



David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com>

08/15/2016 08:35 AM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject TESTIMONY: Human Resources
Committee - August 16, 2016

NAME:

David Negaard

MEETING:

Human Resources Committee - August 16, 2016

AGENDA ITEM:

Committee Action on salary adjustments for the Department of Education's Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Complex Area Superintendent

POSITION:

Oppose

Respected Chair DeLima and Human Resources Committee:

My name is David Negaard, and I'm a public school teacher on Maui.

In Sunday's Star Advertiser, writer Nanea Kalani reported that the Department of Education is seeking 4.5% raises for selected senior executives to "assist in recruiting and retaining high quality individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed in the department's leadership positions and drive advancement in the strategic initiatives," as argued by Superintendent Matayoshi. I am unaware of any current or impending staffing shortage in the specified positions, which leads me to question the urgency of this action, which follows on the heels of a 4% raise last year.

These senior executive positions earn six figures and are fully staffed. Why, then, is a raise necessary to recruit and retain? I rather thought the individuals already in those positions were already "high quality individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities" required. Is this a solution in search of a problem?

On the other hand, school opened this year with approximately 600 teaching positions unfilled. That directly impacts many thousands of students daily. If increased compensation is seen as important in "recruiting and retaining high quality individuals," would that not apply equally to teachers, where there is a demonstrable shortage and true urgency. In chronic teacher shortages, we clearly have a problem desperately searching for a solution.

Teachers and the Board must work together to address the several causes of teacher attrition and cannot afford to ignore the importance of compensation among those factors. When Hawai'i public school teacher compensation is 50th in the nation (adjusted for cost of living), it has a significant impact. While most of us teach for the love of our students and our world, love doesn't put food on the table or a roof over our heads, and it is unjust to exploit our love of our work at our considerable expense.

Whatever the committee's action on the proposed compensation increase, I implore the Board to remember the importance of compensation in recruitment and retention in any position, and ally with teachers as they seek to redress the injustice with respect to teacher compensation. The collective voices of teachers and the BoE united are powerful in the Legislature and everywhere.

Together, we can ensure that every public school student in Hawai'i has qualified teachers in every classroom.

Mahalo for your consideration,

--

David Negaard

"Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play." -Heraclitus

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Testimony to the Hawai'i Board of Education

TO: Hon. Brian DeLima, Chair, and Human Resources Committee

Tuesday, August 16, 2016, 9:30 a.m., Queen Liliuokalani Building

Agenda Item: OPPOSE [Committee Action on salary adjustments for the Department of Education's Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Complex Area Superintendent](#)

FROM: Mireille Ellsworth, Teacher, Waiakea High School, Hilo

Dear Chair DeLima and Human Resources Committee:

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, and I'm a teacher at Waiakea High School in Hilo.

Below are a sampling of the many comments on the Star-Advertiser's web page in response to Nanea Kalani's article in Sunday's paper regarding proposed salary increases for the top DOE positions. Notice, there are NO responses in favor of this idea (and I only omitted two which were also negative).

First of all, if I were in a top position in the DOE, I would fire the person hired for public relations for the HIDOE. The public perception of HIDOE leadership is abysmal. While I don't agree with many of the respondents that those in the top positions "do no work," I must wholeheartedly agree that salary increases would be a horrific public relations move, but the justification given that these positions are in any way "hard to fill" is insulting to the hard-working teachers and administrators in the schools, you know, the people who know the students' names and the ones who most influence the actual human development and learning of our island's most precious resource, our keiki.

Perhaps the most revealing thing about this request is the inability of top HIDOE officials to prioritize where resources would best be spent in the HIDOE budget. For Sup. Matayoshi to admit that there is money for these salary increases makes teachers, like me, upset when we are the lowest paid teachers in the nation when taking into consideration the cost of living. Many of us still teaching have sacrificed our own financial security to remain in the classroom in this state. We have endured Furlough Fridays, policies that deny those with master's degrees the opportunity to reclassify, and continued scrutiny using an invalid and unreliable form of evaluation to demonstrate our value.

Peruse the below comments, think about the teacher shortages and crumbling facilities, and ask yourselves, "Is this the right move at this time?" I know your expertise and intelligence will lead you to the right conclusion, "Not now."

Thank you,

Mireille Ellsworth,
Teacher,

Waiakea High School,
Hilo

what says:

August 14, 2016 at 1:04 am

Is this a joke? The kids are sweating in classrooms with no air conditioning, broken desks, and hundred year old overcrowded, over capacity, delapidated buildings, and they want a pay raise?

localguy says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:21 am

“Let them eat cake” is the motto of Kathryn and her deadwood bureaucrats. No leadership skills at all, just career bureaucrats.

allie says:

August 14, 2016 at 9:16 am

agree. There is not any reason to give any of the top leadership raises. They have been very poor leaders and have not improved their performance.

OIOIO says:

August 14, 2016 at 11:51 am

Most of this top heavy system needs to be done away with. Keep the complex area sups but get rid of the rest of the needless bureaucracy

danji says:

August 14, 2016 at 4:50 am

Where does matayoshi have the funds to cover the raises? Was those funds allotted t for something else? And the DOE has to abolish some of these positions which is all internal politics positions. Even Matayoshi’s position is political-what accomplishment has attained so far(none). Isn’t she a lawyer? Anyway this is how our government works just reward complacency.

cojef says:

August 14, 2016 at 5:09 am

State DOE administrators do not make tough decisions, they only follow guidelines dictated by the Federal DOE. Top heavy management positions, half of staff could be eliminated without any affect on administration. They just make sure the “T’s” are crossed and “I’s” are dotted.

Cellodad says:

August 14, 2016 at 9:25 am

Not to defend the denizens of the Lili Bldg. (they don't like me much and the feeling is reciprocated) but your description of the executive process of the HIDEOE is not accurate. You completely fabricated your explanation from the whole cloth. (Please recall the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. The function of the US DOE has historically been hortatory and not prescriptive. With the demise of NCLB, there are fewer sources of federal funding to use as leverage and the function of that Dept. is returning to what it once was.)

localguy says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:10 am

The Nei set a goal for 100% renewable energy. This goal could be achieved today if all the gas coming out of the schools Superintendent office could be harnessed.. Incredible so much gas from one office. Wow.

What schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, a career bureaucrat, willfully fails to understand is pay raises, like respect, must be earned. Not one of the bureaucrats she wants to give a pay raise has done anything to earn it. No reduction of education expenses, no new initiatives which actually work, no real improvement in testing scores. Just shuffle and pass paper, their standard.

I would tell Kathryn she can have the pay raise but to get the money she will have to eliminate enough deadwood BOE/DOE positions to cover the costs. Even then there would still be hundreds of deadwood positions to eliminate.

Lets send a crystal clear message to Kathryn to clean up this mess, have people do their jobs to standard, save taxpayer's money, improve the education experience. After 5 years of vetted progress we'll consider talking about pay raises.

Wazdat says:

August 14, 2016 at 6:01 am

Total WASTE of money !! and a complete JOKE that an Assistant makes that much, INSANE !!

whs1966 says:

August 14, 2016 at 6:06 am

[From the article, "The recommended compensation adjustments will assist in recruiting and retaining high quality individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed in the department's leadership positions and drive advancement in the strategic initiatives," schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi wrote in a memorandum to Brian De Lima, chairman of the board's Human Resources Committee.] Why does this logic hold only for these people but, of course, not for teachers? Do the BOE members and the DOE "leaders" not realize that our public schools began this school year short over 600 teachers? This has been the case for years, even decades, yet these DOE caretakers continue to pretend they are working hard. What nonsense. Exacerbating the teacher shortage is a shortage of qualified substitute teachers. Since long-term subs earn the same base daily salary they earn for short term assignments but are expected to

work much harder, few subs are willing to fill these critical long-term sub assignments. Q: Who loses? A: Our public school student. Shame on Matayoshi and her gang of do-nothings. It's no wonder the governor has gone to outsiders like Darrel Galera's group to explore ways to improve the DOE.

localguy says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:15 am

Nothing but bureaucratic spin from Kathryn. Just bureaucrats helping fellow bureaucrats rip off taxpayers. Way too much deadwood leeching off of taxpayers.

Pay raises, like respect, must be earned. Never happens with loser educational bureaucrats. They mistakenly feel it is their birthright to always receive undeserved pay raises.

We should set standards for pay raises to only equal to match the ones given to federal workers. No reason at all to waste more money on our never ending educational money pit.

americantaxpayer says:

August 14, 2016 at 6:33 am

One would think we'd already have a moratorium on any new tax until we get our fiscal house in order. We can't even pay enough in taxes to cover the city and county for rail and now DOE wants to further tax our hard earned income to be used for senior leadership raises just to stay even with other salaries! Are they serious? Those in charge are heading us down a path widening the gap between the have's and have not's. Worst part it isn't even based on their job performance....AUWE!

LittleEarl_01 says:

August 14, 2016 at 6:34 am

"Six assistant superintendents and 15 complex-area superintendents." Top heavy I would say. Why do the superintendents need assistants? Just do your job.

wunnee says:

August 14, 2016 at 7:34 am

Agreed, and that's the tip of the iceberg. Recently there was an article about a teacher shortage. The reality is that the most expensive of the 13,500 teachers are not in the classroom at all or full time. Many of these "teachers" spend their time fulfilling DOE executive agendas thereby covertly shifting personnel cost onto HSTA and shielding DOE leadership from accountability. This dysfunction is prevalent at the school level all the way to State level offices.

localguy says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:29 am

Exactly. 21 pure deadwood, do nothing, shuffle paper, look busy, make work, bureaucratic positions ripe for elimination. With all the money saved more school supplies could be purchased, putting the students needs as number one.

Truth is the Nei's educational bureaucracy is unmatched. So much money wasted on obtuse bureaucrats. No one really has a credible job to directly assist students and teachers in the classroom. Bureaucrats coasting to retirement.

Sad to say Kathryn is not putting the needs of students before hers. All about taking care of #1.

Txpyer says:

August 14, 2016 at 7:10 am

What the heck?! The DOE has more important issues to resolve such cooling schools, restoring classrooms, filling vacant teacher positions, etc. Stop fattening the fat at the top! Better yet, get rid of the executives that failed to resolve these long standing issues.

roxie says:

August 14, 2016 at 7:47 am

DOE Admin is extremely top heavy....teachers who are in the trenches are the ones that should be receiving the raises....look at the shortage of 600+ teachers. I have to put blame on administration for not coming up with a comprehensive plan to fill these vacancies. This is inexcusable and some heads should roll. According to my family members whom are teachers have stated that a lot of incompetent teachers go into administration because they can't cut it in the classroom, which makes incompetent administrators.

hawn says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:08 am

The state Department of Education says it's seeking 4.5 percent raises for more than 20 senior executives to help with recruitment and retention, and to keep up with raises awarded to school principals. The recommended compensation adjustments will assist in recruiting and retaining high quality individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed in the department's leadership positions and drive advancement in the strategic initiatives,"

"We're hopeful that the Board will acknowledge the work of the executive and complex-area teams and match the raises that HGEA provides to its members,"

The past twenty years the DOE hasn't been able to recruit and retain high quality individuals executives. What good work has the executive and complex teams done in the past twenty years. The whole public school system is a total failure. The only ones that the DOE has recruited and retained are the incompetent ones that could never make it in the private sector or the incompetent ones that got jobs as political favors. Why do they deserve a pay raise just because the principals got a raise, they were not deserving of a raise.

If the DOE was a private sector employer they would be out of business a long time ago, they are top heavy with incompetent personnel too high paid and the sad part of above it all most of the product they produce is of low quality.

Bdpapa says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:32 am

Absolutely not! Until they decrease the layers of bureaucracy they should get nothing. They spend too much money on administrative expenses.

Cellodad says:

August 14, 2016 at 9:36 am

(It might come as something of a surprise to find out that the State of Hawaii has among the lowest costs as regards the administration of education in the US. That's primarily because, with a single statewide educational entity, you don't find the administrative duplication present in states with bunches of school districts, boards of education, superintendents in each county and township, duplication of infrastructure and services, etc. (please recall: I'm no fan of the present structure of the HIDOE but I am rather partial to accuracy.))

kimo says:

August 14, 2016 at 8:56 am

Absolutely no! As everyone in this forum is saying, the DOE executives are a farce. Get rid of them all, their staff, their buildings and offices, their maintenance costs. Take the huge savings and pump it back into the schools. Let the principals organize a leadership team that manages system-wide governance as part of their duties. End the outdated, unresponsive, ineffective, costly bureaucracy now!

Cellodad says:

August 14, 2016 at 9:30 am

I recall sitting in the Lili Bldg. having a sandwich with then Supt. LeMahieu in 2000. In the course of our lunch, he told me that one of his goals was that school principals would be the highest-paid employees in the HIDOE since they were the administrative component that had the most impact on children and schools. It seems that during the last decade-and-a-half, that's an idea that has undergone a quiet death.

(He also had a plan to bring payroll and personnel procedures into the 20th century and get rid of the 3 x 5 index card system. I guess that didn't work either.)

Cellodad says:

August 14, 2016 at 9:42 am

(Whoops, sorry: "21st century") (If you really want to see the ugliness of sausages being made, find a way to look at the various unconnected components of the HIDOE administrative IT structure. Personnel, Payroll, Payments, Procurement, etc. It's a real banana republic mess.)

den says:

August 14, 2016 at 10:58 am

what the hell?

JustMyTwoPennies says:

August 14, 2016 at 11:03 am

“... will assist in recruiting and retaining ...”

1) How many people in these high paying six-figure salary positions actually leave?

Let's see some statistics.

2) If anyone actually leaves one of those positions, how hard is it to recruit one of their friends?

Let's see some numbers on how long one of these positions actually stays unfilled.

gmejk says:

August 14, 2016 at 11:25 am

Agree. What a joke. If one of those administrators are ever out, is their absence even felt by any teacher or student? Felt like the absence of an actual teacher in a classroom? Several friends of mine have children in classrooms that were staffed in school year 2015-16 by a substitute teacher with absolutely NO knowledge of the subject. They were being given worksheets and videos to watch over and over with no real instruction. This because they could not find a qualified science teacher to put in the classroom. That absence of a qualified teacher is more necessary to fill than some administrator in an office far from the real business of the job, which is educating the kids.

hilofokes says:

August 14, 2016 at 2:05 pm

“A number of educational officers are compensated at salaries higher than leadership employees and it is equitable to maintain appropriate pay relationships.” “We're hopeful that the Board will acknowledge the work of the executive and complex-area teams and match the raises that HGEA provides to its members.”

Oh boy. Sure sounds terrific. IF there were any sense at all that the DOE is at all functional. Teacher shortage. A/C. Not to mention student/school achievement. Anyone out there – besides DOE administrators and principals – who would say that the schools are performing at acceptable levels?

Absolutely no to these pay raises. And too bad it sounds like the “educational officers” succeeded in negotiating their pay raises already.



Lisa Morrison <lamorrison17@gmail.com>

08/15/2016 02:26 PM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc

Subject Testimony for HR Committee
regarding Salary Adjustments for
Superintendents

Honorable Chair Brian De Lima and Human Resources Committee Members,

My name is Lisa Morrison and I teach 8th grade at Maui Waena Intermediate School. Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to raising the salaries of Hawaii's superintendents.

Some teachers hope this will be the year the Department is willing to address the pay inequity that places Hawaii's teacher salaries at the very bottom nationwide, when adjusted for cost-of-living. For those who most closely effect the education of Hawaii's 180,000 students, it is painfully clear that the state's compensation priorities have not aligned with its Strategic Plan goal of "Staff Success," whose purpose is "to attract, prepare, and retain the best teachers."

While improving teacher salaries might not be a widely shared goal, improving learning conditions for students should be, which means providing students with well-qualified teachers who will remain in Hawaii classrooms because there is incentive to do so.

It's disheartening that the focus instead is on giving raises to more than 20 of the highest paid employees in the district, supposedly to "assist in recruiting and retaining high quality individuals," when these top-level executives already have a beginning salary that puts them in the top 10% of wage earners nationally. The Department fails to see the efficacy of higher pay when it comes to recruiting and retaining quality teachers, and this blindness has resulted in record high vacancies in teaching positions statewide across diverse subjects. That translates to thousands of students who sit in classes every day without a qualified teacher.

Let's consider the significance of the terms "recruit" and "retain" for a moment. Are these 6-figure superintendent jobs hard-to-fill positions? Is any one of the individuals currently holding these positions threatening to leave because they just can't make ends meet? And how is it that the Department has existing funds to cover these proposed increases, when they are simultaneously asking for cuts in other areas? Is it because the DOE is saving a bundle in compensation and benefits on the more than 600 still-vacant teaching positions, some of which are currently filled with poorly paid substitutes and emergency hires?

During the last legislative session, HSTA supported legislation that would have provided funding directly for education to address facilities, class sizes, support for small and rural schools, as well as teacher recruitment and retention through higher salaries. I witnessed one of the executives now being considered for a raise stammer without an adequate answer when House Education Committee Chair Roy Takumi asked if the Department could handle receiving this extra money for education. The extra money isn't needed at the top, but you'll find no such hesitation among teachers when you ask them if they could handle more money to do their job.

Please support significant salary increases for those working directly with students, not the executives who lack vision for what is really needed to improve student outcomes.

Mahalo,

Lisa Morrison

Maui Waena Intermediate

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cheryl burghardt <wgcb16@aol.com>

08/15/2016 01:35 PM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Testimony regarding increased pay for employees HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE ITEM 2

Dear Board of Education Members,

As a retired elementary teacher with 40 years experience, including here in Hawai'i, you know I can tell you stories about how the pay for teachers has always been a struggle to get a livable, professional wage. I've heard every argument for the reasons that have kept teachers' wages low. I've stood and written letters and went to legislators and boards. I've taken pay cuts, had no pay and had most of the insurance and other benefits eliminated while the work load got greater. This is something that you are all aware of as well. So I am not going to repeat all of those things.

Instead I am going to offer up these thoughts as you ponder the Superintendents' request for higher pay. Superintendent Matayoshi is the head of a huge system and I believe her pay should match that of other CEO's in similar work. It is even feasible that the Asst. Superintendents should be thought of in the same way. Our Hawai'i system is huge. As you filter through the system, there are even more people who earn over \$100,000 including building principals. What do I say? Good for them! Maybe it is the right amount of pay for what they do in their jobs.

However,

Every person in the system has an important job and each person's work links with someone else's to keep the system moving forward. How is it that the people farthest away from the children for whom the system is supposed to work get the MOST money allocated to their jobs. How is it that the people who sit in offices and rarely spend time near a classroom of our most vital keiki get paid the most? It has been that way since the first day I taught in the 1970's and continues today. The question remains why? How is it that a system can allow those who work most closely, daily basis, to be the poorest paid in the system? After 40 years of teaching, my highest amount ever for one year was \$50,000 which included paying for a percentage of my benefits. It included all of the extra professional development and a Master's degree. I wonder why the teaching profession is always at the bottom of the line for pay and what we do get we have to fight for and be accused of hurting the children.

So what do I suggest? Give the Superintendent etc. their pay raise under the condition that they work along with all of you to raise the amount of pay that other employees receive as well. Work with all other employees to find the monies and get public support for those people who work daily with our children. Here is a link that is not specific to education but to business but I think that it speaks well to the task at hand. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/252039> Three reasons to increase pay: 1. It will help keep and recruit talent 2. It improves employee satisfaction 3) It improves your company brand (in this case attitude towards DOE from community) Instead of a BOE/Supt. adversarial role with the HSTA and others, come up with a way to find the monies to truly pay educators a living wage. If Supt. Matayoshi can find the funds for their raises, then I am sure she can find the monies for everyone else as well. It's time that Hawai'i took the lead in showing people how much we respect our educators and children.

Mahalo for reading my comments.

Cheryl Burghardt

Retired educator , Community member

PS One last thought on our system. RIGHT NOW we are short teachers in classrooms. WHY

aren't all people with licenses working in the DOE right now in classrooms with kids? What is more important data collection or our children. Get the coaches out of offices and back in classrooms. Principals can teach. Get someone to fix the DOE's antiquated system of putting people on a list and get people hired and in classrooms. **KIDS SHOULD COME FIRST.**

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