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September 1, 2017

The Honorable Brian De Lima
Chairperson, Human Resources Committee
Board of Education
PO Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804



RE: Testimony in Support of HR Committee Agenda Item III.A: Committee Action on
Committee strategic priorities for the 2017-2018 school year

Chair De Lima and Members of the Committee,

Teach For America - Hawai'i (TFA Hawai'i) supports HR Committee Chairperson De Lima's recommendation to adopt the strategic priorities presented for decision on September 5, 2017.

Providing an excellent education for all students requires sustained partnership and support from a broad and diverse coalition. TFA Hawai'i is proud to be a long standing partner of the Department of Education in working to recruit, develop, and support a network of leaders committed to educational equity. This includes supporting teachers in the classroom and alumni pursuing careers as school administrators, state-level leaders, and other positions of influence.

Several proposed priorities resonate with our organization. First, we appreciate your recognition that addressing teacher vacancies is a complex and widespread problem that requires monitoring, creative solutions, and partnerships. TFA Hawai'i invests significant resources into helping find, place, and mentor outstanding new teachers committed to serving in hard to fill positions. To that end, we work closely with our teachers and partners to engage students in teaching as a career choice. We also encourage strong kama'āina and Native Hawaiian candidates to positively impact their communities by joining the teaching profession.

Second, we share your interest in protecting our special education and English language learner populations. While TFA Hawai'i endeavors to provide our teachers with the support necessary to succeed in any placement, we remain sensitive to the need to invest additional resources and support to serve our most vulnerable students. We support any effort to ensure that systemic disadvantages do not impede the educational opportunities open to these students.

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Finally, we support your efforts to strengthen leadership pipelines. Given our commitment to developing leaders that will continue to advocate for students throughout their lifetimes, TFA Hawai'i values the partnership of the Department of Education and the Board of Education in helping to expand opportunities for passionate and effective educators to serve students at all levels of leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. We look forward to continuing to partner towards the vision that one day, all students will have access to an excellent education.

Mahalo,

Jill Baldemor
Executive Director
Teach For America - Hawai'i

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