani Middle School, Central District (North), Hawaii Department of Education**Meeting:** Special Meeting (Full Board), Thursday, March 18, 2021, 1:30 p.m. (Meeting number: 182 176 2649)**Agenda Item:** Board Action on Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 92-2.5(b)(1) investigating issues relating to the search for a superintendent, including transition timeline and process, recommendation for an interim superintendent, search timeline and process, and composition of group conducting search.**Position:** Comment

Good Afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education.

I appreciate this opportunity to share professional insights regarding challenges we are facing to find a suitable replacement for Hawaii's Department of Education Superintendent. I am Elynne Chung, Principal, Mililani Middle School, Central District (North).

My testimony today provides the Board's some professional consideration for the selection of our next Superintendent. My comments stem from the fact that the establishment of Hawaii's educational system is founded in the Hawaii Constitution which empowers the Board to appoint a Superintendent of Education. The rights to education afforded to citizens of Hawaii are a state's responsibility and not found in our National Constitution. Furthermore, the State's constitution proclaims that the State shall provide for a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture and history in the public schools. The use of community expertise shall be encouraged as a suitable and essential means in furtherance of the Hawaiian education program.

I encourage the Board to use "community expertise" in consideration for selection of our next Superintendent. This candidate should have the credibility amongst the current leadership within the department and work collectively to bring about real improvements within the department. By

this I mean, have successfully served in various leadership positions (teacher, Principal, Complex Area Superintendent, etc.) within the Hawaii Department of Education. I feel this is fundamental to the Board's commitment to Hawaii's constitution, e.g. use of "community expertise" in the promulgation of the "Hawaiian education program in public schools." The students, families, teachers, principals, and employees of the department deserve a Superintendent who understands Hawaii's diverse culture, and can communicate messages that resonate with the diverse community groups. I consider this a key ingredient for the educational leadership in Hawaii.

I encourage the Board to use "community expertise" in selecting a Superintendent with knowledge and background of our diverse culture, the integral workings of the department, and the uniqueness of our diverse protocols for communication in Hawaii, coupled with the skills, knowledge and abilities to negotiate appropriate agreements and work with the various unions and the BOE, to build, unify and bring about synergistic efforts to improve the educational programs in Hawaii.

I encourage the Board to use "community expertise" in appointing a Superintendent that has worked in Hawaii to establish her/him as leader amongst educators, support personnel, legislators, and communities. A Superintendent that is able to lead the department in an environment of change, diversity, opposing views, and the challenges of restoring credibility of Hawaii's educational program. Appoint a Superintendent that can truly communicate a single vision for Hawaii's education program and unify the different dimensions of the department to focus upon that vision.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board today. I am cognizant of the tremendous task ahead. We, at Mililani Middle School continue to serve on the front line and believe that our schools must provide the educational environment where students' dreams are built ...and learning continues to be by design and not by chance.

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