



From: Jennifer Luke Payne <jennifer.luke_payne@k12.hi.us>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Date: 09/17/2019 02:07 PM
Subject: Testimony against COW recommendation Small School Equity For General Business Meeting

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jennifer Luke-Payne, I am the principal over Ka`a`awa Elementary School. I am against the Committee on Weights recommendations to establish a threshold enrollment level. A threshold doesn't take into consideration all the positive things that a small school is. During a time where the DOE is being criticized for over suspending students last school year, my small school had only 10 office referrals. While people ask how we can increase inclusion practices, my small school has over 90% inclusion rate. Instead of looking at small schools as a burden, why not support small schools and use us as training grounds for best practices, piloting new initiatives, or out of the box ideas? Education in Hawai'i wasn't created for economics, it was created to sustain our society and give our future leaders a chance. Please look for a better option than setting a threshold that will damage communities and, in turn, have our students lose their sense of place.

Mahalo

Jennifer Luke-Payne

Principal Ka`a`awa Elementary School

Vision

Ka`a`awa Elementary School students will leave a legacy by leading with greatness.

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darlene yoshizumi <dsy5472@aim.com>

09/17/2019 09:28 PM

To
testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us

[REDACTED]
boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us,
Subject Testimony - Sharon Takamori -

Waiahole/Waikane Community Assoc.
Member - WSF Fund Allocation

I strongly oppose the Committee on Weights (COW) formula. Waiahole & Kaaawa Elementary Schools needs to remain open for the community and children.

I strongly believe that "pork" can be found for this issue. This is a heartstring issue, not a political issue.

We pray you work towards total support to have Waiahole & Kaaawa Elementry Schools remain open at all cost and funding. Our kids need you to help them!!

Sincerely and God Bless,
Sharon (Matayoshi) Takamori
72 year old former student of Waiahole Elementary School

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September 17, 2019

To whom it may concern:

I am a resident of Waiahole Valley and attended Waiahole Elementary School from 1953 until 1963. This school has fostered many fond memories, especially the close friendships I made with my classmates and the close ties I have with the people and Ohana of the valley.

Waiahole Elementary School is a very important part of our community. The unique closeness we have with everyone in the school from faculty to staff, and children, helps us to work together in harmony. The small class sizes help the teachers to reach out to the students. Because we live in a generation that harbors a lot of single parent, multi-family involvement, the teachers are important to reach out to the students that need that one on one help. It can only be achieved by small class sizes.

I believe that to merge schools together would be detrimental to the learning environment. I believe that the teachers consider themselves a very important asset to our community and would oppose the merger. Being a part of the generation from the past, I know we need to train students that hard work is important, good attitudes about the school and teachers needs to be fostered, and most importantly, we need to instill in the hearts of our children that the community is the heart and soul of what living in Hawaii is about.

Our bonds, our ties, start from our community, the schools are the backbone of our community as they train our young ones to be proud of where they live and support the efforts of our community based Ohana. Family and cultural ties start from the schools and are very important to our community as a whole. Let us not move to consolidate small schools but seek to see value in them.

Thank you for your time,

Norman Sadoyama



Brittany Waracka
<brittanywaracka@gmail.com>
09/17/2019 08:36 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject Against minimum headcount

Aloha,

I am writing opposing to the public school minimum headcount. I was born and raised in Ka'a'awa and attended Ka'a'awa elementary school. Attending a small community elementary school has shaped me into the person I am today and am so blessed for that.

I am 100% against the headcount minimum because public schools should be about providing education to our Keiki and ensuring they are an environment where they can flourish. The public school system shouldn't be about making money and/or reaching quotas. When did our Keiki become a "headcount" oppose to our living & breathing future of Hawai'i? If this minimum headcount were to pass, there would not only be many vital schools that would be shut down but then principals and educators would be more concerned with just "reaching headcount" then their actual purpose and mission. In addition, this would bring more burden to the communities where the small schools are shut down and make "living in Hawai'i" harder than it already is.

Please do not move forward with this.

Mahalo,

Brittany Hopkins

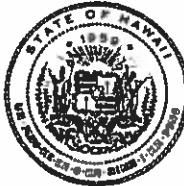
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**

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WAIAHOLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
48-215 WAIAHOLE VALLEY RD.
KANEOHE, HI 96744

DR. CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO
SUPERINTENDENT

Alexandra Obra, Principal
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Name: Alexandra Obra, Waiāhole Elementary School Principal
Meeting: General Business Meeting
Agenda Item: Committee on Weights Recommendations (Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board Members,

My name is Alexandra Obra, Proud Principal of Waiāhole Elementary School located in Ko'olaupoko. Waiāhole Elementary School was established in 1883 during the reign of King David Kalākaua with the mission to educate the valley's rural population, offering farming courses as well as standard subjects. Today, we provide a quality education and safe environment for approximately 100 students in Grades PreK-6, many who are children and grandchildren of those who attended Waiāhole many years ago.

I am vehemently opposed to the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendation to establish a threshold enrollment count which would define a school as "viable" or not. Small schools have long held a special place in the histories of our communities. To use a predetermined enrollment figure as the sole deciding factor to close a school is to negate the tireless efforts and hard work of school staff who have created viable learning experiences for its students.

Based on the work and the research that I have done, I have several recommendations for the Committee on Weights and the Board of Education to consider. They are as follows:

- **Establish a definition for small schools that recognizes Hawai'i's Unique School Characteristics** - There is a need to establish a definition for small schools that recognizes the characteristics of Hawaii's communities, small to large, have helped determine the attributes of individual schools. As a whole, the Castle Complex is an aging community. Currently, we have five out of eight elementary schools (including Waiāhole) that would not meet the "average effective enrollment size" of 300-400 students. There is a need to understand that a small school in Hawai'i is different from a small school on the mainland. We also need to consider that a small urban school is different from a small rural school which is different from a small, remote rural school. The small school definition should include an affirmation of small school contributions and a commitment to their continued existence.
- **Allow small rural elementary schools to apply for WSF Superintendent Reserve Funding** - Currently, "remote schools" is defined as "DOE operated schools that contain a high school and are located at least one hour away from the next nearest public high school." We need to redefine what it means to be a "remote school" and perhaps include small rural elementary schools to the current definition.

I am frustrated that we are no longer able to apply for the WSF Superintendent Reserve funding. In the past, I have requested WSF Superintendent Reserve funding for one teacher position. We should not have to have a conversation every year about how many teachers can be purchased with our WSF budget. Do rural remote elementary schools need \$250,000 in WSF reserve funding? If less funding is given to rural remote elementary schools, funding can also be given to other rural small elementary schools.

- **Provide equitable funding for small schools** - Currently, funding for small schools is inequitable. Small schools deserve equitable funding and the following needs to be considered: 1) Add on additional weights for small schools, 2) Give small schools a WSF budget which would allow us to have one teacher per grade level, and 3) Provide and allocate District/State resources for small schools to "re-design" so that we can increase our student enrollment.

Our school community believes that Waiāhole Elementary School is at the heart of the community. If Waiāhole should ever be consolidated, our 136 year historical connection to the people, past, and present, would be lost and may soon fade from the community's collective memory. This would be a tragedy! Small schools require adequate funding to enable them to implement their school designs with the integrity which community stakeholders developed and continue to construct a plan for sustainability.

It is not fair to tell small schools to increase our student enrollment, find our school design and not be given the resources that we need to do our "day-to-day" work with our students. Our students deserve access to the best education.

I am extending an invitation to any Board of Education member who would like to visit Waiāhole Elementary School to hear and see the stories of our students, teachers, staff, 'ohana and community. We may be a small school but we are a small school with a big heart and we do what we do for our keiki! I am available for further discussion and questions. I can be contacted via email: aobra@waiahole.k12.hi.us or at 239-3111. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Ms. Alexandra Obra
Waiāhole Elementary School
Proud Principal

'A'ohē hana nui ke alu 'ia -- No task is too big when done together
Mary Kawena Pukui

Amarilis Acevedo, PreK SpEd Teacher
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

9/17/2019

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Amarilis Acevedo. I am the Preschool/ Special Education Teacher at Waiahaole Elementary school. I am opposed to the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendation that would establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools. Student enrollment numbers are not the only characteristics that define a school. Thus, student enrollment should not be the only aspect that is considered when deciding whether to consolidate or close a school. At Waiahole Elementary School we provide equitable access to a quality public education, and we strive toward an excellent instruction. Each day the staff excels with their passion for teaching. We serve many students and we have crucial relationships with our thriving community. The general funds that could be spent on students are often taken just to maintain current programs. Our community students also deserve to have what a larger school have.

Sincerely,
Amarilis Acevedo
Preschool/ Special Education Teacher

September 16, 2019

To, The Board of Education,

I am writing to you to show my support for small schools just like our wonderful school, Waiahole Elementary.

Being a teacher, who attended a small school in England, it is a pleasure and an honor to continue to work in the close-knit, family orientated environment that small schools create. Our students here have wonderful social and leadership skills and are nurtured by a loving and devoted community both on campus and off - something that is not always possible on this scale in such large schools. Children who are a part of this community have a stronger sense of personal responsibility for their local area and people and therefore have a deep respect and love for it.

In our small school, every member of staff and faculty know the students by name. They know about their families and how to help each student be successful academically and otherwise. Because we take the time to know each student, we all take part in activities together and the children know each other from grade to grade, fostering wonderful friendships across all ages.

As a Special Education teacher, I feel the benefits of small schools for our keiki are paramount. The staff are able to work so closely as a team to ensure every child is making growth and progress, holistically. We also have the unique ability to work as a whole school team to ensure we are all 'on the same page' when supporting each other and our students.

In my opinion, even the consideration of closing or consolidating small schools is such a sad and scary thought. There are so many benefits which stretch so much further than the academic. Although this of course is important, holistically nurturing our keiki; socially and emotionally and training them to be active members of their community, leaders and successful people is something that small schools will always succeed in, when others can't.

Respectfully,



Mrs E. Alago

Pamela Alo, Grade 4 Teacher
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 17, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in support of small schools and how the discussion and consequent decision to establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools will negatively impact the education of the communities surrounding Wai'ahole and Ka'a'awa.

Every child in our country is entitled to the best education s/he can get. With that being said, the curriculum and learning opportunities provided at Wai'ahole carries a sense of culture and place. This design supports the heart of our community, many of whom has gone through generations of residents from Wai'ahole. The community of Wai'ahole consists of mainly farmers with a strong sense of community, as witnessed when water rights were threatened to be taken away in the 70s. These people are equally passionate about the education of their keiki.

Not everything can be measured by a set number. If it were that simple, numbers would also be created for the maximum number of students at schools and new schools built to take in the excess. There comes a point when education needs to return to what is important...our keiki and providing the best education we can.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pamela L. Alo
Teacher
Wai'ahole Elementary School

Julieta Antone-Nagata, Community
Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

9/16/19

Dear Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto (Superintendent)

&
Phyllis Umebasami (Deputy Superintendent)

We Ben Nagata & Julieta Antone-Nagata,
both oppose the Weighted Student Formula
& Committee of Weights.

All Julieta Antone-Nagata attended Waialole
since Kindergarten. There has been three
generations attending Waialole school.

I attended Waialole thru 9th grade.

Thanks for your attention to this matter

Sincerely, B.T. Nagata

Julieta Antone-Nagata

Shannah-Li Brown-Santiago,
Educational Assistant
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Name: Shannah-Li Brown-Santiago, Waiahole Elementary Educational Assistant

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: Committee on Weights Recommendations (Small Schools Equity)

Position: Opposed

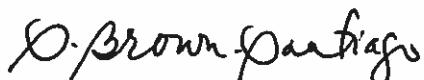
September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board Members,

My name is Shannah-Li Brown-Santiago Educational Assistant at Waiahole Elementary School. For the last six years, I have had the opportunity to be a staff member of Waiahole Elementary's small school community. With our enrollment at approximately 100 students in grades PreK-6 it has allowed me to meet and interact with all students, their families, faculty and staff. When you think of small schools many have the misconception, less students, less work, but it's quite the opposite. As a small school, we understand the importance of each student because each student matters. Our faculty and staff come to the table with an open-mind, expertise, and personal experience to bridge the gaps, align philosophies, curriculum and teaching practices. We have learned to work within our budget without losing quality educational opportunities for our students. We have done this by reaching out to our community members to share their knowledge with our students through hawaiian studies, music, arts ,aquaponics, and farming. Thus showing how small schools are such an important and integral part of the community.

Our small school community of Waiahole has allowed our students to foster citizenship, leadership, and social emotional skills through student engagement. It has provided our students the opportunity to have a voice in school leadership. Being engaged in their school community has allowed them to feel a sense of belonging and personal responsibility to their community.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Shannah-Li Brown-Santiago
Waiahole Elementary School
Educational Assistant

Carlo Caruso, Parent
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

To whom it may concern,

It has recently come to my attention that the Board of Education is visiting the subject of small school equity and in particular drafting a policy to establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools. The issue of allocating funds within a school system is a difficult one and it is reasonable to undertake an assessment of how to best serve the students of Hawaii with the funds available. However, as a parent of students in the public school system and former public school educator myself, I would like to comment because I am concerned about what is intended. The recommendation from the Committee on Weights mentions "the policy should be clear about the Board actions that are triggered when enrollment is below a specific threshold". It is unclear to me what actions are being considered or what is envisioned generally. Actions such as campaigns to increase enrollment in small schools through community and parental engagement or development of magnet programs within small schools (such as offering Hawaiian Language Studies) to attract additional students would be reasonable and welcome. Actions such as forced consolidation of schools districts or closing schools with long histories and deep community integration would not.

Although not inherent in the definition, "specific threshold" would seem to imply a discrete fixed number of students and news reports have cited a "minimum headcount". If so, I find this highly problematic. Community cohesiveness affects education and children's wellbeing. Any threshold metric being considered should be dynamic and should include context such as the distance of the community to other schools and the history of the school within the community. Bussing students away from their home to place them in a larger school has a negative impact on those students and therefore is not equitable in terms of educational opportunity. A minimum headcount is a 'one-size fits all' approach that ignores the characteristics of the community served as well as trends in enrollment and performance. While it may be desirable to take some type of action in the case of schools with ever shrinking enrollment, what would be the plan of action for a school with a small student body but growing enrollment? For example, over the last 14 years (the period for which I have data), I calculated that the positive trend in enrollment numbers at one of the smallest schools, Waiahole Elementary, is highly statistically significant ($Pr < 0.0000000003$) even though total enrollment is less than 100. Would the policy be to close such a school that is undeniably growing in enrollment over the past decade?

I believe we should actually be striving to have smaller schools generally. There are numerous reasons I believe this, based on personal pedagogical philosophy, my own experiences as a student and teacher, and research into the optimal conditions for children's wellbeing, but I think the following situation captures much of that as well as my previous point about community cohesion. We are aware of the deeply disturbing trend of mass school shootings in the United States. It seems apparent that these events could happen anywhere now. Except that they don't. The data clearly show that they happen at larger schools, not at smaller ones¹. Here in Hawaii, we talk about the importance of 'ohana and the strength gained through the interpersonal connections of community. Those are features of small schools. I am opposed to closing schools based on a fixed enrollment cutoff. I am deeply opposed to closing schools with long histories and deep community ties. I wholly support actions to increase community support and enrollment at smaller schools and believe this is where DOE should focus attention and effort when it comes to the issue of small school viability and equity.

¹Baird, A. & Roellke, Emma & Zeifman, Debra. (2017). Alone and adrift: The association between mass school shootings, school size, and student support. The Social Science Journal. 10.1016/j.soscij.2017.01.009.

Sincerely,



Carlo Caruso

September 18, 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

We, as the cafeteria staff of Waiahole Elementary School, are writing this letter in opposition of merging and/or closing this school. With over 40 years of combined service at this school, we feel we know what this school means to the staff, the students, and the community.

Waiahole is more than just a school to this community. It is a historical landmark and an anchor for all of those who have grown up and lived here. It acts a community center, bringing people together with a common desire to raise their children with the values and traditions of this community. Schools are encouraged to cultivate their unique cultures within the contexts of their communities. Waiahole Elementary has done this and we would hate to see that uniqueness sacrificed by asking our students to acclimate to another school.

We know the greater community supports Waiahole Elementary. Just this past weekend, we had a well attended beautification day sponsored by our local businesses. The results can be seen in all of the beautiful paintings the volunteers and the children designed and painted all over our campus.

Our campus also housed one of the only two EOEL preschool programs in the Castle-Kahuku Complex. Preschool children are an underserved population in our state and we need to retain what few programs we have. This program provides early intervention so vital to the students at risk in our community.

We also fear the potential negative effects on our students and our families. With a greater distance to travel to school comes the risk of an increased absenteeism rate, less family involvement, and less time for students to spend with family in the evening or to do homework.

In closing, we'd like to express our love and loyalty for and to Waiahole Elementary. We, like those in this community, consider it our home. We are grateful for the opportunity to work at this school and to serve the students and families in this community. We look forward to working here for many years to come.

Mahalo for considering our perspective.

Darryl Chun – Cafeteria Manager

Darryl Chun, School Food Service Manager

General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Jeffrey Lapilio – Cafeteria Baker

Jeffrey Lapilio, School Baker

General Business Meeting

Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)

Position: Strongly Opposed

Ryan Nekonishi – Cafeteria Cook

Ryan Nekonishi, School Cook

General Business Meeting

Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)

Position: Strongly Opposed

Cheryl Kim – Cafeteria Helper

Molly O'Dell – Cafeteria Van Drive

Molly O'Dell, Van Driver

General Business Meeting

Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)

Position: Strongly Opposed

Cheryl Kim, Meal Prep

General Business Meeting

Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)

Position: Strongly Opposed

Holly deMello, Grandparent
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 17, 2019

Board of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To whom it may concern:

I am so thankful that my grandson is able to attend Waiahole Elementary School. The history of the school is very personal to me. My mother, Kathleen deMello, used to substitute at this very same elementary school. So, for my grandson to attend preschool at this school has come full circle, which happens so often in Hawaii.

I am confident that he is getting the best education possible because of the school size. It doesn't mean that a good education is not possible with a larger student body because my other grandchildren have attended larger schools and are doing fine, but I do feel that there needs to be a blend of both. What the neighborhoods surrounding these schools have done naturally by growing an older population shouldn't be tampered with because these same neighborhoods will fill with young generations again, filling the school to its' full capacity once more. It is like the ebb and flow of the tides at our beaches.

From the very first day at Waiahole Elementary School, my grandson was greeted by name from teachers and staff. It is almost impossible to get such an ohana atmosphere from the beginning elsewhere, and this is what this school specializes in. Everyone there exemplifies what it means to be an administrator, teacher, staff member, and

maintenance employee. It is like being home, and I am so appreciative that my grandson has the opportunity to attend school here.

To bring this full circle again, my father, Milton S. deMello, was an educator in many capacities here in Hawaii. As children, we attended a one-room school on Molokai, the only school on Lanai, and other small elementary schools on Oahu. When it came time to attend larger public schools, I felt lost. Not all children do well in the hustle and bustle, while others excel. There has to be a blend of both in all grades so everyone has the best chance to be excellent in their particular gifts. We need our small schools. Maybe we should be looking at everything that Waiahole Elementary School and other small schools have to offer, letting them serve as models for larger schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly M deMello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Holly" and "deMello" connected by a single stroke.

Holly M. deMello

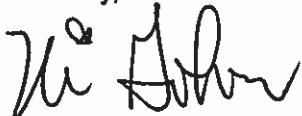
September 18, 2019

U'i Gohier, PPT
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is U'i Gohier, PPT at Waiāhole Elementary School. I am strongly opposed to the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendation to establish a threshold enrollment count which would define a school as "viable" or not. Small schools have long held a special place in the histories of our communities. To use a predetermined enrollment figure as the sole deciding factor to close a school is to negate the tireless efforts and hard work of school staff who have created viable learning experiences for its students.

Sincerely, -



U'i Gohier
PPT

Lisha Hendrick, Grade 2 Teacher
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed
September 17, 2019

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am writing in support of Waiahole Elementary School, hoping that this letter will encourage you to support the continuation of our unique small-community school into the future.

I have been teaching at Waiahole Elementary School for 13 years. Our enrollment numbers (below 100) allows our faculty and staff to know the names of each and every student at Waiahole. This fosters a strong sense of belonging in our students, they know that they are cared about the moment they step onto our campus.

In addition, our small enrollment size leads to small class size. Teachers are able to work with students in small groups and meet with every student or nearly every student every day, differentiating to meet each student's unique needs. This is highly effective for reaching our struggling learners.

Please don't let our keiki fall through the cracks by forcing them into much larger schools!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Lisha Hendrick



September 17, 2019

I oppose that the Board review the HAR Chapter 38 to draft a Board policy that establishes a threshold enrollment for viable small schools. The policy should not distinguish a standard number for Board actions that are triggered when enrollment is below a specific threshold. Small schools should not be evaluated solely based on enrollment numbers. We are more than just a number!

I am a proud graduate of Waiahole Elementary, my son graduated from Waiahole last year, and my two sons are currently enrolled in Waiahole. Waiahole Elementary is a small school that is rich in culture, sense of belonging, and enriched education. Waiahole provides a special environment that allows the student body to build upon each other's strengths to succeed in their education.

Schools should not be rated solely based on a number, but all factors should be considered. The quality of the environment is essential for student success. Our students have adequate support to focus on their strengths and build up their weaknesses. Everyone knows each other by name, no one gets lost in the crowd or in the hustle and bustle of the day. They feel safe and included regardless of their differences.

Our students build confidence in their ability to perform to their best capability. They are encouraged to know who they are, where they come from, and to make sure to represent themselves in the best light.

Our students continue on to bigger middle and high schools with a firm foundation of confidence to succeed in higher education standing out amongst peers as leaders in their classes.

I want to close my testimony with this poem that puts into words what I truly believe is one of the greatest benefits of being a part of a small school, knowing that you belong and are grounded in a place of support which provides you with strength to conquer anything that comes your way.

As the people of the land

We are making an effort and taking a stand

Our children are a resource

Few numbers don't decrease their value of course

Every student matters, be it 10 or 25

They're not dead, they're all so alive!

Each one thrives in their own environment

They have roots where they're at-their environment

Uprooting these children will sever some roots

But kept in a healthy environment, they'll bear good fruits

Mahalo Nui Loa for your time and consideration, please remember that Small Schools Matter, we are more than just a number!

Sincerely,


Noe Kahalepuna

These children are like plants in a pot
They all belong somewhere-home is what they've got

We all know there's no place like home
Home is where we have our space-our very own zone

These precious children are like tender young shoots
Let's allow them to grow and flourish attached to their roots

By:Loulare Moore

Noe Kahalepuna, PPT/Parent
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 10, 2019

Joelyn Kaina, SPED PreK EA/Parent of
a Former Student
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha, my name is Mrs. Kaina, Parent and Educational Assistant. I would like to share from my heart what a small school means to me. First, students that attend small schools are highly more likely to be engaged in their sense of school community. They know all students by their names. Being engaged helps them to be more responsible in their learning and a sense of personal pride and confidence. Second, faculty and staff play an important role in guiding students in all grade levels. For example, teachers don't only address their grade level students. They address all students be it in PreK through Grade 6. Administration, faculty and staff help each other on so many different levels.

Small schools might not offer what big schools do but some how we make it work. Third, I think small schools also deserve to have a teacher per grade level and no combination classes. Being a small school has its perks also to where teachers are able to help more of their students one-to-one. When needed small schools should also have a physical education teacher and a librarian. Students need to get out and exercise and challenge themselves and maintain physical balance and have fun with peers. They also need to be able to borrow books to help keep their minds open and learn new things. As well as be able to know what happened in the past. That's how students gain knowledge which helps them to become more confident.

Being a small school is great! But they need your help. Just by adding and making sure our students have a grade to call their own makes a huge difference. Giving them a little more budget won't harm either. I know small schools already know how to budget the money for our student success. Please give additional funding to small schools. Money comes and goes. It's for our students! Let's show them what small schools have to offer! For me, I know small schools have a big impact on our students just as much as the big schools so please let's not treat them differently. As a parent and State of Hawai'i employee, I know how important these things matter. I'm all about supporting our small schools.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Joelyn Kaina
Parent & Waiāhole Educational Assistant

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joelyn Kaina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Joelyn" on top and "Kaina" below it, both starting with a capital letter.

Shane Kumashiro, Counselor/SSC
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Shane Toshio Kumashiro
47-136 Hui Oo Place
Kaneohe, HI 96744
(808) 225-194
shane.kumashiro@gmail.com

September 17, 2019

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am writing because I would like to endorse my full support for small schools. Through my six years as the school counselor and student services coordinator at Waiahole Elementary School, I have seen first-hand the positive effect small schools have on our keiki. Each of our faculty and staff know every student on campus and have the opportunity to interact closely with them. Students don't get lost in the shuffle and can get the individual attention that many bigger schools with larger class sizes can't afford. As a result, students are engaged throughout the day and are empowered to use their voice to lead discussions.

Waiahole Elementary might be a small school, but we have a lot of heart. Faculty and staff never complain about their roles and responsibilities. Every person on this campus puts in 110% and wears multiple hats, but never complain about it. I believe the results would speak for itself seeing as how satisfaction about our school is one of our strongest attributes, according to the School Quality Survey.

Despite the underfunding of small schools, Waiahole Elementary makes it work each year. My principal, Alexandra Obra, is very capable of working with a small budget and is very thorough in fiscal decisions. Students' needs are our priority and we never allow a smaller budget affect our decisions at the cost of our students. Over the past couple of years, we've made some tremendous growth in terms of our state assessment scores, student growth, and chronic absenteeism. In addition, we've been doing some amazing things with our students such as academies, rotations, and creating an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) program just to name a few.

I urge you to reconsider drafting a policy that establishes a threshold enrollment for small schools that leads to school consolidation/closure. I truly believe that schools, especially smaller schools, are such an integral part of the community fabric. Without a school, there's nothing to hold the community around it together.

Sincerely,



Shane Kumashiro

September 16, 2019

To The Board of Education:

On behalf of my four DOE-enrolled children (pre-K through 8th grade), many thanks for all of your hard work and leadership to make Hawaii schools the best that they can be. Thank you for supporting healthy and safe childhoods in this state. Best wishes in fulfilling your mission and continuing to weather the challenges you face.

I am writing on behalf of my small school, Waiahole Elementary. Two of my children have been blessed by this lovely Waiahole community, and I am currently the reading specialist at the school. This school is a gem. I have my fingers crossed for its successful and long future.

I have been impressed (truthfully, blown away) with this school in many ways. For one, the office staff, teachers, custodians, and support staff have an amazing rapport with the students. Every adult knows every child by name, at least from what I can tell. The class sizes are more manageable for teachers. In other schools in the district, my mother-in-law and I have both had classes with 35 students in them. There is no class at Waiahole that even comes close to this number, and that is a major plus for the school. I know that the DOE does not operate on an infinite budget, so teachers are in high demand, but the schools with smaller class sizes should be the model and the ideal, not a fantasy. I would hope that the DOE would fight for this ideal!

The students are treated like family, and in some cases, they are literally family members of staff. When family is this entrenched in the school community, this causes the connections between home and school to be strong. Many of the staff remember son by name, and he attended three years ago for one year. He is now attending our home school, but we have the fondest memories of his teacher and community here. When I sought to dip my feet back into education, Waiahole is the first place I looked.

Students who would otherwise be lost in the crowd are given leadership opportunities and better access to specials, services, and help. Teachers speak on a daily basis regarding problem-solving, specific student issues, planning, professional development, etc. Their involvement in the school is not forced nor mandated. They all want to see everyone succeeding. The students who leave this

school have a strong foundation of academics and personal care. The teachers love it here. My first year of teaching in the DOE at Kalaheo High School, about half of the new hires left. It is the complete opposite feeling at this school. The staff know they have a special community and are loyal, which creates a greater sense of continuity from year to year.

The students are very friendly with each other. There is a sense that everyone is on the same team, and that they all matter. I have not witnessed bullying or shaming because the in/out groups are not obvious here. Please know how much this wonderful community means to each and every one of the staff and students.

Mahalo for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Kaneyuki".

Michelle Kaneyuki

Donna Kawasaki, Grade 5/6 Teacher
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 17, 2019

Catherine Payne
Chairperson, At Large
Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Dear Ms. Payne,

I am a teacher at Waiahole Elementary School, one of the smallest and oldest schools in the state of Hawai'i. I would like to strongly advocate for all small schools in our state for we offer many benefits to our students, families, and communities.

At Waiahole, everyone knows each other by name. We can build relationships with our students before they even step foot in our classrooms at the beginning of the school year. As we all know, relationships are at the heart of learning. Without it, true learning does not take place.

We are also fortunate to have had generations of families pass through our tight knit school community. Some of our parents can even show their children the artwork they created when they attended Waiahole which are perpetuated as murals on our school buildings.

We can also respond in a timely manner and adjust to our students needs – because we truly know each student's strengths and weaknesses. I was able to build a strong connection with one of my students which allowed her to transform from a shy, timid girl into a confident, articulate young woman. Without the nurturing and support of a small school environment, she would probably have been one who was overlooked. Instead, she was able to speak in front of large audiences and was even the student representative on the School Community Council.

Please consider everything that a small school offers our students. We are so much more than just a number.

Sincerely,



Donna K. Kawasaki
Grade 5 and 6 Teacher, Waiahole Elementary

Testimony of: Brian Lewis, father of two Waiahole Elementary School children

Meeting: Committee on Finance and Infrastructure, September 19, 2019

Agenda item: B. Committee Action on the recommendations of the Committee on Weights XI regarding the Weighted Student Formula fund allocation for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years

Position: Oppose

Aloha –

Three years ago, my son qualified for special education public preschool. He left a private preschool in downtown Honolulu to attend special ed at Waiahole Elementary. When he first arrived, he did not know his colors like all the other three-year-old friends from his old school. But soon after enrolling at Waiahole special ed, he could yell out car colors on road trips like any other loud and happy toddler.

Fast forward two years, and my son was ready for kindergarten at Waiahole. He was able to leave the special ed classroom behind and learn in a mainstream classroom. One big reason is that Waiahole is small. The transition from special ed classroom to a mainstream classroom that still had a low teacher to student ratio was much easier than the transition to a mainstream classroom would have been in a larger school. It is fair to say that smaller schools provide better educational opportunities to disabled children. Those opportunities could disappear when small schools are forced to consolidate with big schools.

An enrollment threshold will exacerbate existing achievement gaps between students with disabilities and non-disabled students. Disabled students who currently enjoy small class sizes and individualized attention in mainstreamed classrooms, on account of attending small schools, will end up either being placed in special education classrooms; or else falling behind their peers.

One size does not fit all. When you look at the “Enrollment Dashboard” in Attachment H to the September 2019 COW XI report, note that there is no mention of special education resources as a consideration for enrollment threshold. Other gaps include low-income pre-school enrollment and variations based on Title I. There is no one simple number that should trigger Board action.

Brian Lewis, Parent
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 8, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

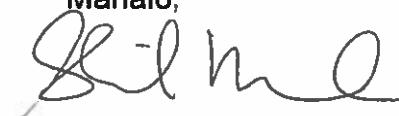
Aloha! My name is Sheila Manuel. I am a first grade teacher at Waiahole Elementary. I would like to share with you my experience as an educator at Waiahole Elementary.

I began teaching at Waiahole in 2018. I was the new teacher on campus and on our Back to School night, nearly every single one of my new first grade families came to greet and welcome me into the Waiahole ohana. They came with hugs and offerings of "good luck." They came with smiles and excitement. They came with aloha. That is the beauty of teaching at Waiahole. We are not just a school with stakeholders - administration, teachers, students, families, communities. We are a school where we are one ohana and together we strive to make it the best learning environment for our keiki.

One week into my first year of teaching at Waiahole, I knew nearly every single student and staff member's name and they knew mine in return. Our students are not just data points or test scores. Here at Waiahole, our students are individuals with strengths, hobbies, and little quirks. Our students become school leaders who create slides and facilitate our daily morning assemblies. Our students sing mele and learn about the mo'olelo of our community. Our students perform in operas as they sing and memorize lines. Our students plant corn and kalo with community partners. Our students are phenomenal individuals, curious learners, and creative thinkers. Our

students are our keiki who we take the time to know and learn about them in more ways than just academics.

Waiahole is a unique and special place. It is a place where "Ohana means family and family means no one gets left behind." Please continue to allow Waiahole Elementary to be the heart of the Waiahole community and a special place for our students and families.

Mahalo,

Sheila Manuel

Penny Rapoza, PPT/Community
Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board Members,

Aloha, my name is Penny Rapoza. I was a student here in the 70's from Pre-Kindergarten to 6'th grade. Now I work for the DOE as a PPT and art teacher at this wonderful SMALL SCHOOL called Waiahole Elementary. I was born and raised here in this beautiful valley and still currently live in this community. We feel a sense of pride to be able to open our eyes every morning to see its beauty, and know that we will have tomorrow to be able to see and feel the way we do. And then, we have hope...The hope for tomorrow that we, the school and our community, can all continue on this journey; that we will still have this partnership continue on; that we will have this school, the Piko (center of our community), here for generations to come.

I am strongly opposed to the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendation that would establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools. Small schools are unique to Hawaii and have a special place here in Hawaii. Student enrollment numbers are not the only thing that is considered when deciding to consolidate or close a school.

Sincerely,



Penny Rapoza

Theresa Rayco/Colette Mizuno,
Custodians
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strnnlv Onnosed

To the Board of Education and COW committee

On behalf of the Custodial staff at Waiahole Elementary, we strongly oppose the COW's recommendation of setting a high specific enrollment number on any school which could lead to school closer. Having a cap on enrollment would greatly have a negative effect on our small school, students, families, community, teachers, and staff. Waiahole is a unique learning environment where students get to have voices and be creative. We as staff take pride in our work we do to help facilitate the students learning by investing our time, hard work, and efforts. Working at Waiahole where funding is sometimes the issue you can't have the "it's not my job!" mentality and I'm proud to work for a small school with what little funding we do have, the amazing opportunities we create for our children. I've witness students blossom and grow who have been given opportunities to run for student council, advocate for programs, or become active in special academies or planning events, were they make a difference in our school. I couldn't see that happening for most of our students if the school were to close and they would have to move to a bigger school were they'd probably be just another face. Before making a permanent decision for us please take into consideration US the people who work so hard to make a small school stand out despite our count. Please put us into a special funding if anything protects small schools and give us the opportunity to provide the unique, strong, safe, giving, loving, caring, learning environment we have been all these years. Please give small schools a chance.

Sincerely,

Theresa Rayco

Colette Mizuno

September 16, 2019

*'A'ohē pau ku 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi.
One can learn from many sources.
(All knowledge is not learned in just one school)*

Aloha mai,

My name is Mikilani Keohokalole Tupuola. I was born and raised in Kane'ohe and I am a teacher at Waiahole Elementary School. I am writing this letter to advocate for Small Schools, namely, Waiahole Elementary School.

According to an article published on the National Education Association's website, research has shown that the benefits of Small Schools include:

- Raised student achievement
- Increased attendance
- Elevated teacher satisfaction
- Improved school climate

In my 13 years as an Elementary School educator, Waiahole Elementary School is the smallest school I have ever taught at. It has also been the most progressive, collaborative, and supportive working environment I've worked in. The culture of the school is one that promotes lokahi (unity), and a deep 'Sense of Belonging' among the staff and students alike. The school staff are passionate about what they do, and every teacher is committed to their students' academic growth. There is less bullying, and behavioral issues are minimal.

Smaller class sizes have allowed me to give more individualized attention to my students and I am able to address different learning styles. The small size of the school allows me to give more personalized educational experiences to my students. Smaller classes give me the opportunity to create close relationships with the students and their families. I have gotten to know these families well, and these relationships help with communication and build trust between us. We are then able to work together to help the students thrive. One of my students last year said that she feels like her classmates are her brothers and sisters because she spends so much time with them and has known them since she was in Kindergarten.

Small Schools may not be understood by everyone, but this small community in the Waiahole Valley loves and needs our school. It is located at the heart of this ahupua'a. Waiahole School has been around for over 130 years and I hope to see it flourish for another 130 years! Please hear our voices when we say that small schools unite communities, promote more individualized learning, and safer, happier, work

environments. We need small schools like Waiahole Elementary. They are producing a whole new generation of leaders, forward thinkers, innovators, and high achievers! Please help advocate for small schools like Waiahole. Your keiki and their futures will thank you for it.

‘O wau iho no me ka mahalo,



N. Mikilani Keohokalole Tupuola
Third Grade Teacher
Waiahole Elementary School

Christine Wilkinson, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed



To whom it may concern,

I'm a product of a small school, Kawaiola Elementary school. Our average number of students were 60 students for grade 1-6. I had one sister ahead of me and she attended Punahoa after graduating from 6th grade. The year I graduated from 6th grade they closed the school down after my graduation. My 3 sisters below me started to attend Haleiwa Elementary school where they were lost in the numbers.
My oldest sister and I graduated from college and the 3 sisters didn't even attend college. To me that says a lot about small schools.

Sincerely ,

Christine Wilkinson

THE BEST WAY TO GET AHOOLD OF Me IS TO CALL ON my PHONE 2395630 or
Email: Tutuchrisx3@gmail.com or Chris' cell 808 4784345

P.O. Box 661 | Kaneohe, HI 96744 |

Jacqueline Yanagi
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 10, 2019

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Jacqueline Yanagi. I have been employed by the Hawaii Department of Education for 31 years, 12 of which have been at Waiahole Elementary Schools. I am writing a letter of testimony in support of small schools.

Waiahole is the oldest school in the Windward District. This year we celebrate our 136th anniversary. Many of the students who attend this school have parents, grandparents, and great grandparents that are alumni of Waiahole. Families long to continue this tradition of having their children attend the same school their families attended years before. Parents have expressed to me the importance of having their children attend the same school they (and multi-generations) attended when they were younger.

Waiahole School is the hub of this small, tight knit community. It is a place where families come together to participate in their child's education, attend community meetings, and provide input through our School Community Council. Parents have a vested interest in the school, participate in shared decision making, and help to shape the direction of our school and community.

Small schools provide unique learning environments. At a small school, teachers and staff know students, share information about students, and collaborate to problem solve. Teachers know their students academic strengths and challenges. When a student is struggling with learning, teachers can personalize the learning experience to meet the student's need. The low student-teacher ratio helps teachers to intervene early and close the achievement gap quicker. The individualized attention students receive is what attracts parents to obtain a Geographical Exception and send their child to Waiahole.

Small schools create a community atmosphere. Teachers and staff know students personally and academically. I have gone to my students soccer games, attended ballet recitals, and watched hula performances. This positive, meaningful relationship between teacher and student impacts learning when students know someone cares and knows their name.

I am in favor of small schools and strongly urge you to perpetuate the legacy of Waiahole School as the oldest school in the Windward District. Further, I ask the Board of Education to refuse to move forward with proposals to consider possible small school consolidation.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Yanagi
Jacqueline Yanagi
Kindergarten Teacher



Tamar Bee <tamar.bee@k12.hi.us>

09/18/2019 09:52 AM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Testimony

Tamar Bee
Ka'a'awa Elementary School
51-296 Kamehameha Hwy.
Ka'a'awa, HI 96730

Board of Education

RE: Committee of Weights XI regarding the Weighted Student Formula fund allocation for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years

September 18, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tamar Bee, and I am the School Counselor and Student Services Coordinator at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. I am writing this letter in opposition of recommendation of policy development of Small School Equity, which would establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools. A policy that establishes such a threshold would negatively impact our school and community by way of possible closure or consolidation. With our district extending from Kualoa to Punalu'u, our students would truly feel the impacts of traveling far beyond their community where they currently thrive and flourish. Our small, safe community allows our students to walk or take a short ride to and from school, participate in afterschool programs, and develop true social emotional relationships with others. As both a parent and educator, small class size matters tremendously. Here at Ka'a'awa Elementary, we know each and everyone of our students, and strive to develop leaders in each and everyone of them. On paper we may look like we are not worth funding, but our students and staff matter! We may be considered a "small school," but we truly are mighty. We invite you to come and visit to see for yourself that we MATTER!

Mahalo for your time!

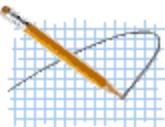
Tamar M. Bee, Ka'a'awa Elementary School Counselor/Student Services Coordinator

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**



Davelani Johnson
<djohnson96744@yahoo.com>
09/18/2019 10:16 AM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject COW Recommendation For Small
School Equity

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number. How is that fair to turn our children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force our children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention our kids will receive?

We live in the Waiahole community in which Waiahole Elementary School has been the home school for many generations. It is part of our community, a part of our history and a part of our lives today. I'm so blessed to have Waiahole Elementary School for now my youngest daughter to attend. We recently enrolled her into Waiahole and she thrives there due to the smaller classroom sizes, the increase of teacher/staff attention she receives due to that, and just the uniqueness of the school entirely.

We are also apart of our community's Association which holds meetings and holiday functions in the school's cafeteria and on the school grounds. It is the center of our community as has been held as a gathering place for my generations for both school children, friends and family and our community. It would be a shame to consider school closures and adequate funding just base on a "number".

Thank you for your time & consideration.

Thank you,
Davelani Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

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**



Lucy Salas <ching.salas@gmail.com>

09/18/2019 10:19 AM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Testimony

Aloha,

To whom it may concern:

I am an alumni of Waiahole Elementary School, and also a resident in the valley for all my life.. Don't let the size fool you!. We are a very vibrant and cultural community. I am testifying my concern in regards to your agenda item of "WSF Fund Allocation" of small public schools.. I STRONGLY OPPOSE to your plan that statistics would determine whether to close or consolidate our small schools. Leave windward small schools alone.. It fits all our educational needs for our keiki's and will for 100++ more years live our heritage and ancestral promises to promote & protect our mountains, lands and seas for all and future generations to come.

Deuteronomy 31:8 It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Peace be with you.

Lucy M. Salas

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**



DAVELANI JOHNSON <keonz@yahoo.com>

09/18/2019 10:19 AM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject COW Recommendation For Small School Equity

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number. How is that fair to turn our children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force our children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention our kids will receive?

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We are also apart of our community's Association which holds meetings and holiday functions in the school's cafeteria and on the school grounds. It is the center of our community as has been held as a gathering place for my generations for both school children, friends and family and our community.

It would be a shame to consider school closures and adequate funding just base on a "number". Thank you for your time & consideration.

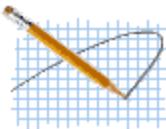
Thank you,
Keith Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

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**



Kanani Ioane <kioane@live.com>

09/18/2019 10:39 AM

To "testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us"

<testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

Subject Waiahole

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school's closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number.

How is that fair to turn our children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force our children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention our kids will receive?

I feel it is unfair and I oppose the ruling of future small school's closure or adequate funding for them solely based on a number of enrollment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter!

Thank you,
Kanani Ioane
Waiahole Resident

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Kanani Ioane <kioane@live.com>

09/18/2019 10:40 AM

To "testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us"

<testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

Subject Waiahole

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school's closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number.

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Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter!

Thank you,
Jason Ioane
Waiahole Resident

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**



DAVELANI JOHNSON <keonz@yahoo.com>

09/18/2019 10:46 AM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject COW Recommendation For Small School Equity

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school's closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number.

How is that fair to turn our children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force our children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention our kids will receive?

I feel it is unfair and I oppose the ruling of future small school's closure or adequate funding for them solely based on a number of enrollment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter!

Thank you,
Melvin Ige
Waiahole School District

Sent from my iPhone

**

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**



aliyah Johnson
<aliyahjohnson96744@gmail.com>

09/18/2019 11:09 AM

To "testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us"
<testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us>
cc
Subject COW Recommendation For Small
Schools Equity

Good morning,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school's closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number.

How is that fair to turn the children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention the kids will receive?

I feel it is unfair and I oppose the ruling of future small school's closure or adequate funding for them solely based on a number of enrollment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter!

Thank you,

Aliyah Johnson

Waiahole School District

**

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**



Staci Shiroma <staci.shiroma@k12.hi.us>

09/18/2019 10:57 AM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject Testimony against Small School
Equity COW Recommendation to
create a threshold for small school
equity

Aloha and good morning,

My name is Staci K. Shiroma, I am a SASA at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. I reside in Waiahole Valley. I would like to advocate strongly in opposition to the small school threshold, in the best interest of every student that attends these schools and the community we reside in. These two communities are a small but close knit community. I serve on the WWCA which is Waiahole Waikane Community Association. Serving in the community and in the public school in both these communities have brought me a great sense of community and just how important it is to be a part of one. Waiahole Elementary and Ka'a'awa Elementary as you know are both over a century old. It has stood the test of time and has planted many seeds in the children that it has served. As far back as I know my father in law attended Waiahole Elementary School, down to my grandchild currently. That is 4 generations. And I know I speak for more people like myself at both elementary schools. If you take these opportunities away for these legacies to be continued, it will displace children's identity. The heart and soul of the communities are overflowed through the schools in these communities. I am asking you to please be more forward-thinking and consider the long-term effects of school closures, rather than the short-term bottom line. School closures will result in larger, more over crowded schools, fewer student attending neighborhood schools, more traffic problems. Please consider the consequences for the community before you make your final decision.

Mahalo,

Staci Kanoelehua Shiroma, SASA
Ka'a'awa Elementary School
808-305-6650

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* *



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WINDWARD OAHU DISTRICT
46-169 KAMEHAMEHA HIGHWAY
KANEOHE, HAWAII 96744
September 17, 2019

NAME: Matthew C.W. Ho, Complex Area Superintendent
MEETING: General Business Meeting
AGENDA ITEM: Committee on Weights Recommendations (Small Schools Equity)
POSITION: Opposed

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board of Education Members:

My name is Matthew Ho, and I am the complex area superintendent of the Castle-Kahuku Complex Area. I have written this letter in support of my two schools, Waiāhole and Ka‘a‘awa Elementary Schools whose current student enrollment is 88 and 122 respectively. Principals Dr. Alexandra Obra and Jennifer Luke-Payne have already presented oral and written testimony to the Committee of Weights (COW) XI advocating for their schools and community, specifically funding for their small schools.

During the COW meetings, there were discussions about the definition and constitution of small schools—these discussions included defining a small school being 200 students or less, 300 students or less, and an “average effective enrollment size” of 300-400 students. At the conclusion of COW XI, the definition of a “small school” was not determined or agreed upon. Should a small school be defined as 400 students or less however, eight of our thirteen elementary schools in the Castle-Kahuku Complex would be defined as small schools; and the total of the Windward District (Castle-Kahuku Complex Area and Kailua-Kalaheo Complex Area), fourteen of our twenty-three elementary schools would be classified as small schools. Along with the Department’s recommendation of establishing a threshold of enrollment of small schools, it is a priority to determine the definition of a small school.

I am excited that in the process of increasing the viability of our two small schools, embracing the charge of being innovative and developing our unique school design, Principals Dr. Obra and Luke-Payne and I have been engaging in conversations to look at long-term school designs. Although we have recently started our discussions together, we are already considering and exploring multiple school designs which include: magnet schools, satellite learning, multi-age schools, microschools, teacher training/academy models, and community-based hubs; while researching current State and Department of Education policies and discussing policies that are not in existence, but will support designs that fit our school, community, faculty, and most importantly students.

In doing our research of small schools design, the benefits of small schools include:

- Personalized relationships because small schools allow students to have more individual attention from teachers, feelings of safety, and a relationship connectiveness.
- More personalized learning
- Increased student achievement
- Increased student attendance
- Reduced student discipline incidents
- Increased home and community involvement
- Improved instructional quality and accountability
- Improved teacher working conditions and job satisfaction
- Greater teacher to home interactions
- Increased opportunities for teachers to work and collaborate with other teachers
- More ownership and empowerment of the school by faculty.

How are we able to provide equitable funding for our small schools who have already embraced the Five Promises of the new 2030 Promise Plan? Can we consider additional weights for small schools, or restructuring the current base funding for these schools? Waiāhole and Ka‘a‘awa Elementary Schools have clearly articulated school designs (see school design profiles) which fits the needs of their communities and students.

The Department recently completed a Statewide Master Facility Plan where our school and community stakeholders were gathered and discussed at length various long-term scenarios about our campuses and facilities, including conversations about the consolidation of both schools. The final recommendations by the stakeholders in the Master Facility Plan however, did not include the consolidation of Waiāhole and Ka‘a‘awa Elementary Schools in the long-term—instead prioritized options for the two campuses which included community centers, magnet schools, and a replacement school with land acquisition. To acknowledge the time and resources invested in the development of the Master Facility Plan, I request the members of the Board of Education to review the sections which included our two small schools in the Castle-Kahuku Complex Area.

Principals Dr. Obra and Luke-Payne, and I will make ourselves available should you have questions or should you need further information about the viability of our two schools. If you are available, we also invite you to attend our Support for Small Schools meeting on September 26 at 5:30 p.m. at the Waiāhole Elementary School.

Thank you for your consideration and in advance for your support for our small schools in the Castle-Kahuku Complex Area.

Sincerely,



Matthew C.W. Ho
Complex Area Superintendent
Castle-Kahuku Complex

Nikki Morishige, Academic Coach
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 18, 2019

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Members of the Board of Education
State of Hawaii Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

To Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board Members,

My name is Nikki Morishige and I am the Academic Coach at Waiahole Elementary. I have been teaching at Waiāhole Elementary for 13 years, and plan to remain for many more. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Committee on Weight's (COW) recommendation that would establish a threshold enrollment to determine whether a school is viable. Student enrollment numbers should NOT be the major deciding factor for consolidation and school closure. To do so is to ignore the very reason that public schools exist – to serve the people in the community.

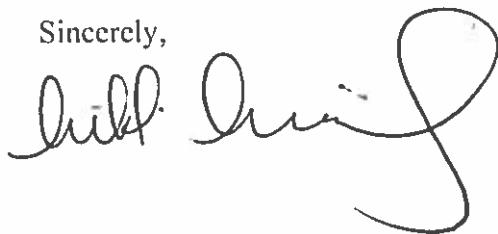
While every school has processes and procedures in common, where we differ is where it matters the most – how we interact with, and learn alongside, our keiki, families and the community. In particular, for rural schools such as Waiāhole Elementary, the school becomes the heart of the community. We know the importance of teaching our keiki to have strong roots here – to know about who they are and where they have come from, to know their family stories and the stories of the Valley, to understand the history of this place and the importance of perpetuating and protecting it for the future. This knowledge is strengthened as we take our keiki into the Valley – up the road to a lo‘i or down to the ocean on the wa‘a – building connections between the keiki and members of the community. With knowledge comes a sense of pride, and with pride,

responsibility. This is where our keiki's sense of place develops and their roots begin to take hold. We are perpetuating this strong community by teaching them about who they are and where they come from and go to school. A number and a pricetag cannot be placed on the heart of the community.

Student numbers do NOT define a school. As such, decisions on school consolidation or closure cannot be made based on those numbers.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki Morishige".

Nikki Morishige, MEdT, NBCT

Academic Coach

Waiāhole Elementary

Vivien Lee/Charlie Reppun,
Community Members
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 16, 2019

Dear DOE Superintendent Kishimoto and BOE Chairperson Payne,

We are writing to advocate for small schools.

We have lived and farmed in Waiahole Valley since the late 1970's. Our two sons attended Waiahole Elementary School from Kindergarten through 6th grade in the late 1980's and early 1990's. After Waiahole School, they attended Punahoa School. One son went on to graduate from Harvard and get a Masters from Ohio State University. The other son graduated from Occidental College. Both have returned to Hawaii to live; both are working in the areas of environmental protection and agriculture.

The Waiahole School principal recently said: "Students at small schools are more likely to be highly engaged in their community, leading to a sense of personal responsibility for the community." In this time when climate change is THE ISSUE in the world, especially for youth, that sense of responsibility is of paramount importance. On September 23rd, the United Nations is having a climate summit meeting and youth around the world are calling on adults to join them this Friday, September 20th, to support the UN call for action.

Our school is our community and has been a site for many community activities and festivities. It has been and can be a place for continuing education of all ages. A place where the whole community learns how to take care of the ahupua'a where they live. Maybe the DOE should work on trying to make big schools into small schools that are "an integral part of the community fabric"—the "PIKO" of the community as the Ka'a'awa principal said.

Our children certainly benefited from their years at Waiahole School. The smallness of the school helped them to gain a sense of place and they are highly engaged in their Hawaii community today.

Thank you,



Vivien Lee and Charlie Reppun



Waiāhole-Waikāne Community Association

September 17, 2019

Laurence Uyemura, WWCA President
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

TO: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony on the COW Recommendation for Small School Equity

Aloha Kakou,

The Waiāhole -Waikaāne Community Association (“WWCA”) is writing to you today to bring forth an extremely heartbreaking concern recently brought to our attention.

While we understand that public schools are facing stringent budgets according to student enrollments, we believe it is unfair that smaller schools, particularly those located in Waiāhole and Ka‘a‘awa, become targets whenever enrollments decline. The uncertainty in budgetary funding each year makes it nearly impossible for the principals, administrative staff & teachers of smaller schools to plan effectively, thus putting education to the children of these communities at risk. This is not right!

Waiāhole Valley Elementary School is a unique, flourishing, culturally-centric, and well-rooted school that is tightly woven into our community. This school is an absolute hidden gem nestled within the two beautiful green valleys of Waiāhole and Waikāne!

On behalf of the WWCA members, we stand in full opposition to your COW recommendation.

Waiāhole - Waikāne will continue to stand united in solidarity to ensure that our Keiki O Ka Aina will be provided the same legacy, learning experiences, and opportunities that were once shared with their kupuna in the past 135 years.

Lastly, with respect to moving forward, I would like to request that should there be any notices and/or hearings regarding any possible changes that could potentially impact Waiāhole - Waikāne’s school in the future that they be sent directly to me at the address provided below.

Mahalo Ke Akua,

Mr. Laurence Uyemura, President

Dear Board of Education,

I am a parent first and foremost of a student who attends Waiāhole Elementary School. I am writing this letter because I oppose the proposed threshold minimum enrollment. We have been at that school for 4 years now and I am pleased and fortunate to be able to send my child there, a school small in size yet big in heart and educational opportunities. My child expresses his love for his small school through positive engagements with other students and the sense of belonging amongst everyone, staff and faculty included. We love that we can be a part of school community that has strong cultural beliefs and a connection of shared knowledge through resources. Our students are not just numbers. They deserve to continue their education in a community that share in their interest. Fund small schools!

Furthermore, I am also an employee at Waiahole Elementary School and I see first hand the level of staff interest in student success. We all come together (even during time constraints) with efforts to make things work for the better of our students.

Our already small school allows for one to one teacher/student relationship, but with the extra support comes more manageable classrooms and small group engagements. I feel that smaller schools allow students to get extra help in the classroom, and I believe that if small schools have the same expectations as larger schools, then there should be equitable funding.

As a parent and employee of Waiāhole Elementary School, I would like to acknowledge my support of "small schools" and ask that funding be made available because we matter too. After all, we all have the same ultimate goal, quality education for every student!

I oppose COW!

Sincerely,



Melissa Drew

Pat Dumadang, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 18, 2019

To: The Hawaii State Board of Education
Cc: Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, Hawaii Department of Education
Ms. Phyllis Unebasami, Deputy Superintendent, Hawaii Department of Education

Subj: Committee of Weights (COW) for Small School Equity

We are opposed to the recommendation on small school equity!

As long-time residents of Waiahole Valley, we have personally seen the fruits of what small schools like Waiahole and Kaaawa Elementary Schools have produced into our communities. Many students from our small school here in Waiahole have gained careers into the medical field, judiciary system, public service, teaching, vocational trades, and have also become successful owners of different private contracting companies.

Certainly these are also products of bigger schools, but the difference of our students who come from our small school in Waiahole is that they bring with them pride and community spirit in their development into adulthood. They carry on the strong concerns of protection of the aina, the ocean, and the culture of our community more than any of the bigger school students we meet today. These are the citizens and future voting citizens that will perpetuate value of our Hawaiian and Local Culture.

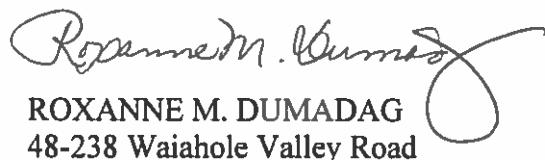
Every election season, politicians give their rhetorical promise of what they will do for our schools financially as well as to help bring up the standard ratings of our school support. But all these politicians fall short. They give more support to the tourism industries and to other political favorites when our school infrastructure needs repairs, our school staff gets smaller every budget year, and every year there's talk about closing our Small Schools, the heart of our Elementary Learning and Hawaiian Local Culture of Aloha.

We're at a point to whatever politicians that support this present Board of Education System, we will not vote for them. They say it takes a village to raise a child. This community is that village. Keep Our Small Schools In Session!

With Sincere Hearts,



PATRICK F. DUMADAG



ROXANNE M. DUMADAG
48-238 Waiahole Valley Road
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Sept.17,2019

Chriselda Lopes, School Health
Aide/Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strnnolv Onnonsert

To the Board of Education:

My name is Chriselda Lopes. I work here at Waiahole Elementary School for 15 years. I love my job here. I am for small schools. Waiahole is a unique place for me for I was born and raised here and attended school here K-8th grade (1960's -1970's) . Being a small school we all knew each other's name first and last. We also knew everyone's family member in that household .We all had a sense of belonging here. We have the Koolau mountain's, the Waiahole river, and the Waiahole beach park below. How great is that. Here we learn and have hands on about what the farmer's grow here like taro, corn, ti leaf for leies for our May day program. We use the back drop of the Koolau Mountains and all it's lush greenery around us. We walk to resident's farms for excursions. Our principal Ms. Obra is outstanding , she works with the children like her own and wants all children to have a Good education. Small Schools are Great.

Mahalo

Chriselda Lopes

SEPT 18,2019

Board of Education: I lived in this valley for years dating back to the 40's . I am for Small Schools and Waiahole is a Beautiful and well respected school. Myself I have attended here and my children and grand-children. We are Blessed to have our Elementary School here in the Valley. We learn culture here and about our surroundings. Please don't take away our School. Think about how we can keep our school open not to CLOSE it. We are PROUD residents of Waiahole Valley.

So I OPPOSE STRONGLY. I AM FOR SMALL SCHOOL.

Mahalo (resident)



Shelby Fernandez, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

I STRONGLY OPPOSE. STRONGLY OPPOSE. KEEP
WAIAHOLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEGACY ALIVE. WE
HAVE HISTORY HERE.

FIRST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON THE WINDWARD SIDE
FROM 1883 TO PRESENT. OUR COMMUNITY SAY'S
"PEOPLE UNITED WILL ALWAYS BE DEFEATED."

ALOHA, *Albert Badiyo Jr.*

Albert Badiyo Jr.

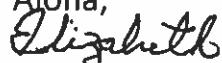
(RESIDENT)

Albert Badiyo, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

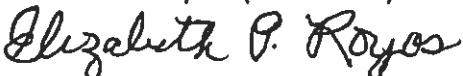
Sept 18, 2019

To the B.O.E.- My name is Patricia Royos . I have been living here from the 50's. I'm for small schools. I have 3 generations of my ohana who attended here. (1950-to present) Without Waiahole Elementary School a lot of us would have not been educated. Waiahole School has been standing tall from 1883 till today 136 years Kindergarten- 9th grade. We were the only school on the windward side. Don't give us a number as to how much students should attend. Look into how we should keep our children at their home school. Do away with Geographical Exceptions. Then families would stay at their Home school . Like back in the day . Waiahole enrollment than we had 300 plus. Again I STRONGLY OPPOSED.

Aloha,



Patricia Royos.(Resident)



Pat Royos, Community Member

General Business Meeting

Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)

Position: Strongly Opposed

Lisa McFarlane, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

9/18/19

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha! My name is Lisa Naii (Lagapa) McFarland. I attended Waiahole Elementary and Intermediate School from kindergarten to ninth grade. I was part of the graduating class of 1969.

Waiahole School was the school my parents also attended.

It really upsets me to hear that just because Waiahole is a small school that, it is in danger of closing. Waiahole school is not just a school, it is "Ohana".

We are a farming community that helps feed the islands. We do not have big developments or housing/condos so yes, the number of students are small.

By thinking about closing Waiahole, you are telling all of us in the community that we don't matter. Everyone should matter!!

My teachers at Waiahole were like aunties and uncles to us! They prepared us for life!! I still keep in touch with my classmates I went to kindergarten with. They are my brothers and sisters!

Please keep the small schools open!
They are of value to us in the community!
We love Waiahole School!

Mahalo,
Lisa N. McFarland
Lisa N. (Lagapa) McFarland

Inga Halas, Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Aloha,

My name is Inga & (Sam Ho) Halas.
There are 9 children in our family
and we all attended Waiahole School.

My niece tells me that Waiahole
School is in danger of closing. That
makes me very sad to hear.

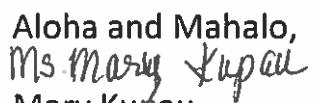
Please do not close Waiahole
just because it is small. Please keep it
open.

Mahalo,
Inga & Halas.

Mary Kupau, PTT/Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Mary Kupau. I am the proud parent who has had children attend Waiahole Elem. Sch. I attended this Beautiful School and so did my 7 other siblings. We loved our Valley School. We have fond memories dating back to the early 60's. We are residents of Waiahole Valley . We all have respectful jobs why because our education at Waiahole made it possible.Waiahole has small classrooms which allowed us to learn about what's around us like the Koolau Mountains and Waiahole Valley river. We learned from our surrounding the plants and flowers . We have resources here just by tapping into our Waiahole Valley.

Aloha and Mahalo,

Mary Kupau

Darrell Manalo,
Grandparent/Community Member
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

9/18/11

My name is Darrell Manalo, I went to Waiahole Elem. D.I.N.T.O.R. my 3 kids went to Waiahole Elem. and now my grandkids goes to Waiahole Elem. I would like to see Waiahole to continue. For the sake of the kids. So please don't close Waiahole for which its one of the oldest school on the islands. So Please

don't Close Waiahole Sch. Continue the Sch. to still be there. my name is Darrell Manalo I resided in Waiahole my whole life. So Please Don't Close that school.

Darrell Manalo

Sept 18, 20¹₀ Zaudia Chee, Parent
General Business Meeting
Committee on Weights Recommendation
(Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

My name is Zaudia Chee
and I am in support of
Waiahole Elementary School
to remain open indefinitely
no matter what the enrollment
count is. In our family, we
have 4 generations that
attended Waiahole Elem. School.
(over)

(2)

Being in a small school teaches
the students to be well rounded
in learning skills in life that
will benefit them both socially
and academically. Through the
excellent teachers that teaches
with "Heart" and not just books.
There is an atmosphere of family
where everyone can work
with one another both in and

(3)

out of the classroom.

Our students learn

sustainability, garden to

food on our tables. Quality

life skills that will

help them in life no matter

what job they have.

This small Dhanca, teachers

students, staff and community
is on a mission. ~~Reading the~~

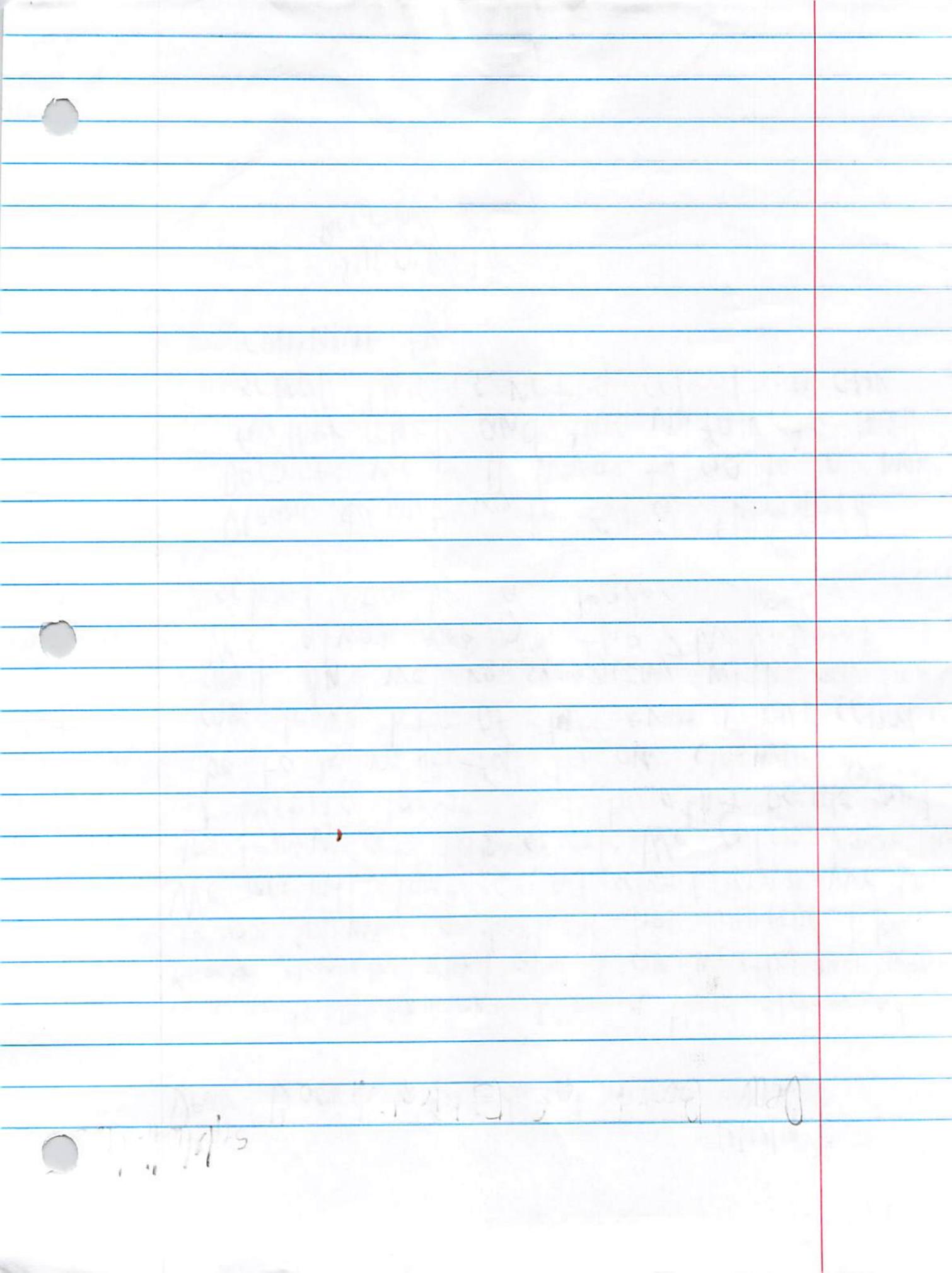
10/18/19

Dear Board of Education

My name is Benjamin and I am a third grader at Kanakura elementary school and I am writing this letter to you so many good things has happened like... We are all leaders at school and we love to learn at this school. We also have the 7 habits to be kind to other people and be to be respectful to our classmates. We can learn lots of stuff even if our school is small. And we are synergizing with our team. We always one of the 7 Habits at school to be a leader.

Please do not vote for a threshold because we will have to go to a more farther school and this unfair to small school. This is not a school in our community.

Sincerely:
Benjamin



September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

Hi my name is Ryden. I just want to say why you shouldn't close down our school. One reason why you shouldn't shut down our school is because we are all leader's. Another reason why you shouldn't shut down our school is because we are mighty and hard worker's. Also we follow the seven habits. Also, please don't vote for the threshold. It is unfair to small schools. My Next reason is, we won't have a school in our community. Also Barack Obama said

September 18

Dear Board of Education,

Hi I am Sebastian and I am a third grader in Kaa'aw Elementary school. This is what is good about our school. First the community is small on the outside but on the inside we can be the best school in the world if we try. First we have a lot of habits and we have fun doing them. We also have a lot of friends.

This is what would happen if there was a threshold. First I would not find. Next I would not have friends to play with any more that go to this school. Please don't shut down small schools.

thus far, over 5000 have
been treated and about 1000
have been helped.

Local people are

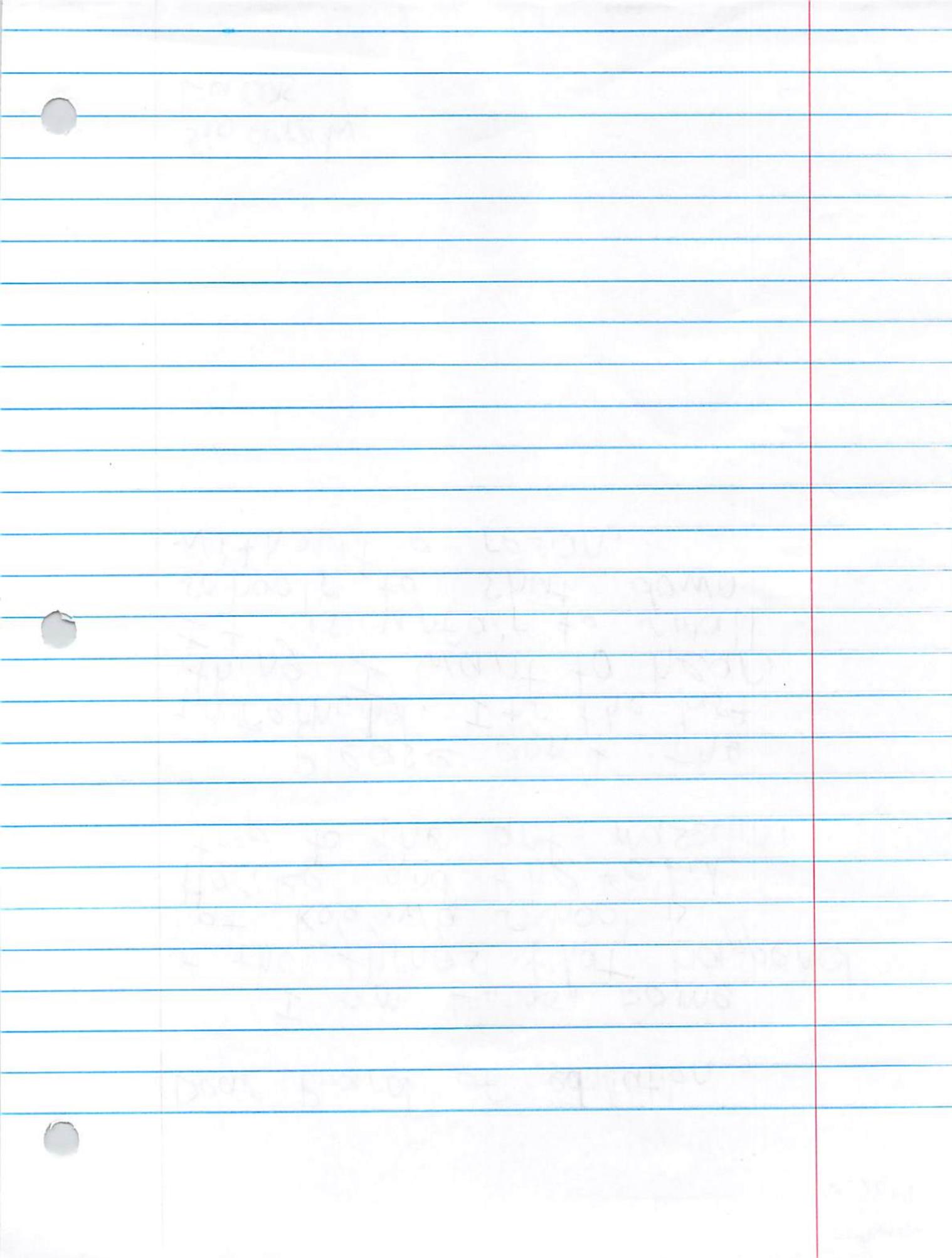
September
18, 2019

Dear Board of education,

I am Lucas. Some of the things that happened at ka'a'wa school is Ho'ike and the feild trip to the art museum.

Please don't the threshold. It's the last thing I want to hear. It is unfair to small schools to shut down without a reson.

Sincerely,
Lucas



September 17, 2018

Dear Board of Education

I am a student of Kake'ana my

name is Mataio I am writing to you today because

Please do not vote for us for the threshold

because our school has so many good things like

the 7 habits because they have helped my class

Please dont do threshold our school because

I am going to half to go to all the way

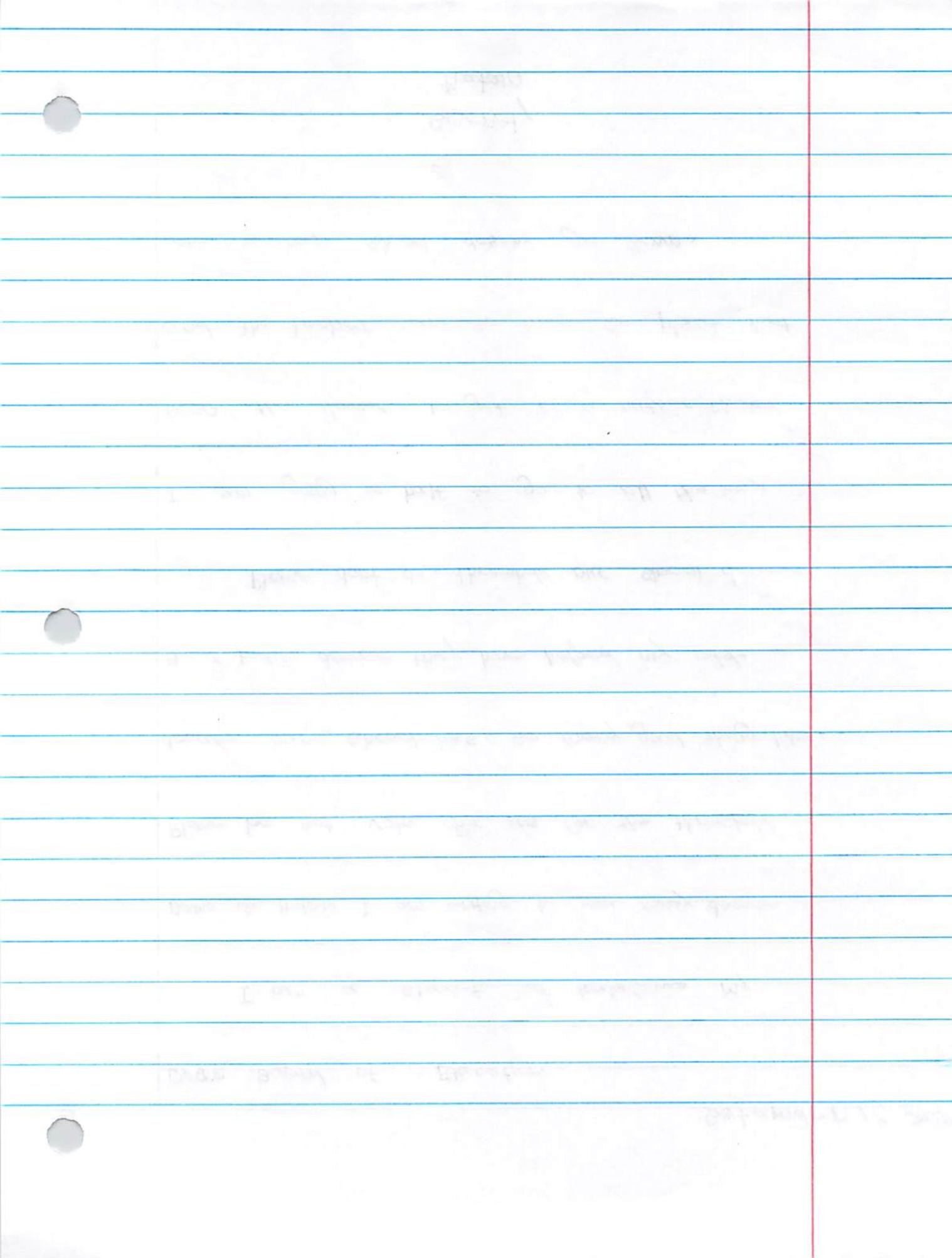
around the island to get to a nather school

and the teacher are so nice so please dont

vote so our school dosent go down.

9

Sincerely
Mataio



September 13, 19

Dear Board of Education,

Hello my name is

Mishen im a 3rd grader

in Kailana Elementary School

the good things of are

School is we lead to succeed

and we do the Seven habits.

We are a big community

too

The bad things is

if you take our school

away we are going

to go to a farther

school we are also going to
need to take the bus
to school and to go to our
house.

Sincerely,

Mishen

September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

Hi my name is Myah let me tell you some good things about this school. We all care for each other, we are mighty and kind to each other. We are all leaders in Ka'a'awa Elementary School. Please don't vote. Because it is unfair for the little school. I hope you do not vote. Because what if we need to have 200 students but we only have 120 students. So please don't vote.

Sincerely
MYAH

Ward
Education

10/20

On the 10th of October 2010 I had my first day at school. I was very nervous because I had never been to school before.

My first day at school was very fun. I made lots of new friends and I enjoyed learning new things. I also enjoyed playing with my friends during break time.

Dear Ward & Education

Best regards,

Sep 18, 2019

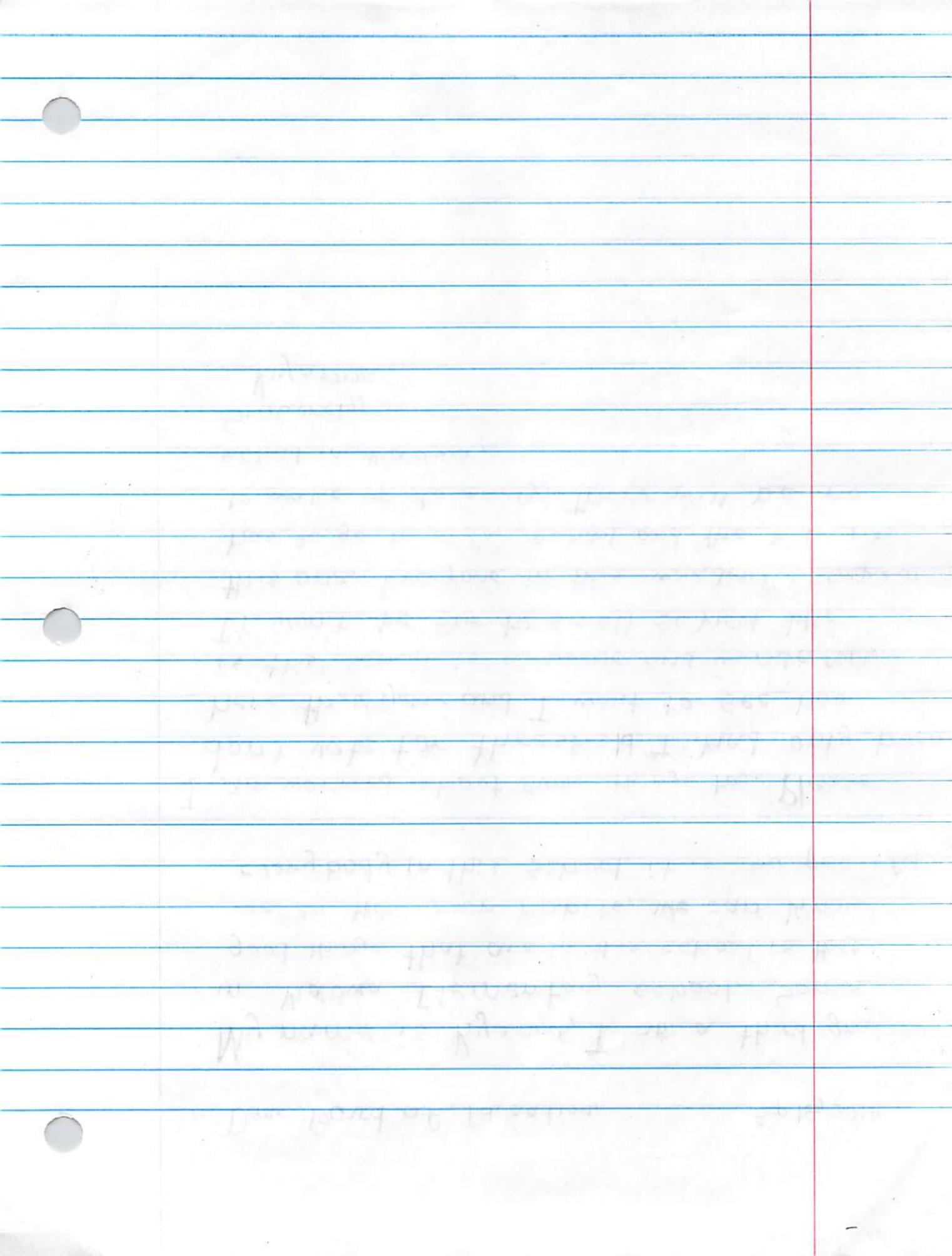
Dear Board of Education,

Sep 18, 2019

My name is Kyanna, I am a third grader in Ha'awa Elementary school. Some good things that are in this school is that we do the seven habits, we can know everybody in this school, it is so peaceful.

I am worried about some things too. Please don't vote for threshold, I had only been here this year and I want to see how is this school is awesome and wonderful. It won't be fair to small school like this one. Everyone in this wonderful school has to go to a far school and the kids has to wake up to early. There will be no school in Ha'awa,

Sincerely,
Kyanna



Scmpetember 18, 2019

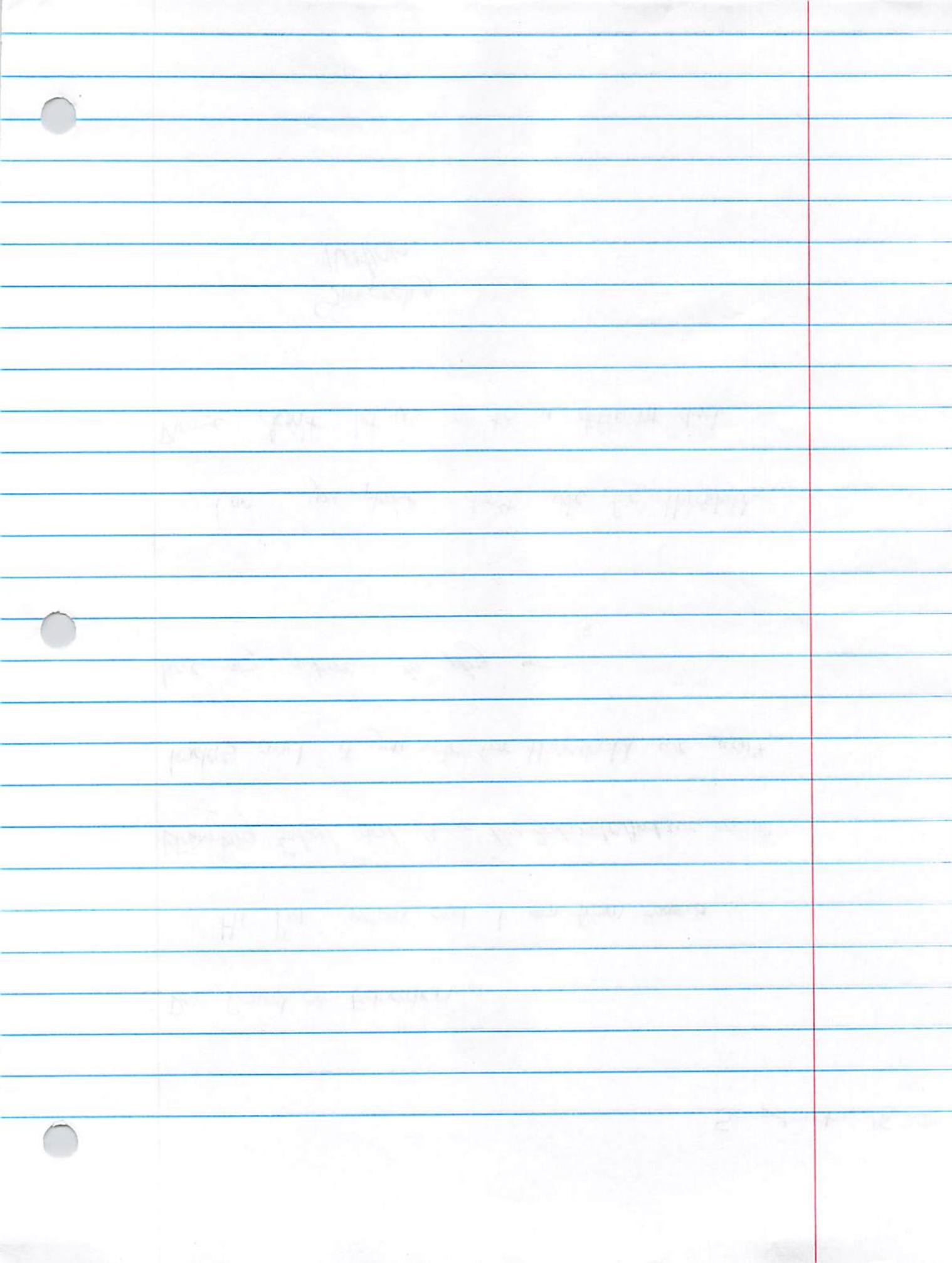
Dear Board of Education,

Hi I'm nation and I am from Kasawa Elementary School and I'm in the 3rd Grade. And we are all leaders and if you vote for threshold we won't have anywhere to play at.

Can you please don't vote for threshold.

Please don't let us go to a different school.

Sincerely,
Nation



Sep 9

September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

We need the school
because Ka'a'awa Elementary,
we are good leaders and we
learn as much as we can.
We also make a good school
and we are kind to one another.

This is also a great school too.

And we also don't want
a threshold because it's unfair
for all small schools because
what if there's kids that need to
go to far schools like in Honolulu
or other elementary schools
some kids will might be late
or the school will be over or →
PTO

all the learning from far elementry
schools we might miss it.

sincerely,

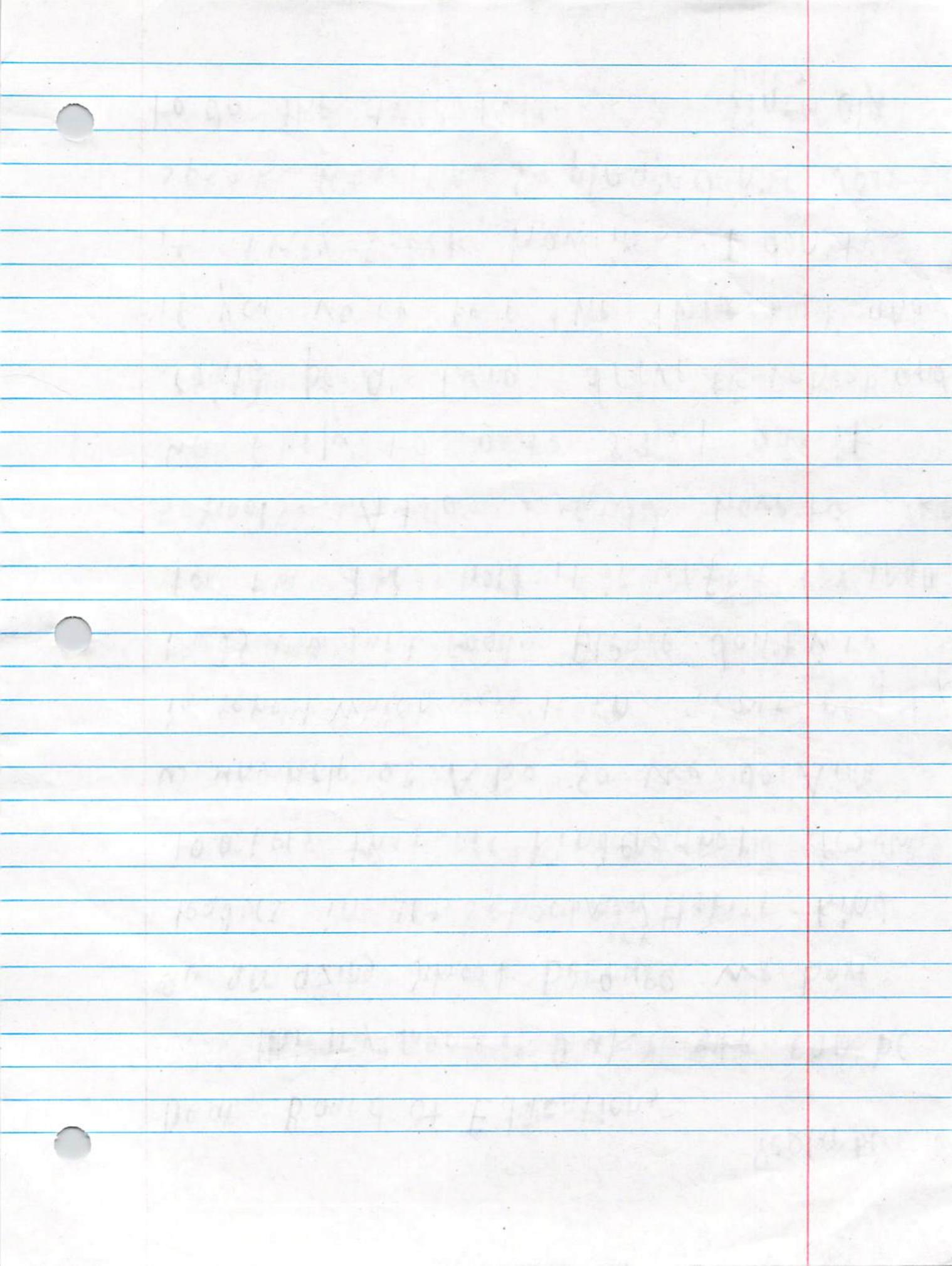
Xyienne

September 16, 19

Dear Board of Education,

Hi my name is Duket. We can be an amazing school because we have leaders in our school ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{the} Habits kind teachers that are kind enough to teach us and help us. Also so we do Aina in school which we learn about healthy Foods and junk Food. Please don't vote for the threshold it is unfair for small schools. Also I would have to wake up early to go to school and if could be a long drive to school and if you vote for the threshold and if they speak hawaiian I don't speak hawaiian so please don't vote to do the threshold.

Sincerely,
Duket



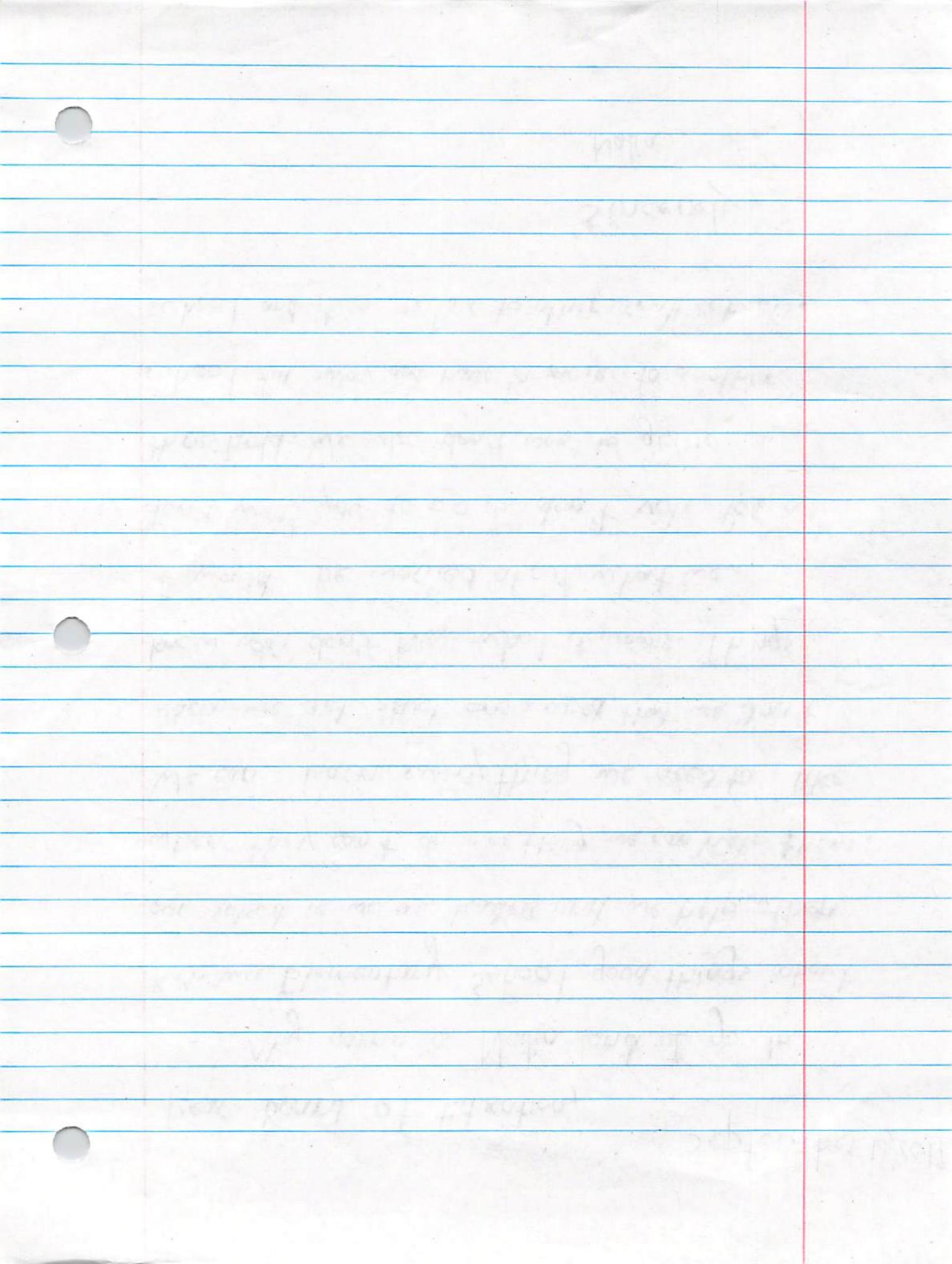
September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Nalia and I go to Ka'a'awa Elementary School. good things about our school is we are leaders and we help others when they can't do something we can help them. We can learn everything we need to like when we get stuck on a word that we don't know or don't know what it means. Things I would be worried about what we don't want you to do is don't vote for a threshold. We also don't want to go to a school far away and have to move to another school and it is unfair to other small schools.

Sincerely,

Nalia



Kaiqa

September 18/2019

Dear Board of Education,

Hello my name is Kaiqa

and our school is Leders

and it is a fantasic

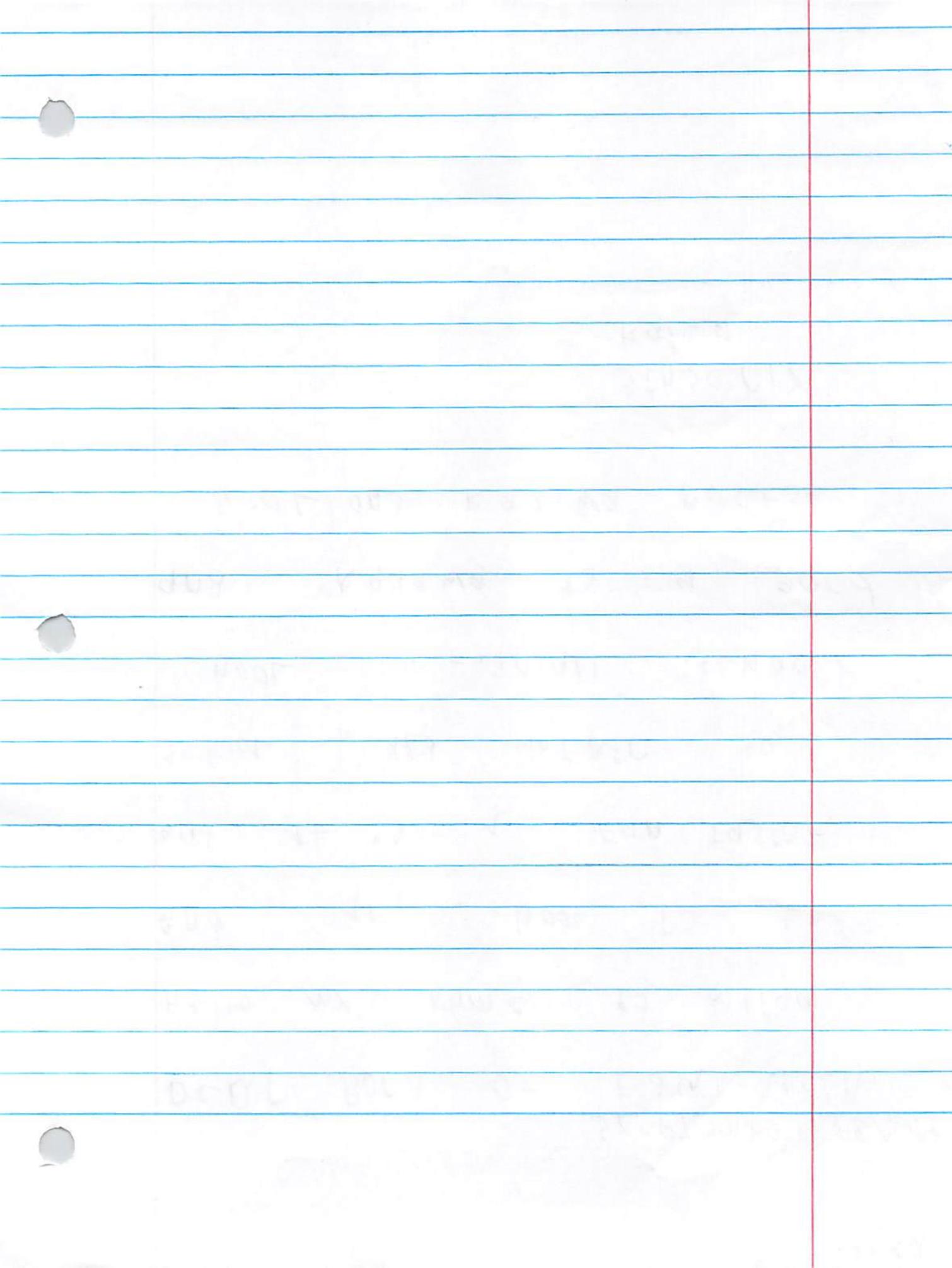
school and unfair to

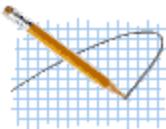
school to small schools

and Kaaawa is a good

school and Kaaawa rocks!

Sincerely
Kaiqa





Hilary White <hwhite@kaawaschool.k12.hi.us>

09/18/2019 01:33 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

Subject Testimony COW reccommendation

BOE board-

I am writing to you as a concerned parent, community member, and educator. It is very concerning that there seems to be an attitude that schools should be closed based just on numbers or a student "threshold". Has the effect on our communities been considered? Have other alternatives been considered? There is much value in small schools.

Small schools foster citizenship, leadership, and social emotional skills through increased student engagement. Our students are highly engaged in our school community. They have a sense of personal responsibility for our community. As a faculty member, I know almost all of the students, and the students know all the teachers. This creates a sense of belonging, compassion, and a desire to do well.

As a faculty/staff member I understand the importance of each student. Each student is so very important and I try so hard to reach and teach each one. There is a bond in small schools that is very unique. It often results in a sense of belonging and that each child, each student feels they are important and needed.

As our school has been sorely underfunded for quite some time, we have learned how to work within a budget and make fiscally responsible decisions. As team members of a small school we work hard to synergize and work together to make things work with what we have.

Our parents also feel a strong bond with our community centered school. Our school is an integral part of our community and neighborhood fabric. We are a close knit community who know the value of our small school and the education provided to their children, our students.

I humbly ask that you consider the many factors and adjustments that can be made to FUND small schools. Our children's education is not the lace to cut corners and reduce funding. The students are our future, they deserve better. Please do what is right.

Sincerely,

Hilary T White
Parent, Community Member, and Educator
at Kaaawa Elementary

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Name: Nicole Tamashiro, Waiāhole Elementary School SASA
Meeting: General Business Meeting
Agenda Item: Committee on Weights Recommendations (Small Schools Equity)
Position: Strongly Opposed

September 18, 2019

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and Board Members,

"Ke kalo pa'a o Waiāhole." "The hard taro of Waiāhole" is 'ōlelo no'eau 1735 by Mary Kawena Puku'i. This 'ōlelo no'eau has been used as an expression for the strong-willed people of Waiāhole valley by comparing them to the hard taro that the valley was known for back in the day. The people here are determined to protect their 'āina and resources for future generations.

My name is Nicole Tamashiro and I am the school administrative services assistant (SASA), school registrar, and on-campus technology contact here at Waiāhole Elementary School. I've been employed here for four years. This school is very unique because we are a small school and it allows us to get to know our co-workers, families, and students personally and there's a feeling of being apart of a big 'ohana here on campus.

Being hired here at Waiāhole Elementary School back in 2015 was a personal blessing for me. My maternal grandmother's family has been living here in the valley for five generations and working here at the school has allowed me to reconnect with family and long-time family friends. This experience has allowed me to feel a sense of belonging, which is one of the "Nā Hopena A'o Statements". My brother and his family also moved into the valley recently and my niece is attending her first year here at Waiāhole as a first grader. She enjoys this school because she is able to attend school with her cousins and neighbors, which is something she didn't get to experience while being a GE student at another school, sense of belonging.

I am against the Committee on Weights' (COW) recommendation to set a number to define a school as operable. A suggestion that I have would be to not allow small schools' students to submit Geographic Exceptions (GE) to attend other schools. If this rule was implemented, Waiāhole Elementary School would have a higher student count.

This school has been around since 1883, it would be such a shame to see it close. We are a small school, with a big heart. Welina me ke aloha, please come and visit our school to see how special it is for our students, staff, families, and community before making a decision.

Sincerely,



Nicole Tamashiro
Waiāhole Elementary School
School Administrative Services Assistant (SASA)



Pauline <pyoshizumi@hawaii.rr.com>

09/18/2019 08:09 PM

To testimony_boe@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject COW Recommendation For Small School Equity

Good evening,

I would like to oppose the recommendation for small schools equity. I feel it is unfair to place an enrollment number on any school which will eventually determine future closures or funding. There has to be more to making those kinds of decisions than just deciding a future school's closure or even adequate funding due to an enrollment number.

How is that fair to turn our children away and place them in schools outside of our district when we have a school right in our community? Or cut teacher funding and force our children's teachers and staff to be spread out so thin that it jeopardizes the attention our kids will receive?

I feel it is unfair and I oppose the ruling of future small school's closure or adequate funding for them solely based on a number of enrollment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter!

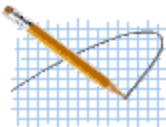
Thank you,
Pauline Yoshizumi

Sent from my iPhone

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**



Michael Kirk-Kuwaye
<mkirkkuwaye@gmail.com>
09/18/2019 04:55 PM

To boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
cc
Subject Testimony OPPOSING Small School
Equity: Establish a threshold
enrollment for viable small schools
//BOE General Business Meeting
9/19/19, 1pm

Re: F&I Committee Action on the Recommendations of the Committee on Weights XI regarding the Weighted Student Formula Fund Allocation for the 2020-21 and 2021-2022 School Years // **Small School Equity: Establish a threshold enrollment for viable small schools**

Aloha Board Members,

I am Michael Kirk-Kuwaye, Ka'a'awa resident, and I oppose the setting of a threshold number that will trigger small school closures. This single threshold number sounds like what Honolulu Magazine (HM) public school rankings does to the DOE every year -- assigning a single grade to schools -- which is what everyone focuses on. In fact this may be worse than what HM does because at least HM uses and shows the various subscores that go into the grade.

This proposed single metric to trigger small school closure – student enrollment -- doesn't factor in the culture and history of the school and community, the many benefits of small schools*, and the special needs of the students, such as their geographic isolation. It's common knowledge that road closures due to inclement weather happen regularly along Kamehameha Highway from north Ko'olaupoko and through all of Ko'olauoa. Do we really want to put more students on the road in these conditions, and parents as well, having to travel to a school outside of their community? Also, Hawaii is already one of the most traffic-congested states in the nation. I don't think BOE policies should add to this problem. Finally, small school "equity" does not mean "equal" -- as used in a formula -- but what is fair, based on the unique needs of students, schools and their communities.

* http://www.ruraledu.org/user_uploads/docs/hobbit_effect.pdf

Thank you for considering my views.

Respectfully,

Michael Kirk-Kuwaye
Ka'a'awa resident

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September 19, 2019

Hawai'i Board of Education

General Business Meeting

Catherine Payne, Chair

Brian De Lima, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima, and Members,

We would like to comment on item IV D (3) update on the development of a 10-year Board of Education and Department of Education Strategic Plan, and (4) update on Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") Plan Amendment

We are a group of equity in education advocates that represent the voices of Native Hawaiian, parent, disability, higher education, multilingual, social justice, and education reform communities and are committed to advocate for students who have historically struggled in our public education system.

Regarding item IV D (3), we look forward to seeing the HIDOE draft of the 2030 Promise plan and appreciate the inclusion of stakeholder feedback throughout this entire process. As we move into the discussion phase on aligning the plan with benchmarks and metrics, we would like to reiterate the message that we have provided in previous testimonies, that in order to track the progress of the Strategic Plan and provide guidance and clarity to schools and the community, the Department should take a ***balanced approach of including both quantitative and qualitative measures.***

We also hope to see the Department answer the following questions, which have been echoed by fellow community partners:

- 1) Moving into the new strategic plan, how does the Department plan to specifically address 2017-2020 Strategic Plan goals that have not been reached, including chronic absenteeism, the achievement gap, and foundational academic proficiency?

Relatedly, at the upcoming Data Retreat scheduled for November 7, 2019, will the Department provide the public with a comprehensive evaluation on the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan that includes an analysis of each indicator, lessons learned, and strategies needed to reach these goals? Ideally, this report would be produced in advance of the final approval of the 2030 Promise Plan and would guide the new plan.

- 2) For any benchmarks and indicators selected for the new strategic plan, will the Department disaggregate data to better show the performance of high-needs

students? This includes indicators such as college-going rate and dual credit attainment.

In addition to more transparency around disaggregated data, will the Department provide clarity on what specifically is being done to address the subgroup performance, whether or not there is progress, and why?

Regarding item IV D (4), we understand that with the **revised methodology for identifying schools' subgroups for Additional Targeted Support Improvement (A-TSI)**, more “consistently underperforming” subgroups, defined as the subgroups with the lowest performing unit score in the bottom 10% of all schools for two consecutive years, may be identified and addressed. We are pleased with this outcome, as it gives attention to more of our struggling students.

However, the transparency about which subgroups and what specifically is being done to address these subgroups is lacking. HIDOE's ESSA Report for 2017-2018 only lists the schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support (A-TSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement-Consistently Underperforming (TSI-CU), not the subgroups, or the interventions being made. <http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/strivehi/2018/999ESSARpt.pdf>

We would like more clarity around which subgroups, what specifically is being done to address the underperformance, the status of improvement or lack of improvement, and why.

We have come together as signatories on this letter as organizations, identified by the organization name in parenthesis, and as individuals who are not representing affiliated organizations.

Mahalo,

Martha Guinan (SEAC)

Patricia Halagao

Gavin Thornton (Hawai'i Appleseed)

Cheri Nakamura (HE`E Coalition)

Paula Adams (Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance)

David Miyashiro (HawaiiKidsCAN)

William “Pila” Wilson

Deborah Zysman (Hawai'i Children's Action Network)

Late Testimony



SAVE KAAWA Elementary School
From: Anne Karnuth <karnutha002@gmail.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Aloha,

Why save Kaaawa Elementary? The list is long but I want to tell you a personal story that will show you just how important this school is.

My husband and I have 3 children (now grown). All 3 were students at Kaaawa Elementary school and graduated to go on to Kahuku.

When my daughter was in the 6th grade at Kaaawa she came home one day and told us she wanted to be a teacher. At the time we thought

it was cute that she already knew what she wanted to do with her life but like most of us....life changes. My daughter graduated with honors

from another Public School, Kahuku and was accepted to the University of Hawaii. She graduated on schedule with a teaching degree.

Her first job was on the West side in a brand new School with AC, hundreds of students, endless amenities and did very well. She was successful

in raising the bar for her grades test scores. However, she knew something was missing in fulfilling her dream of becoming a teacher. This year

she attained that goal. She is now a teacher at Kaaawa Elementary School. Full Circle!

She feels that NOW she can give back to her community though she lives miles away in Mililani. Her commute is long, the hours are long,

but nothing makes her happier than teaching at Kaaawa Elementary. My daughters brothers are very proud of her. Her husband and their family

are very proud of her. My husband and I extremely proud of her sense of community, love of teaching and commitment to this little school

in Kaaawa that needs teachers like my daughter to show our youth the way. She is committed to Kaaawa Elementary and so should our State!

If Kaaawa Elementary school closes you will see a shift in the feel of community and like so many of our past and future teachers they will leave the islands to

teach elsewhere. We need teachers who want to be part of a community and truly feel their impact on the children they yearn to teach.

Please SAVE KAAWA Elementary as we have personally seen first hand how a small school CAN change a life for the good of others!

Mahalo,

Anne & Ben Karnuth

PS Please excuse any typos or grammatical errors, needed to send this offer before your meeting!

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