



March 2, 2020
Hawaii State Board of Education
General Business Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chair
Brian De Lima, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima and Members,

We are pleased to provide comments on Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE) consideration of the 10-year Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE) Strategic Plan, The Power and Promise of Public Education.

As you know, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation is a private foundation whose mission is to close the achievement and college attainment gaps in public education so that all of Hawaii's children benefit from high-quality education that prepares them for a successful future.

Each year we invest nearly \$4 million in Hawaii public school students. Our strategy supports efforts to expand and strengthen career academies and pathways, high quality project-based learning, early college, industry certifications, teacher externships, student internships and other career exploration opportunities. We also invest in student supports such as strong counseling and financial aid awareness.

We commend the DOE for soliciting community feedback for the 2030 Promise Plan through multiple phases over the last year. Considerable input and a lot of hard thinking have clearly gone into the Promise Plan. The very act of framing this plan as a promise to students is compelling and inspirational. Preserving the strategic implementation indicators from the prior plan shows a healthy continuity that sends a positive message to the field. Finally, equity clearly comes across as one of the very strongest commitments in the Plan.

Amidst these many positives, however, we remain concerned that Hawaii's performance on the National Assessment of Education Progress (or NAEP) has flattened after strong gains in the earlier part of the 2000s. Also flat are rates of college going, troublesome as most new jobs – especially those that pay family sustaining wages – require a postsecondary college or certificate. And achievement gaps remain stubbornly wide despite many efforts to close them.

While we are encouraged that leaders remain committed to key student achievement data indicators and targets in this new plan, it is not at all clear how the Board, state, complex areas

and schools will use these data to drive decisions. The Promise Plan appears to focus more on aspiration than implementation; and yet, the Board must gauge both whether these are the right promises as well as whether the Department is likely to deliver results on these promises to students.

Several key factors stand out in looking at strategic plans from other school districts that effectively drive work and results. Amongst these are a compelling aspiration, clear goals that define the aspiration in practical terms and targets based on historical performance of leading schools, a limited set of strategies that feed the goal, feedback loops to manage performance and some sense of the resources needed to accomplish these goals.

So our first concern is that the public documents we have seen of the Promise Plan lay out the aspiration but fail to answer some critical implementation questions. Which strategic opportunities are expected to impact specific student success indicators, and why? How were the targets arrived at? How will implementation occur and what is the underlying accountability and support for schools and complex areas that are off-track? What strategic resources are needed to deliver on this ambition?

Our second concern is the sheer number of strategic opportunities – 123 in all. In overly simplistic terms, this means that the Department must deliver on 12 opportunities every single year for the next decade in order to fulfill its promises to students. None of these are minor projects and it is daunting to think of how the best-intentioned public servants across the Department must mobilize in service of this vision. Conversely, if each school and complex area may choose which strategic opportunity to pursue, then what is the value of a statewide plan?

Finally, our third concern is the timing of a ten-year plan. In essence, the public will not know how the plan is progressing until late 2023. Too much is at stake for our children, especially those furthest from opportunity, for the Board to wait this long for a public accounting of progress.

So given all of the positive work undertaken to date, we encourage leaders from the Board and Department towards a few next steps. First, reorganize around a few top priorities and the key opportunities under each priority that are expected to impact a specific student learning goal. Develop a detailed implementation plan for each priority that contains a single accountable owner empowered to lead, the chain of actions required for these ideas to become reality in public schools across the state, and the resources needed to support this work.

We hope that this feedback is taken in the spirit in which it is intended – as a critical friend to public schools. We deeply value our long-term partnership with the Board and Department and share your commitment to improve learning opportunities for all of Hawaii's students.

Terrence George
President/CEO

Alex Harris
Vice President for Programs

January 28, 2020

Board of Education

re: Testimony for 3/5/20 Community Meeting concerning 2030 Promise Plan.

Aloha Board of Education Members,

The Promise Plan is filled with many promises. Unfortunately, it's extremely thin in making promises to improve family engagement. Throughout the plan, family engagement is noticeably absent. I can't list all the examples, but here are two of them:

2030 Promise Plan p. 6

We will work in partnership with our community leaders as we develop and implement our strategies to fulfill this promise.

Why not write, "We will work in partnership with our community leaders and families as we develop and implement our strategies to fulfill this promise.

2030 Promise Plan p. 8

HĀ supports a holistic learning process with universal appeal and application to guide learners and leaders in the entire school community.

Why not write, "...to guide learners, leaders, and the entire school community."

One of the worst problems throughout the Hawaii Department of Education is it's attitude toward families, in spite of the fact that authentic family engagement is one of the highest predictors of academic success – especially for high-risk populations (poverty, non-native-English-speaking parents, etc.)

I don't see any promises to really improve the deplorable lack of family engagement. That has been, and will continue to be, a primary reason that Hawaii schools do not perform well compared to the nation and the rest of the world.

The other problem is the lack of accountability for following the BOE policies that already exist. There is no data to track complaints from families or the public, to track why teachers leave, to find out where problems persist, etc. There is no system for handling complaints or problems, and I don't see any promise that this will change. The issue continues to be ignored.

Mahalo,



Vanessa Ott



Hawai'i

Committee: Board of Education
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 5, 2020, 3 p.m.
Place: 1390 Miller Street, Honolulu, HI, Room 404
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i on Board Action for the DOE 2020-30 Promise Plan

Dear Board of Education Members:

The ACLU of Hawai'i ("ACLU") writes to testify with questions on the Board of Education's ("BOE") review of the Hawai'i Department of Education's ("DOE") 2020-30 Promise Plan. The BOE has an obligation to ensure the academic proficiency of all DOE students. This includes requiring the DOE to collect and report relevant education data, and reducing disparity among related factors such as the use of discipline and referrals to law enforcement. Otherwise the "promise" of equity remains merely an ideal.

We recommend that the Board consider:

1. How to ensure vulnerable populations of students' needs are addressed, for instance, students with disabilities, English language learners, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth, and housing insecure or foster youth. Subgroup academic goals are not identified, nor are any indicators on student discipline. We often see disparities in the over- and mis-use of punitive school discipline for these populations.
2. With as much flexibility as this plan entails, the BOE must design transparency and accountability measures. Lowering the data reporting requirement from an n size of 10 down to an n size of 5 is one concrete way to addresses the transparency issue. New York City adopted an n size of 5 for its data reporting requirements. For many of our smaller schools, this type of data transparency is necessary. As an example, when we submitted a public records request for incidents of restraint, every single entry was redacted for every school. This makes it impossible to determine if certain subgroups are overrepresented, particularly for a practice that is ripe for abuse.
3. What are the mechanisms for holding the Superintendent, complex area staff, and schools accountable for reaching the goals in the plan? The DOE failed to meet certain goals in its 2016-20 plan. What went wrong? What is different this time to meet these new goals? What happens if schools fail to reach their academic proficiency and growth targets?

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 380-5422 or rshih@acluhawaii.org.

Sincerely,

Rae Shih
Legal Fellow ACLU of Hawai'i



Kauahikaua Response to 2030 Strategic Plan

Noelani Kauahikaua <cchow78@hotmail.com>

Thu, Mar 5, 2020 at 9:31 AM

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

Aloha mai,

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my mana'o regarding the 2030 Strategic Plan. I am a parent of 2 students that attend Kaiapuni schools, one at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala and one at the new Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo located at Blanche Pope Elementary. I am also the Secretary of of Hui Makua o Pū'ōhala, Kaiapuni parent group. I feel that Kaiapuni is not sufficiently integrated into the strategic plan. With the 1978 Concon legislation of the State of Hawai'i, Hawaiian language rightfully became an "official" language of the State. If 'ōlelo Hawai'i is an official language of the state, it should be treated as so in the DOE's plan. Right now Kaiapuni is compartmentalized under one section, the Hawai'i section. Kaiapuni is not merely a single aspect in the DOE. The DOE & the state has an obligation to the people of Hawai'i to provide Kaiapuni education equally to all learners. Kaiapuni is a pathway of education that should be woven through all the 5 promises, not just in the Hawai'i promise. The DOE needs to include plans in each of the 5 promises: Hawai'i, Equity, School design, Empowerment, Innovation to properly address the needs to continue to build and support the Kaiapuni in all areas.

There are many struggles that our community continues to face in obtaining a Kaiapuni education. Access: Many 'ohana currently have to travel great distances to access an education in the official language of this state. Resources: Our teachers currently make their own curriculum as none is available as "off-the-shelf" as their English counterparts have. Teachers: There is an even greater teacher shortage in the Kaiapuni than there is in the English classrooms! If the state continues to ignore its obligation to meet the needs of Kaiapuni, it is not only ignoring it's legal obligation, it is also ignoring the call of the community as enrollment in Kaiapuni continues to grow steadily even in the face of these adversities.

Additionally, the current Organization plan of the Department needs to be corrected. [Policy 105-7 Hawaiian Education](#) states: "The Department of Education ("Department") shall establish in the office of the Superintendent an Office of Hawaiian Education of which the head shall be part of the Superintendent's leadership team." I do not see this reflected in the current Organizational plan. OHE needs to be given it's mandated place in the Superintendent's office in your organizational plan and in leadership with the Superintendent.

Mahalo for your time,

Noelani Kauahikaua
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