

Testimony BOE

From: Lacy Chun <l.chun@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lacy Chun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:55 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action H

TESTIFYING ON ACTION ITEM H. BOARD ACTION ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION AND HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 RESPONSE): 2017-2021 CONTRACTUAL MODIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK RELATED TO COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR BARGAINING UNIT 5 EMPLOYEES.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

11:00 AM

Aloha,

My name is Lacy Chun. I am a teacher at Waianae High School in the Leeward District on Oahu. I teach in the Waianae/Nanakuli complex. I am submitting testimony against the reopening of schools on August 4, 2020.

We are nationally in a state of uncertainty, with little guidance of which states and countries to look towards. This is not a simple solution of reopening our schools as we must find a compromise between student/staff health and student education. Face-to-face instruction is ideal and what educators look forward to returning to, but there are many factors that inhibit easy accessibility to our previous instructional methods.

I encourage a pause on reopening school buildings, just as we paused on reopening the state. Our preventative actions were effective in the low number of cases throughout our state, as it was single digit caseloads. When the state began to slowly reopen, our numbers were significantly higher than our quarantined conditions, and it rose to be consistent with numbers we saw at the beginning of COVID-19 in Hawaii. Schools are still not open at this time, and as someone that has a part time job in healthcare, I can attest that the numbers will rise with the higher volumes of individuals moving. These numbers continue to fluctuate, and I am concerned for health and safety of both the staff and keiki that will be exposed with such a sudden shift.

Administrations across all schools have been working effortlessly on creating a seamless plan, but they continue to plan for the upcoming school year as we reach only 2 weeks before opening. This leaves teachers with little to no clarity on what to prepare for our classes, especially if there is greater emphasis on developing relationships within the first two weeks of school.

Schools are still given only 4 days to train and prepare for students' return, which was normal to our past opening of the school year procedures. The half days are made for more training, but teachers are expected to be trained after students are already in school. Online platforms are meant to be supplementary and not primary sources of learning for secondary education. If teachers are expected to create an online curriculum, we are not currently ready to provide effective online instructional methods in a two week period.

We should not be one of the first states to open up, especially without a plan. As Lt. Josh Green mentioned, a healthcare plan should be established prior to the opening of schools to ensure safety. Many questions go unanswered, such as "what do we do if a teacher is sick? Will all of those in contact need to be quarantined? What happens if someone passes and it is linked to a school infection?" We need more time and guidance to provide effective protocols. A board was only now being created, but two weeks is not enough for efficient planning to protect the communities. I am especially concerned with communities, such as Waianae and Nanakuli.

Please consider postponing the reopening of schools for a later date when more questions can be answered and we reduce the amount of COVID-19 cases. At least 2-4 more weeks of planning could greatly reduce the risks that come with an eager opening of schools.

Mahalo,

Lacy Chun, Leeward District, Oahu

--

L. Chun

Biology | Sophomore Academy

Wai'anae High School

l.chun@seariders.k12.hi.us

Testimony BOE

From: Yuka Mickelson <yukamickelson@gmail.com> on behalf of Yuka Mickelson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to the Board of Education today in regards to "H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Yuka Mickelson, I am a 8th year kindergarten teacher at Kamali'i Elementary School. I am very concerned about the reopening of the schools in Hawaii. Not only am I concerned about the health and safety of my own, but also am I fearful of the emotional damage that could be caused to my students (and everyone around them) if one of the classmates or teachers contracts the virus and gets very ill (and/or dies). I do understand that we need to prioritize the social and emotional needs of our students, however, by rushing teachers and students back to the schools could be more costly..

And how are teachers illegally protected when one of the families wants to blame the school for their child contracting the virus? Also, how would the state of hawaii and DOE be responsible for the death if a teacher dies from COVID-19 at his/her workplace?

I was recently at school and I can honestly say that my teacher's bathroom did not have any improvements, again, I understand the budget shortage, but I'm also hearing that DOE is receiving funds. Could these funds be used not only for purchasing the devices (very important) for hard-to-reach students but also be used for improving the school bathrooms (both students and teachers)?? It would be much safer if every student bathroom had automatic faucets, soap and paper towel dispensers. If we delay the reopening of school even for another month, these safety improvements could be installed.

I watched the most recent video from the superintendent and am concerned about hiring 15 nurses. One extra nurse for each complex area does not seem sufficient at all. I also feel that staff members at schools should be tested regularly for COVID-19 to ensure the safety and health on everyone's behalf.

With many states observint the spikes in COVID-19 cases, I believe that we should wait to reopen the schools especially because most of the schools in Hawaii need improvements in safety and health aspects of the buildings.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Annie Zamber <anniezamber@gmail.com> on behalf of Annie Zamber
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teacher Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017 -2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

It is crucial that when students return to school all classrooms and the entire campus is setup to ensure proper social distancing. Clear and well developed procedures are needed to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and faculty. If the opening of this school year is rushed and not done properly, COVID-19 will likely spike dramatically throughout our communities and the entire state. We are all well aware that the healthcare system in this state can only handle so many people getting sick, especially on the outer islands. It seems only reasonable that we would get at least an extra week to develop clear and thorough school wide systems that we will be able to teach our students. Each school needs to come up with procedures and also strategies to implement and enforce the procedures in order to drastically minimize the risk of COVID-19 spreading. Again, if we rush this school opening the results could be devastating and people will die, that's the truth. I was quite surprised to find out that we weren't going to be given any extra time at the start of the year to make sure that when students return to school we have clear procedures and well developed strategies to implement those procedures to minimize in every way we can the spread of COVID-19. Lastly, it would be greatly beneficial for each school to be able to provide their specific developed procedures clearly to students, parents, and guardians before students return to school, we can't do that with just 4 standard teacher work days.

In regards to the differentials, these were already negotiated and it doesn't seem reasonable at all that these negotiated differentials are just going to be taken away or delayed for who knows how long. Teachers that received and are supposed to continue to receive the differentials were given them for a reason. If you take those differentials away it will undo their purpose. In addition, teachers have already made financial decisions based on the pay increase because of the differentials and it will put them in a very difficult situation if this part of their income is just taken away. From what I understand, we have a \$1 billion state emergency fund and the possibility of more federal stimulus money coming to the state, it doesn't seem reasonable at this time to take away income that was already negotiated. Down the line, we may have to deal with furloughs and loss of income but to just take this income away in my opinion seems clearly to be a violation of the negotiation made between the state and the union.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Ann Zamber
Teacher
Kealahou High School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Todd Craine <todd.craine@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Todd Craine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:57 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Testimony
Attachments: Differential Testimony.docx

Hello-

Please find my testimony regarding the importance of our pay differential attached. Mahalo, Todd Craine.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Hello-

I would like to express the critical importance of the Special Ed pay differential in my life.

I spent the past few years subbing as I struggled to overcome health and personal issues and return to my teaching license and tenured position as a Special Education teacher. Taking home around \$30,000 yearly doesn't suffice to live in Hawaii. Last year, Hawaii economists pegged the state poverty level at around \$54,000 (which we know is almost exactly teacher starting pay). The poverty level is barely enough to subsist in Hawaii, yet I struggled to remain in the state in the midst of an oncoming divorce. I returned to a teaching position in November of 2019, and nearly doubled my income with the included pay differential. This proved to be a LIFESAVER for me, and allowed me to remain in Hawaii, and remain in teaching. Many teachers in Hawaii maintain multiple jobs to get by, which creates further difficulties in their personal and family lives. To attract and retain the quality teachers Hawaii needs, pay must meet the needs of educators so they don't have to stretch themselves too thin just to survive and raise their families. Since mainland jobs pay better compensation, we must not suffer the usual brain drain of talent to mainland pursuing adequate income. This pay differential is critical to me continuing to teach in Hawaii. I cannot raise my children and meet my needs on teacher pay alone, and don't like needing to work hotel banquets to make better money to supplement my income. Therefore, I BEG the state to continue the pay differential (and raise educator and school personnel pay across the board to retain the quality people we have) so I may continue to support our statewide education goals and further the growth of our keiki. Thank you so very much for helping our teachers survive.

Warmest aloha,

Todd Craine, Special Education teacher.

Ph: (808)264-2964

toddcraine1@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Waiolu Peterson <waiolu@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Waiolu Peterson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reject Proposal for Action Item VI- G

Aloha mai e ka Papa Alaka'i o ka Ho'ona'auao,

I would like to urge you to **reject the proposal** to temporarily discontinue the extra compensation for teachers of Special Education, Hawaiian Immersion and Hard to fill areas.

The DOE has consistently been underfunded by the State. The State needs to be held accountable to funding the DOE without cuts to the Public Education System as we are already underfunded and undervalued.

I fear for the major repercussions that come from unmet promises of differential pay.

Teachers should not be the first budget cuts as we get through this COVID-19 crisis. This 2020-2021 school year, teachers overall will be doing twice the amount of work. Hawaiian Immersion teachers will start at a **disadvantage** because as we move toward digital learning, Hawaiian Immersion teachers will need to create, edit, translate, and adjust to digital platforms and curriculum resources that were developed for English only learners.

Please continue to support and acknowledge the front line of education, teachers, by rejecting the Proposal to discontinue the compensation for those teachers that will be working even harder during this COVID-19 time.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Wai‘olu Peterson
Teacher and Makua at
Ke Kula O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u
Kea‘au, Hawai‘i

Testimony BOE

From: Mermaid Surfer <mermaidsurfer@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mermaid Surfer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: please disregard my last email with testimony as it had a typo I needed to correct!

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I teach English at Kahuku High and Intermediate on Oahu and request that we delay the return of students in person on 8/4/2020 so that we can spend more time preparing and planning to give our students both a safe and quality educational experience.

Since I started teaching, we've always been given 4 days without students, 2 of which are administration lead, leaving many teachers to spend long hours of their own time doing what needs to be done to get ready for students to return and these are under the normal circumstances we are ALL used to.

This year is an entirely different ball game. We have not seen our students since March. Our classrooms are in shambles; many of us returning to rooms that still have not been cleaned or set up to enforce CDC guidelines. The shock of all of this still has not set in with me and I've been trying my best to mentally train myself to accept this new normal so that I can set a good example for the kids when they are back. But here's the thing- I'm still having a hard time. In my 37 years of living, I've never encountered a situation like this before. Each time I sit down at my computer to think about lesson plan ideas, my mind reverts to a normal classroom setting situation. Once the reality sets in that things will no longer be that way for the time being, I start to panic because I don't know how or where to even begin with planning. Add in the fact that my family is on another island and I worry about catching this virus and never being able to see them again.

Psychologically, it's quite difficult to untrain the mind once it's conditioned to see things in a certain light. For me, the start of a school year symbolizes promise, opportunities and excitement for a new challenge with different students while fondly looking back on areas of growth to continue to improve on. How can I focus on those things as an educator when my own basic needs are being trifled with as I debate coming back to work directly with students in the midst of a pandemic?

Since March, I have frantically ran to the aisle of cleaning supplies first whenever I go to the store, eager to grab whatever sanitation supplies or paper goods I can get my hands on. Never in my time of living alone in my 20's and 30's have I had a freezer full of food or closets full of cleaning stuff to last beyond a week at a time. You may call that foolish but I call that being a teacher who lives on her own in the state of Hawaii. While it's gotten easier to find toilet paper, many of the supplies we will need for our classrooms on a regular and consistent basis like hand sanitizer and wipes are still extremely difficult to obtain. If we can barely find these products for our own homes, how are we going to find them for our classrooms? While you say these things are being provided for us, we are going to need a lot more than a month's supply to make it through a 10 month school year. If you are already planning to take back the pay differentials you promised for SPED/Hawaiian Immersion and hard to fill geographic locations, how are you going to pay for PPE, cleaning supplies and most importantly, more custodial staff?

As an employer, the DOE has let us down many times before. I could write an entire novel on how many times I've been screwed over but that's beside the point. How can I trust that this time you guys are going to deliver? In a sense, teaching has become for me what is similar to the dynamics of an abusive relationship. The teacher often gets guilt tripped into staying in the profession because we care so much about our students and will continue to put ourselves in compromising situations while holding on to hope that some day things will change for the better. We love our students and our careers so much that we continue to push past the pain of

being disappointed, taken advantage of and verbally abused and attacked by all kinds of people on a daily basis.

Enough is enough. I am sick of being reduced to a label of a glorified babysitter who is being guilt tripped into not fighting for what I feel our students and school staff members deserve. Parents have found ways during school breaks to provide childcare while they go to work and given the fact that many are still out of work as it is, claiming we need kids back in school so that they can go back is a weak argument. Don't fault us for the state of the economy- we delivered in the best way that we could in a situation that you pretty much set us and our students up to fail in.

We cannot control the lifestyles of our students and while there are many amazing parents who see eye to eye with us in this situation and do not want to send their kids back for in person instruction, there are still going to be the ones who insist this virus is not real, demand that their child not wear a mask and go against Governor Ige's wishes of them not being sent to school in spite of being sick. Educators need more time to prepare for situations like these.

The passive aggressive message delivered by Dr. Kishimoto last night was another instance of the continued abuse teachers are expected to endure. She alluded to the fact that since grocery stores, restaurants, delivery drivers, custodians and security personnel continued to work during the pandemic, teachers should also step it up and do the same. I'm not sure what planet she's on but we DID work through the pandemic. We DID the best that we could in spite of never having been trained on how to teach in this manner. We were instructed by the higher ups, Kishimoto included, not to grade assignments, introduce new concepts or require students to do the work. We were set up by her for continued criticism from the public from the get go. Once summer started at the end of May, many of us continued to work, myself included.

To close, I must say, I feel more safe doing food deliveries for DoorDash than I do going back to my classroom. That statement alone should speak for itself. Please delay the return of students to in person instruction so that teachers have more time to prepare because contrary to the plethora of lies Kishimoto is continuing to spew out to silence the public about us being trained and schools being safe and sanitary spaces for students to come back to, we are not ready. This is coming from someone who is on the frontlines- an educator.

Mahalo nui loa,
Ms. Jennifer M. Corpion
MAT, Chaminade University
Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Kekoa Michael Bay <kbaysquared@gmail.com> on behalf of Kekoa Michael Bay
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I am testifying on action item G: which is labeled “Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.” I have been teaching at Pearl City High School in a Special Education position for the past three years. I was hired as an emergency hire and recently completed my master’s degree to be “Highly Qualified” in Secondary Science and Special Education.

Now that I am finished and highly qualified, my wife has enrolled to get her licensure in Special Education as well. The differential is a significant reason I have chosen to stay teaching in the Special Education setting, and it will help our family survive while my wife seeks to complete her licensure. Nationwide, Special Educators have a heavy burden of legal implications tied to the writing and managing of IEPs. Most states have a built-in differential for Special Educators because they understand the burden. Hawai’i just made the appropriate adjustments and made a promise not only to our educators but to our students as well. We promised to push to keep qualified teachers in the classrooms for our students by creating this differential. If you “suspend” this differential, you are sending a message that implies, “Special Education only matters if things are going well.” **This is not the message we need to be sending to our students and families.**

This pandemic crisis is precisely the time that support needs to be pushed toward our students in the highest need areas. Many teachers are relying on the promise of this differential to help support us through this challenging time. Going back on this promise would be a significant betrayal to our teachers and our students. Many teachers made some significant decisions based on this promise of differential. Breaking that promise is sending the message, “We do not care enough to live up to our agreements, because money is tight.” As a teacher, that is the opposite of the values we are trying to teach our students every day. The numbers that are shown within today’s agenda show that this differential is working to retain our qualified teachers. Teachers saw that the Hawai’i Board of Education cared enough to give us reasons to stay. Previous years we had many teachers leaving Hawai’i for better offers in other states. Let’s not encourage a return of that trend.

Your decision in this matter is critical to keeping the promise to improve education in Hawai’i. Please don’t disappoint our keiki by choosing to betray your promises.

Mahalo,

Kekoa Michael Bay
Pearl City High School
Science / Special Education / Key Club

Testimony BOE

From: RD Luster <letslearn023@gmail.com> on behalf of RD Luster
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board of Education,
PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE read and listen to all of the testimonies that you have been getting regarding school reopenings.

I am a teacher who has been working for 20+ years.

I am dedicated each year to do all that I can to help my students achieve success. I deeply care for my students, that is why I do this job.

For the first time in my life, I am afraid to return to school.

-The numbers are much higher now than they were in March

-Asymptomatic kids/colleagues may be all around us.

-Most students have been sheltered these past four months keeping the numbers down. What happens when they all start coming together, before school/after school?

-I TRULY FEEL LIKE WE ARE BEING MADE TO GO ON THE FRONT LINES

-ARE WE A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT TO SHOW THE REST OF THE COUNTRY HOW THINGS GO?

-I am PLEADING with you to please hold off on schools reopening

-I honestly do not know how you could sleep at night, putting all of us in this situation.

Sincerely,

A deep from the heart Devoted teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Bobbie Wilson <bwlhikairoad@gmail.com> on behalf of Bobbie Wilson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying school reopening

Aloha- I am writing this testimony to humbly ask you to delay the re-opening of the schools in Hawai'i to give the teachers and administration time to adequately prepare for the return of students. There is not enough time for the teachers to prepare and gather the supplies they need. I have two daughters who are teachers in the schools and I am afraid for them. I also have two grandchildren I will be caring for when they are not in school. That relates to me to possibly being exposed to this deadly virus without the proper preventions in the schools. What procedure is in place when someone in the school tests positive for Covid-19? The teachers are coming up short and having to use their own money to attempt to keep their students and themselves safe. So far for one of my daughter's the administration has not provided any supplies for her to insure that the students and indeed herself operate safely. She has spent over \$600.00 of her own money to attempt to keep her classroom safe for herself and her students. Please require administration to reimburse her or provide her with new supplies when the ones she has ordered run out. I implore you to give our teachers the tools they need to safely reopen our schools. Mahalo, Bobbie Wilson, 107 Lihikai Road, Hilo, Hawai'i

Testimony BOE

From: Amber Hong <amber.hong@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Amber Hong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To whom it may concern:

I am a third grade teacher at Pu'u Kukui Elementary on the island of Maui. I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As teachers, we have many questions and concerns regarding the health and safety of our students and staff that have not been answered. To date, the promised written guidance from the state Department of Health has not been provided. Schools need a written comprehensive healthcare plan prior to the start of school. The plan for the use of 'ohana bubbles' has many flaws. Students will be unable to consistently use social distancing or remain inside of their 'bubble'. In addition, there are many potential situations that have no clear plan or guidelines, such as students who are enrolled from out of state or country.

In addition, teachers have not received the training that is necessary to move forward. Please consider delaying the opening of school buildings, in order to allow appropriate time for essential plans and procedures to be drafted, and for training to take place. Please put health and safety for all, at the forefront of the decision making process.

Thank you,
Amber Hong

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Testimony BOE

From: Erica Neves <ericaaneves@hotmail.com> on behalf of Erica Neves
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: PARENT INPUT RE: SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021 A/B ROTATION MODEL

ALOHA,

This is the request I sent directly to my child's school last week after receiving a letter in the mail regarding the A/B rotation model. I heard BOE was accepting testimony, so I will share the same. In summary, working parents will have ongoing challenges with an A/B rotation model. We prefer SET DAYS - just like a work schedule - that our children will be in school, and set "distance learning days" of the week so we can still afford to work and provide for our families. It's more realistic to ask for set days off to be home with our children under 12 years old who are distance learning, than to opt to leave minors home alone, or choose unemployment vs. work to accommodate their school schedule.

Thank you for understanding that parents still need to work to provide for our families and prefer not to leave minor children under 12 unattended. We are all working together to provide a safe learning environment for the community, and at the same time, allow parents to have a realistic work schedule.

From: Erica Neves
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 3:46 PM
To: frank.fernandes@k12.hi.us <frank.fernandes@k12.hi.us>; Celia Ann Main-anakalea <Celia.Main-anakalea@k12.hi.us>; patrick.nishi@k12.hi.us <patrick.nishi@k12.hi.us>; Catherine Hee <catherine.hee@k12.hi.us>; clay.cockett@k12.hi.us <clay.cockett@k12.hi.us>; kevin.dias@k12.hi.us <kevin.dias@k12.hi.us>
Cc: doeinfo@k12.hi.us <doeinfo@k12.hi.us>; info@kaimukims.k12.hi.us <info@kaimukims.k12.hi.us>
Subject: PARENT INPUT RE: SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021 A/B ROTATION MODEL

Aloha Principal Fernandes, Vice Principals Dias, Main-Anakalea, Nishi, Counselor Hee and Mr. Cockett, My daughter attended 6th grade at KMS and many of our friends and family have students returning to KMS for 7th grade also. Let me say, first, that we appreciate all that the staff is doing to ensure a safe learning environment for all returning students, teachers and staff.

Upon receiving the letter by mail regarding the adapted A/B rotation model, I felt compelled to share some very strong feelings as a working parent during this pandemic. Please take to heart the following input, as I realize we ALL need to work together - the school and the community - to keep our kids and community safe.

The main point I would like to express is that **the A/B rotation model is NOT a realistic, functioning, doable model for working parents**. If every working parent of your student body took that letter into their employer tomorrow and said, "I need to be home M/W/F this week and then off Tues/Thursday next week, then off the schedule M/W/F the following week, and then back to Tues/Thursday the following week" many of us would be fired and seeking non-existent unemployment benefits. The letter is basically asking parents to CHOOSE between being employed and having the means to feed our family and put a roof over their head, OR stay home to guide our children through distance learning - which has not been proven to be an effective learning model.

I wish the DOE and at least KMS had taken more time during these planning months to involve the parents. How is this A/B model realistic for any working parent? Do you feel it is safe to leave an 11-year-old child, who just turned 12, at home alone? Are we not placing a community of minors at-risk in this environment? For parents who do not have the option to stay at home, will there be ANY PEACE OF MIND that the child won't answer the door to a stranger, or risk trying to cook for themselves and avoid a fire in the home, or any other list of potential unsupervised accidents?

With the recent survey provided to parents, you only asked about "distance learning" - you didn't ask about what would be realistic for families to have their children return to school. You never asked for input on what would work.

Your recent communication shows that you are open to a "full-time distance learning option" - for those parents who have the option to stay home with their kids, that's great for them and it automatically eliminates that count from the student body numbers. But for a MAJORITY OF WORKING PARENTS who do NOT have the option to work from home, we need a MORE SET SCHEDULE, a MORE REALISTIC/WORKING SCHEDULE. As an example, this is what you should be asking:

1. What days of the week would your child be able to attend school?
2. What days of the week would your child be available for online distance learning?
3. Do you plan to have your child homeschooled 100% of the time?

Those (3) questions alone will give you a plan on when children can attend and how to craft their individual schedules. **You need to consider the working parent.** If someone is working in a restaurant and only does the night shift, they may be able to stay home 100% of the time during school hours with their child. However, if someone always has Thursday/Fridays off, maybe those are the days their child stays home for distance learning? Do you see my point? I, personally, work in an office and am absolutely sure that when I need to have the conversation with my employer that I need "M/W/F off this week and then Tues/Thu off next week" that it will not work for my employer. I also know I will have zero peace of mind that my minor child would have to be home alone 10 days out of every month.

I want to take a moment to share with you our personal family story before providing my suggestions for the upcoming school year, so I hope you take them seriously under consideration.

During the last global pandemic in 2009, we lost our firstborn son, Joshua, to complications from the H1N1 flu virus: he was only 3-years-old, and the youngest in the State of Hawaii to have died from the flu that year. *So please know and understand that our family has personally experienced the horrible tragedy of losing a child to a sudden illness.* We have experienced something that no family should ever have to experience. Someone in the community coughed or sneezed, didn't cover their mouth, somehow our son contracted the flu virus, and he is no longer with us. It is the absolute worst pain anyone could imagine. As a parent who has lost a child, I would be the first to hesitate in sending my daughter back to school if I thought there was a risk to her health. That said, I believe if proper protocol is taken with students wearing face masks in the classroom, practicing social distancing whenever possible, and consistent handwashing/sanitizing and keeping classrooms wiped down, that they can have a safe learning experience in school.

At this age, kids need social skills; they need to engage with their peers; and I know firsthand that my daughter learns better by engaging and interacting with her educators. The highest-grade level she achieved was an "A" by learning ukulele from Ms. Ledesma, and that kind of instruction needs to be face-to-face, hands on learning. Education is a gift and it helps to mold them into the adults and productive members of society they will become.

Overall, if every precaution is taken to ensure the following, there is no reason the student body cannot be in session with a more consistent schedule for working parents. I ask, not just on my behalf, but on behalf of ALL WORKING PARENTS, please allow us the option of selecting A SET SCHEDULE for our children. I'm even fine with only attending school in person 3 days out of the week and 2 days of "distance learning" but it will make these more feasible for working parents if we have SET DAYS when our children our home. If Makayla is in Group A and could be in school ALL of Mon/Wed/Friday and do Tue/Thursday distance learning, I believe my employer would be more flexible on giving me those days off and having to work the weekends to make-up for work hours. The same has to be said for other families. Employers still need to run their businesses, and it cannot be done accommodating an unrealistic work schedule like that. Please, there were SO MANY FAMILIES who have lost their jobs in the tourism/hotel/airline/retail/restaurant industries that when the economy begins to slowly reopen, parents NEED to have the option to return to work when their employers need them to. We cannot be "picking and choosing" days we are available based on when their kids our home.

Help us all. Help the kids, and help the parents, but please go back to the drawing board on this back-to-school model. There is still enough time - nearly A FULL MONTH FROM NOW - to when they are expected to start school full-time, to reassess and do a better job of working with all families regarding this concern.

The easiest transition suggested could be recrafting the A/B model to:

- **GROUP A: Attending in person 3x/week for the duration of the school year M/W/F with distance learning on Tue/Thurs**
- **GROUP B: Attending in person 2x/week (this may appeal more to the 8th graders) Tue/Thursday with distance learning on M/W/F**

I sincerely appreciate everyone's time and hope there can be meaningful discussion on what is important to all working families of students at KMS.

Sincerely, Erica Neves

cc via email: Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, DOE

Testimony BOE

From: elizabeth oden <eoden@hotmail.com> on behalf of elizabeth oden
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii BOE,

Please consider delaying the opening of schools to keiki on August 4, 2020. Educators need ample time back at the workplace preparing new classrooms, moving to new classrooms, receiving training, developing protocols, and solidifying social emotional programs to help our students navigate these difficult times.

Students can always tell when a teacher/school is unprepared. Please allow for the DOH to adequately support and help schools reopen safely to students and faculty.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Oden-Kanu o ka 'Aina NCPCS
Educator

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jenna Oskey <joskey2@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenna Oskey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Reopening of Schools on Aug. 4

To Whom It May Concern:

I am testifying on Action Item H. board ACtion on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Jenna Oskey, and I am a special education teacher at Kanoelani Elementary School. While I feel that our school has been working extremely hard to do all that we can do to prepare for the return of our students, I believe that delaying the return of students to campus will only benefit our students, families, and staff, and make all of our efforts stronger. Throughout the summer, our staff has been working extremely hard to ensure that students can safely return to our school while also receiving a quality education, no matter how families choose to attend. We have been working on new schedules and routines and adding additional safety precautions. While we have been working on this the entire summer break, I feel that additional time will only help us to strengthen what we have already created and will better prepare our staff to work with our students and families during this time. In addition, it will give us additional opportunities to prepare ourselves, our teaching strategies, and our classrooms to ensure that our students are receiving the best education possible while still remaining safe within our school community.

Thank you very much for your time. It is very much appreciated!

Appreciatively,
Jenna Oskey

Testimony BOE

From: Kayleigh C <kayleigh.concepcion@gmail.com> on behalf of Kayleigh C
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Regarding Cuts to Shortage Differentials and Delaying the Student Start Date

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Kayleigh Concepcion and I am a teacher at Wai'anae High School. I understand the complicated nature of making decisions in the current climate. As a teacher, I agree that face-to-face instruction is the most effective method of teaching for student success and that the social emotional aspect of being in a school setting is undoubtedly essential for student, staff and family mental health. I recognize that as family members have to return to work, students at home would pose a significant issue regarding access to childcare as well.

However, and this may be the only point that need be made, but for us to place students back in school puts the lives of students, staff, their families and the greater Hawaii community at risk. **If we were to lose a student...a staff member... or any more lives because of exposure in schools when we could have prevented it, you are responsible for that death.**

Additionally, the hybrid models that are the current expected course are littered with an innumerable amount of logistical nightmares that are waiting to happen including sick staff and ineffective substitute coverage, an unknown number of students who will have to be completely online compared to their peers and potentially entire classes that will have to quarantine at any point in time. The uncertainty that is accompanied by these models will be paralleled with uncertainty in instruction as teachers struggle to manage multiple classroom environments with little to no time to prepare.

While distance learning may not have the face-to-face component that we all desire, it DOES offer more flexibility within the ever changing status of the public health crisis at hand. We can find solutions within distance learning that will provide a much more solid curriculum, routine AND instruction if we are not having to change plans at every turn. Because of that, distance learning is the better option and I urge you to reconsider it as the path moving forward.

Finally, if your argument for pushing the return to school is based in any way on better instruction for students (which again, I believe can be better achieved through a less volatile plan) then suggesting that differentials for teachers in hard-to-fill and sped positions be cut is hypocritical. Students in these areas and placement experience the highest rate of teacher turnover which is a leading cause for less than optimal instruction. The differentials have proven to retain more teachers in these positions which directly impacts student learning. On top of that, **as you ask teachers to enter classrooms amid a pandemic and simultaneously cut their pay you're sending the message, as always, that teachers are dispensable and not a valued position within our society and that is a message we simply cannot take any more.**

Best,

Kayleigh Concepcion

Kayleigh L. Concepcion

B.S. Psychology | University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2016
M.S Ed | Johns Hopkins University, 2019

Testimony BOE

From: Ele <superflyele@gmail.com> on behalf of Ele
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Kauai school opening

Aloha

My name is Eleanor Jones. I have two children in the public school system. I support the schools opening on August 4 so that relationships between teacher and child can at least get a head start. If schools have to go remote later due to any sort of spike I completely understand that as well. However, our island has zero active cases and until the island opens to the mainland it will hopefully remain that way. Please give the kids a chance to have a little school experience.

Mahalo,

Eleanor Jones
808-346-6020

Testimony BOE

From: K <tolaer@hotmail.com> on behalf of K
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Sped Differential

As a veteran special education teacher, I am sending this testimony in support of the continuation of the pay differential for special education and Hawaiian immersion teachers. The differnetial was a welcome surprise. I felt that we were finally recognized for all the extra time, work and money we put in on a daily basis. Hours outside of the school day are spent developing specialized lessons, collaborating with general ed teachers, IEPs, data collection, data analysis, coordinating meetings, IN meetings, just developing relationships with my parents, etc. The list goes on and on.

I've seen the changes in the special education through the years from teachers specializing in specific disabilities (e.g., LD, EH, HI, etc.) to non-categorical placements. Instead of being a specialist in one or possibly two areas, special ed teachers are now required to be jack-of-all trades for **every** disability. My analogy is--would you go to your PCP for heart surgery?

I don't even want to start on paying for supplies and materials out of my own pocket. Going through the regular purchase order process takes a month or so if you're lucky. I need those things now when my kids need it. Not a couple of months down the road.

That pay differential not only represents the recognition by the DOE, the Legislature and BOE of the challenges sped teachers face but also helps to pay for some of those "extras". I've already spent \$400 to purchase PPEs, additional cleaning supplies and additional materials to address the social distancing guideline. Do you know how difficult it's going to be to keep K-1 students social distancing? I purchased things that students can use individually and still have fun at recess. And that money is money spent on stuff before school even starts!

Please consider continuing the pay differential if at all possible.

Thank you,

Kathryn Inouye, Linapuni Elementary
MED, National Board Certified Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Mary McCarthy <mhmccarthy95@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary McCarthy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: ameliak@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony: Action item H.; Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding

Testimony on Action Item H: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii and Hawaii State Teachers Association

Dear Board of Education members;

I am writing to express my grave concern about the consideration to open schools to in-person attendance. My daughter Amelia Keefe is a very dedicated middle school teacher at Ewa Beach Middle School who would like nothing better than to be back in the classroom where she can give students the best possible attention and atmosphere to learn in. But she and I are both far more concerned about the deadly potential that exists for both students and staff if students physically return to school. Much of the data is showing that outbreaks predominantly occur when there are congested gatherings AND when people are interacting face to face in close proximity for prolonged periods of time. A school classroom, lunchroom or outdoor free time for students that wouldn't look a lot like this is hard to imagine. Especially if students are feeling it is an unwanted restriction to wear masks. Again the idea of preventing preteens and teenagers from engaging in socializing that is so important to their development at this stage is difficult and sad and may create other social deficits down the road. That's nothing anyone wants but taking the chance of losing lives would be worse. I read recently that transmission rate percentages among high school students is relatively low, like 7% of ALL identified Covid cases. But as another commentator put it. If someone gave you 100 M&Ms and told you there were 7 deadly ones in it, most likely you wouldn't try eating any of those M&Ms. That's the question I guess. What kinds of chances are we willing to take? I hope the Hawaii's Board of Education will err on the side of caution.

Sincerely,

Mary McCarthy

Mother of Amelia Keefe, Ewa Beach Middle School English Teacher

CC: Amelia Keefe

Testimony BOE

From: Maryalice Woody <maryalice.woody@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Maryalice Woody
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Morning,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a PTT, Part-time Temporary Teacher. I tutor 8th graders in small groups and one-to-one, at Kailua Intermediate School. I am a retired Kamehameha Elementary Teacher with 38 years of experience.

The bottom line is that our school, actually all schools in Hawai'i, including what I hear, even Kamehameha, are not ready to open for in-person teaching and learning. I included 'learning' because just having students sitting in the classroom does not guarantee learning. Please take the time to read this journal article about one teacher's experience with teaching under CDC guidelines. <https://blog.usejournal.com/i-spent-three-weeks-in-school-with-kids-under-covid-19-21b78c1a9339>

This summer teachers and administrations should have planned for distance learning only. Curriculum should have been pared down to focus on the core objectives and PD for delivering/ assessing these objectives should have been completed so that the teachers would be prepared to teach online. Most teachers did try to do that but with the vague and late directives coming from the top, there is confusion and a lack of clarity for opening in-person schools. When a school is able to have in person classes, it is much easier to adjust and add on to distance learning plans.

The numbers of covid cases are at the same level when we shut schools down. I am not confident that the schools have gotten the budgets to adequately prepare our schools to have them safe. It is also my understanding that many of the agreed upon decisions between the union and the DOE are not in writing. This needs to be done before the students arrive on campus. I am in the high risk category for age and asthma. I have requested to tutor from home. I will not go on campus to work with students. I am lucky, I have a choice. Most teachers do not. Please consider them and their families along with those of the students'.

Mahalo,
Maryalice Woody

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Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Grant <jennifer.grant@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Grant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony-Reopening of schools

Jennifer Grant
Teacher at Farrington High School
Parent of Ali'iolani Elementary Students

I am testifying in regards to the H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Today I am testifying as both a teacher and a parent. Let me be clear, as both of these roles, I want nothing more than to see our keiki back at school. There are however several questions that both DOH and DOE can't seem to answer which is very disturbing as both a teacher and parent with one week before I go back as a teacher. I believe that these questions should have clear answers and protocols and procedures should be in place before we see our students in person.

Question #1: What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?

This question is really one that needs to be answered before we go back to school. My husband and I are both teachers. So all four of my family members will be going back to school and potentially be exposed or even contract COVID-19. So if I am exposed, do all my family members need to quarantine as well? If my daughters have been exposed, do we all need to quarantine? Do I work from home while in quarantine if I am not sick? If I get sick, will a sub teach my online class too?

Under the CAREs Act, quarantine would be admin directed paid leave but how many times could this happen? I should not have to use my own personal sick leave if I am being ordered to quarantine due to an exposure at my school, my husband's school, or our daughters school. If the state wants to use us as a science experiment then they better be able to support the staff and have a plan in place when they are out.

Question #2-How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?

While working at Farrington, I have had many students come from other countries. How will DOH and DOE make sure that these students followed the self-isolation rule before showing up in my room?

Question #3-When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

First of all, DOH can't even say what the trigger point would be to close a school. DOH and DOE have known since March that we would be going back to school in August. I am blown away that this has not been talked about or agreed upon and communicated to the public. To not have this simple answer is very unsettling as a teacher and as a parent.

Is it up to the school to come up with their distance learning plan or will this be a statewide plan? I personally feel ready to transition to 100% distance learning since I will be teaching by distance 2

days a week to start at my school this year. As a high school teacher, we use online learning tools often. As a parent of a 2nd and 5th grader, are they ready to teach online? Much harder grade levels to teach online.

Our superintendent sent out a video last night that implied that teachers need to basically step up and be brave and be there in person for our students. She referenced people who have been on the frontline this entire time and now it is our turn. The difference between grocery store clerks, security, food workers etc and teachers is the amount of exposure with others. Being in contact with others for longer than 15 minutes is one of the factors in contracting COVID-19. Someone goes into the grocery store, walks around and leaves. As a teacher, my students will be in my room for at least an hour, 3 times a day, 3 days a week. I will have hours of exposure with multiple students and they will have exposure with multiple peers as well as different teachers. Many teachers will have a blended model of online/in person teaching at their school, why are we not allowed to telework on those days? What is the purpose of me going into the school physically to do the same thing I would do from my house without the risk of being exposed.

I want my own children to be in the classroom with their peers and students. I want to teach my students in person more than anything but I don't feel like we can welcome the students back physically until these questions among others can be answered. We are talking about lives at stake and this should not be taken lightly.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Grant

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Testimony BOE

From: Michele Branco <haolemichele@gmail.com> on behalf of Michele Branco
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: I support opening schools testimony

To: BOE

From: Michele Branco

Subject: I support opening schools testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I am a second grade teacher at Keonepoko Elementary School in Pahoa, Hawaii. This is the first time I have ever submitted a testimony for or against an issue. I felt compelled to do so because the union is not representing me or the opinions of the teachers who want to go back to school.

I would like to encourage you to open school up according to the plans in place by each school. I feel things have been handled as well as they can be and that my school administration, complex administration, state administration, BOE, DOE, and DOH have tried their best to think of the best solutions for this terrible time. Do I think they have all the answers? No. I also know that no one does. I think we need to move forward with the best possible plan and as we do I will pray that God, my Savior, blesses us in our very thoughtful efforts and keeps us all safe.

I am no better than any other working person in our country. Many other people were very fearful of having to go to work early on and yet they went in spite of their fear. I actually know one person, my neighbor, who was so fearful to go back to work that she quit her job. Which I commend her. She believed that her health was more important and she didn't expect to get paid if she wasn't willing to do the work they wanted her to do. She stood for her beliefs, it caused her financial loss but she did what she felt she had to do. I cannot name the countless amount of humans who went to work in spite of their fear because they needed the money to survive. They put their lives on the line very early on, when many things about the Coronavirus were unknown.

Of course there will be trepidation, anything new in life does cause trepidation. We must move forward and I encourage you to make positive step forward, even though it is very hard.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Michele Branco

Testimony BOE

From: Cheri Nakamura <cheri.nakamura@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheri Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: HE`E Testimony GBM Item VI. C Superintendent Evaluation Metrics
Attachments: Testimony BOE Meeting 07 23 2020 FINAL.pdf

Aloha,

Please find attached HE`E Coalition Testimony for the General Business Meeting Agenda Item VI. C. Superintendent Evaluation.

Regards,
Cheri Nakamura
808-375-5066



July 23, 2020

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

We would like to comment on General Business Meeting (GBM) Item VI. C. Superintendent's evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year: Superintendent's Priorities and strategic plan indicator targets.

We supported the addition of the strategic plan indicator targets to the Superintendent's evaluation when it was brought to the Board of Education (BOE) on June 18, 2020.

We support the recommendation presented in the June 18, 2020 Memo, "Action on Superintendent evaluation system process for 2020-2021 School Year and Superintendent job description," which suggests that a possible proposal could be to use the **14 indicators in the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan as a starting point.**¹ We believe that the 14 indicators of success is a data-driven, objective way to track the state school system. As the June 18 memo states, using the 14 indicators is appropriate because there is established historic data on the indicators. And although the 2020 Promise Plan has not been approved, the BOE recommends using the 2030 Promise Plan targets for the 2023-2024-year as a goal. Annual targets for the 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 can be calculated by taking the difference between the 2023-2024 targets and the 2018-2019 base and dividing by 3 to establish the target for each interim year (see table attached). **We think it is reasonable to have an "effective" rating require at least 50% of the indicators to be on target.** For the 2020-2021-year, The Superintendent would follow the targets in the 2020-2021 column of the table.

However, we are not in support of the Superintendent's Proposed Strategic Plan Indicator Targets listed in the July 23, 2020 memo. While we appreciate that the Superintendent appears to be focusing on equity, giving special attention to the high-needs students with the indicators she proposed, we do not feel that her proposed indicators are looking at the system in a comprehensive way. **The Superintendent needs to be accountable for all students and the entire system.**

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

¹http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_20200618_Action%20on%20Superintendent%20Evaluation%20and%20Job%20Description.pdf

	Student Indicators of Success	2015-2016 (Base)	2018-2019	Difference (2016-2019)	Difference (2019 base vs 2023- 2024 Target)	2020-2021 Target	2021-2022 Target	2022-2023 Target	2023-2024 Target
1	Chronic Absenteeism	15%	15%	No change	6%	2%	2%	2%	9%
2	School Climate (% Positive)	TBA	74%	Need more data	4%	1%	1%	1%	78%
3	Inclusion Rate	37%	44%	7%	9%	3%	3%	3%	53%
4	3rd Grade Literacy	70%	74%	4%	11%	4%	4%	4%	86%
5	9th Grade On-Track	91%	91%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%	94%
6	Academic Achievement								
	ELA	51%	54%	3%	19%	6%	6%	6%	73%
	Math	42%	43%	1%	23%	8%	8%	8%	66%
	Schience	43%	44%	1%	14%	5%	5%	5%	58%
7	Acheivement Gap								
	ELA	33pts	34pts	-1 point	12pts	4pts	4pts	4pts	22pts
	Math	29pts	29pts	No change	9pots	3pts	3pts	3pts	20pts
8	High School Graduation	82%	84%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	89%
9	CTE Concentrator	38%	56%	18%	12%	4%	4%	4%	68%
10	College-Going Graduates	56%	55%	-1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	58%
11	Teacher Positions Filled	93%	93%%	No change	3%	1%	1%	1%	96%
12	Teacher Retention	52%	55%	3%	8%	3%	3%	3%	63%
13	R&M Backlog (millions)	\$279mm	\$983mm	-\$740M	\$325M	\$108M	\$108M	\$108M	\$658M
14	Family Engagement	TBA	74%	Need more data	6%	2%	2%	2%	80%

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

After-School All-Stars Hawai'i

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

*Castle Complex Community Council

*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS

*Education Institute of Hawai'i

*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

*HawaiiKidsCAN

*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and
Economic Justice

*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Hawai'i P-20

Hawai'i 3Rs

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

*Parents and Children Together

*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Punahou School PUEO Program

Special Education Provider Alliance

*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

YMCA of Honolulu

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

Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Joggerst <joshua.joggerst@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joshua Joggerst
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:01 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please don't temporarily discontinue differentials

The differential that I receive is the hard to staff differential that allows me to receive \$8,000 to supplement my pay here on Lanai. This differential has allowed me to pay off my student loans early, pay for groceries that are extremely high on Lanai, and has raised my moral as a teacher to stay with the profession. Please do not temporarily discontinue differentials because it sends the wrong message to people who came to Hawaii because of these differentials to then just have them taken away can cause unnecessary harm to solving our teacher crisis. Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you will continue paying these differentials to solve Hawaii's teacher shortage problem.

Best Regards,
Josh Joggerst

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Testimony BOE

From: Brandon Galarita <brandon.galarita@gmail.com> on behalf of Brandon Galarita
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am an 8th-grade teacher at Central Middle School and am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

With the combination of, in my opinion, disease levels above what is acceptable as well as the difficulty in controlling student social distancing (especially outside the four walls of my classroom), I believe that the reopening of schools should be delayed until schools are ready in addition to case numbers minimized further to ensure the health and safety of educators and students and their families alike. State Department of Health Director Bruce Anderson told Hawaii Public Radio Monday that schools should only reopen if they feel prepared and that "the schools have to be ready, disease levels got to be down to a point acceptable before we can support that." Additionally, Lt. Gov. Josh Green said in regarding containment of cases within 'ohana bubbles that, "Bubbles burst. I'm concerned...Young children can't adhere to social distancing or staying in a bubble and teens will socialize and be difficult to manage." Additionally, my school serves many students who live in tightly-knit communities as well as those in large and vulnerable households and am afraid of a significant outbreak that would severely impact our already large at-risk population.

While I believe my school is preparing well for the upcoming school year, four days (two of which are the admin-directed days) is not enough to prepare for what is being asked of teachers in the midst of this crisis. We need more time to prepare for the major shift in teaching strategies and to better consider how not only the academic parts of our students are being addressed but the ways in which social interactions and growth will be supported as well.

Mahalo for your time,

Brandon Galarita

Testimony BOE

From: Hannah Ulm <hanaulm@kamaile.org> on behalf of Hannah Ulm
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Responses): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Hannah Ulm.

I am a special education teacher for a fully self contained classroom with students who depend fully on others to care for their self care and hygiene needs.

I am submitting testimony to request that the State delay the opening of schools until; 1) community transmission of COVID-19 is under control, and 2) suitable alternative plans (including teacher training) are in place so that if schools need to be shut down, the department can provide consistent access to distance learning for all students.

The Ohana bubble model makes a lot of assumptions. It assumes that the community is taking responsibility for minimizing close contacts of students with others, following social distancing guidelines, and complying with other CDC health guidelines when not in school. As we see consistent community transmission, we can see this is a problem. The "bubble" also makes assumptions about student behavior that are unrealistic. That students will sit facing forward and not turn to a classmate that is 3 feet away on their left or right. That students will not mix and interact with others when passing and outside of class. That students will consistently wear face coverings and use appropriate hygiene. I have noticed in recent meetings with colleagues that some adults do not comply with these kinds of expectations. It is not a stretch to see that many students will not.

Rushing to open based on a date rather than data does not seem aligned with an effective response to a pandemic. When schools were initially shut down, the spread was coming due to travelers, so travel was reduced and the stay at home order was enacted. That appeared to be successful. Initially, the plan was to get new cases down to zero before opening up schools again. The rules were relaxed a bit and the community at large seemed to start getting complacent. Some people I've talked to say that we are overreacting, it's a hoax, or it's just like a cold. Because some people are not concerned and do not follow guidelines, we now have community spread. New cases are staying in the double digits on a daily basis. Instead of addressing that issue, and working back toward the goal of zero new cases, we are talking about reopening anyway and then reopening tourism in a month. Why has the focus shifted this way? Do we not see what is happening in the States who opened everything up too soon?

I understand the economy is important. I really want students back in classrooms and learning! But, if we are going to reopen, only to shut down again without being really ready to implement full distance learning for all students, are we ready to open? If we can anticipate that opening schools puts our most vulnerable teachers and students at risk, should we do it? What if a student or teacher dies because of COVID-19 acquired in school? Is access to classrooms and education worth even a few lives?

I think the State has done a great job so far, but unfortunately the guidance coming from the continental U.S. is "science should not stand in the way" of schools opening. Can we please agree to disagree? Schools could potentially be a place where community spread increases rapidly. I am sure that you have considered this, but I think that message is worth repeating.

Thank you very much for considering my input.

Hannah Ulm

--

Hannah Ulm

Special Education Teacher

Kamaile Academy PCS

Phone: (808) 697-7110 ex.613

Fax: (808) 697-7115

Testimony BOE

From: Rebecca Swan <swan90@msn.com> on behalf of Rebecca Swan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

Hi! My name is Rebecca Weisz. I teach pre-k special education at Kohala Elementary. I am writing to encourage the delay of reopening to face to face learning. I am fortunate in that I have a small class and responsible parents. I want to go back to teaching my kids in person although I was able (with the help of the parents to implement) to provide a stimulating well rounded curriculum to my students during the shut down. My class is not where I see the problem. I can not fathom how it would be possible to have in person learning for the rest of the school and have it safe. Schools are one the biggest spreader of contagious illnesses. Students bring germs from home, share and take back other germs. Unless limited contact and sanitation outside of school was strictly adhered to, viruses will spread. (I also do not want to bring Covid or any virus to my 88 year old mother.) In order to figure out how to control these variables (if they can be controlled) it will take more time. Please consider delaying face to face learning until the Covid case count come back down and a viable solution is in place.

Thank you,
Rebecca Weisz
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Lee <rac35@pdx.edu> on behalf of Rachel Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographic locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Rachel Lee and I have worked as a special education teacher here in Hawaii for 17 years. I am licensed and highly qualified to teach multiple subjects in grades K-12. For the last two years I have furthered my education to attain certification to work with visually impaired students. The differential has made a difference for me to attain this goal. I am now a teacher for the visually impaired and service many students at different schools throughout the Honolulu District. This differential was effective in retaining me in my position, which is highly specialized and nationally hard-to-fill. The shortage differentials have made a difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in special education and hard-to-staff schools. Suspending the shortage differential would be an affront to teachers who transferred or remained in their positions to meet the DOE's teaching shortage.

There is an extreme shortage of teachers in special education and in hard-to-staff schools. If the BOE retracts the differentials, many teachers will leave these positions or schools. How will the DOE fill these already hard-to-staff positions?

Please keep your pledge to fund the shortage differentials. Please explore other options in the budget, so that our most vulnerable students can continue to be taught by qualified Hawaii teachers who are committed to education.

Thank-you for your consideration,

Rachel Lee
Special Education Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments
Honolulu District, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Lori Newell <c1hottamale808@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Newell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Michelle Bebeau-Santos
Subject: Reopening for school classes August 4, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am a former resident of Hawaii and still have children and grandchildren that live they're on the big island and on Oahu I am concerned about the reopening of classes for children and high school children that is soon approaching. I live in California know where the numbers have past New York covid-19 cases, I have a daughter-in-law who is the teacher at leihoku elementary and two granddaughters that attend that school is well and my concern is that they will get sick with covid-19 and already with the way things are not being able to see them or be with them during these trying times is scary. Not everyone is taking this virus seriously and therefore we don't know who these people are and we could be subjected to that my concern is to please ask you to reconsider opening at this time here in California they have decided to go virtual only in the beginning they were thinking of doing so many days in class which is important for children they need interaction with others I agree but at this time it's just too risky. Speaking of risky I just recently had a trip that was paid for by my daughter-in-law to go home July 16th of this year and I had to cancel it because it is just not safe please reconsider the virus is real and it can affect anyone no one should ever think that it'll never happen to them cuz it can hear in El Dorado County where I reside the last time we had a shelter in place are County was lucky enough to only get two cases during that time this time we have 49 so far, we got to wait last time but this time it looks like that there's going to be way more than what originally there was and that is real we ask that you reconsider please think about it for everyone's safety I cannot bear to lose my granddaughter's my daughter-in-law or my son that lives there in Honolulu to this deadly virus like I said it's already bad enough not knowing when I'll be able to see them again and people are not allowed to be with their loved ones while they're sick please please reconsider opening at this time! Eventually things will slow down and it'll be safe again until then please be wise and not open for students to have to be subjected to something that they are not ready for nobody is thank you!

Lori Newell

A concerned parent and Grand parent

Testimony BOE

From: Cecilia Heimuli <cecilia.heimuli@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cecilia Heimuli
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Cecilia Heimuli and I am a 1st grade teacher at Laie Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State teachers Association SY2020-2021. First of all, I love learning and I love teaching young students. Normally I would be excited about starting a new school year but I am really nervous about this coming school year. I feel that the state of Hawaii Department of Education is not ready to start this school year with the covid 19 pandemic still out of control. We do not have written covid 19 safety guidelines, procedures, or protocols from the DOE. I have a small classroom and it will be hard to have students 6 feet apart after the hybrid schedule has ended. We do not have partitions between students like they do in South Korea and they still had to shut down due to the spike in Covid 19. We do not have anyone to do temperature checks at the door everyday. It is hard enough to get a classroom filled with students to learn the required standards without the fear of getting covid 19.

Cecilia Heimuli
1st Grade Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Denise Mazurik <dmazurik808@gmail.com> on behalf of Denise Mazurik
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:02 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item VI. H.

Name: Denise Mazurik
Title: Classroom Teacher
Agenda Item: VI. H.
Position: Comment

Dear Board Members:

I am writing in support of a distance learning start to the 2020-21 school year. I know you have been inundated with testimony about the risks to students and teachers involved in a return to in-person schooling. While I agree with many of those arguments, I trust my fellow citizens have them covered. I want to provide testimony about why an **August 4 return to school buildings is not in the best interest of Hawai'i from both economic and potential liability perspectives**. I also argue that strong relationships and classroom communities can be forged in the distance learning environment.

One of the major reasons cited for a return to in-person schooling is parents need a safe place for their kids to be while they get back to work. I agree. But the hybrid models do not provide this solution as they only have students on campus an average of two days a week. [Child care subsidies](#) for families impacted by COVID-19, such as those offered by [Hawai'i Child Care Connections](#), should continue to be funded through the CARES Act so families can afford to have their children looked after at the home of a family member or by a non-family member (college students? displaced tourism employees?) in the family home. These caregivers, all of whom must pass a background check, can assist keiki in accessing their distance learning classes and help troubleshoot any issues. For families who do not have family or friends available to step into paid caregiver roles, the Hawai'i non-profit People Attentive to Children (PATCH) already has the infrastructure to match families and caregivers through their [searchable online database](#). This plan is an economic boon in both the long and short term as it gets parents back to work full time, puts extra money in the pocket of local caregivers, and invests in the quality education of Hawai'i's next generation, all while keeping everyone safe.

I spoke with a University of Hawai'i at Mānoa economics professor earlier this week who claimed an argument could be made that even from a strictly economic viewpoint (zero health considerations) it doesn't make sense to send children back to in-person schooling once you factor in the value of a human life (normal life expectancy x annual value based on earnings/profession/skills) and the mortality rate of COVID-19. U.S. agencies vary somewhat on the [value they place on a human life](#), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is on the lower end at \$7.4 million and the Federal Aviation Administration is on the higher end at \$9.6 million. While the mortality rate for keiki is low, it is not for teachers with underlying health conditions or the parents and kupuna students will take the virus home to. This is where community spread could take more value in human life than the economic gains of having "childcare" a couple of days a week for working families. Certainly, as we are the first major school district in the nation to wade into this, we also need to consider unknown risks.

There are districts requiring parents to sign [liability waivers for students to participate in school sports](#). I suppose this makes sense as we have already seen a [football coach at 'Iolani school test positive for COVID-19](#). There are also districts requiring parents to sign [liability waivers for children to attend in-person schooling](#). These districts are concerned about liability because right now no one knows what legal precedents will be set over ill advised school reopenings. To date, there have been [3,649 COVID-19 related lawsuits](#) filed in the United States alone. Of those, 199 are suing education institutions, and while many of those are attempts to get a college tuition refund (164), [thirty-five lawsuits against schools](#) are for other causes of action related to

COVID-19. Keiki may not die as a result of attending in-person school (though their teachers or family may), but new reports document children contract COVID-19 more readily than previously thought ([1/3 of those tested in Florida](#)) and that children may develop multi-system inflammatory syndrome ([MIS-C](#)) and other complications (including [neurological disorders](#)), potentially impacting [health across their lifetime](#) (think chickenpox and shingles but with the later manifestations unknown and potentially far worse). Who will be liable if our children develop potentially debilitating conditions as a direct result of returning to schools categorically unprepared to keep them safe? Who will be liable for the emotional harm they suffer when a teacher or a classmate or a family member dies because of a school cluster?

Finally, some have pointed to a need for some amount of face-to-face learning as a way to build relationships, setting a foundation for distance learning. Relationships and resilient classroom communities can be forged in the distance learning environment. While distance learning is new to many, it is not new. The free public online school K12.com was founded in 2007. While I cannot speak to the quality of their program specifically, distance learning has been around long enough for [best practices](#) to be well established, including best practice in instructional design, curriculum delivery, family communication, and [relationship-building](#). In fact Panorama, the developer of the distance learning survey repeatedly cited by HDOE in their reopening decision-making, has published their own [strategies for building relationships via distance learning](#), though the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) resources hyperlinked above are more reliable as they are peer-reviewed. Philosophy for Children Hawai'i (p4cHI) is another evidence-based approach already used in many K-12 Hawai'i classrooms to build strong, safe classroom communities. The UH-Manoa [Uehiro Academy](#) is already busy helping teachers adapt p4cHI to distance learning. I can personally attest to the strong relationships that can develop in online communities as my teacher training program was a distance learning program which practiced p4cHI principles. I was surprised by how strong the bonds became in my cohort. It may, arguably, be easier to develop adult relationships in the online context, but it can be done with children and adolescents as well. Hawai'i's teachers know how to build and facilitate relationships, they just need training to adapt their expertise to the distance learning classroom.

As a teacher, I am afraid to welcome students in-person on August 4. I do not want to be complicit in the community spread of COVID-19 the Department of Health (DOH) anticipates upon the return to school buildings. I am pleading with you to make the decision that values all human lives. There are solutions to child care that let parents get back to work and support quality distance learning. Please, let us look at options that do not put our keiki, kumu, and kupuna at risk. Let us start the 2020-21 school year with distance learning.

Mahalo,
Denise

Testimony BOE

From: Mari Ann Arveson <mearveson@gmail.com> on behalf of Mari Ann Arveson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Mari Ann Arveson and I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

I have been a special education teacher for 30 years at Lanakila Elementary School. I am writing in opposition to the proposed action to temporarily discontinue differentials for classroom teachers in shortage areas. Although I understand the financial challenges brought about by the current pandemic, I strongly believe that retracting what was promised to classroom teachers will negatively impact the already small pool of teachers willing to teach in shortage areas. More importantly, this dearth of qualified teachers will affect our keiki in vulnerable shortage areas. We cannot afford to “short change” these keiki, especially after recent school closures so clearly demonstrated how much they lost without consistent, effective classroom instruction.

When I received the differential during the Spring semester, I felt validated and valued. At last, my employer recognized and acknowledged all the long, extra hours of IEP work, time spent working with families to help them cope with their special needs child, and agonizing hours of crafting, changing, and honing individual instructional plans to meet the specific needs of each child. Much of this extra time came at the expense of my own family time, but it was worth it when I saw the progress made by my students. To be honest, I celebrated receiving the differential by using half of it to purchase more classroom materials for my students.

As I write this, I am wiping away tears, because with the current state of teaching, I have decided to retire earlier than I originally anticipated. The possibility of losing the differential was the final deciding factor.

For the sake of attracting and retaining qualified teachers, I urge you to continue funding the differential so that our keiki will have experienced teachers who are willing to remain in the field for the long haul.

Sincerely,
Mari Ann Arveson

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Chow <lisa.chow@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa Chow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please do not reopen schools on August 4, 2020
Attachments: July 22, 2020 Letter to DOE per reopening schools.docx

Attached is my testimony.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

July 22, 2020

Hawaii Department of Education,

I am a teacher at Makakilo Elementary School, and my husband is also a teacher. We are very concerned about the Department of Education's decision to go forward in reopening schools on August 4th. We are not fully convinced that our schools are ready in terms of health/safety and curriculum/curriculum delivery. There are so many issues that have not been addressed at the state, district and school levels. For example, there are no solid protocols in place should someone in our school contract the corona virus. We've been told to keep our "bubbles" limited to certain individuals to keep our "bubbles" as safe as possible. What about substitute teachers entering different "bubbles"? In this situation alone, the substitute teacher and students are potentially put in harms way. There are just so many unanswered questions by the Department of Education!

I have been attending building virtual classroom trainings. However, I feel that we are "flying by the seat of our pants" to ready ourselves for the hybrid educational model. I can barely wrap my mind around the menacing virus that is lurking out there, then to have to learn how to build and manage a virtual classroom in a matter of less than 2 weeks! It is absolutely absurd to expect teachers to be ready to service their students on August 4th in a SAFE and MEANINGFUL way!

Please, please slow everything down and allow the reopening date of schools be pushed back. Allow the reopening of our Hawaii schools to be gradual. **The corona virus WILL NOT slow down if we don't!**

Sincerely,

Lisa Chow
Makakilo Elementary School
Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Dawn <dawnamie@gmail.com> on behalf of Dawn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Starting school

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to ask that we start school on time. I think that it will be good to for the kids to get back to school. I have 3 kids that will be attending Kilauea elementary and they are ready to get back to class.

Thank you
Dawn Worley

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Leona Luuwai <leona.luuwai@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leona Luuwai
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of School on 8/4

Aloha,

As a principal of an elementary school, I am doing my best to open my school on August 4th. There has been so many requirements and deadlines placed on principals this summer. I worry about the education of our students if we delay opening our schools. However, I feel we should push back the opening to August 17th. Principals are on the front line and when things go right we are thanked. However, when things go wrong we suffer in many ways from teachers, community, and parents. Asking administrators to have teachers assess for part of a day and then, switch to professional development in the second half of the day is not ideal. I am asking the Board of Education to reconsider reopening the schools to August 17th. Allow administrators and teachers to use the first nine days for training and collaboration time.

‘Oia‘i‘o nō,

Kēhau Lu‘uwai
Po‘okumu
Pā‘ia School
Kula Kaiapuni o Maui

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Testimony BOE

From: Carol Yuen <imallheart@gmail.com> on behalf of Carol Yuen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - re: delay of school opening

To whom it may concern,

Please consider delaying the physical opening of schools until faculty, staff, and schools are ready to open safely for everyone to be in physical contact with each other.

There have been plans at school that have been constantly changing due to the COVID numbers and directions from DOE and BOE. However, nothing is set in place that is definite. Teachers need to know EXACTLY what that schedule is going to look like. They need to know how many students will be committing to 100% distance learning, how many students will have access to technology - devices and the internet. Teachers need to know this BEFORE the half days even begin. Teachers need training on how to utilize learning management systems and get things in place so ALL STUDENTS can succeed whether they are in the classroom learning or learning from home.

As soon as there are plan in place that are NOT going to be changing from day to day, as soon as teachers are aware of the numbers that will be distance learning and how many are in the classroom, they can better plan to teach effectively.

As a parent, I do not feel comfortable sending my children to campus physically and who may come in contact with someone that has been exposed to COVID, especially because we will have a newborn in the house when school starts.

Please delay the opening of school until schools have information to set the schedules to let teachers know how to plan and teach effectively so students and teachers will feel safe at school. We need to feel safe at school.

Thank you for your time.

Aloha,
Carol Yuen

Testimony BOE

From: Jodi Uehara <jodi.uehara@gmail.com> on behalf of Jodi Uehara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I don't think our kids are ready to go back to school on 8/4 for the following reasons.

1. They may not be equipped with enough masks to wear everyday or hand sanitizers when hand washing is not available.
2. Training or procedures need to be taught to the kids on how to conduct themselves in this new COVID-19 environment in the classrooms.
3. During lunch, recess & after school, social distancing may not be practiced properly by the kids.

Thanks,

Jodi Uehara
Parent of 8th Grader at Jarrett Middle School
(808) 927-5400

Testimony BOE

From: Ellen Zanetos <ellen.zanetos@gmail.com> on behalf of Ellen Zanetos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Urgent request for action

Aloha,

My name is Ellen Zanetos and I teach high school in the Hilo-Waiakea district.

With the ever-changing status of COVID-19 outbreaks across the globe, I do not agree with the state's plan to reopen schools to students on August 4th.

While I would rather be in class with my students, I do not feel that it's safe to return to campus until we have zero cases for at least 14 days on any of our Hawai'i islands. The allowance of inter-island travel without testing puts each island at risk of a COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition to safety risks, our schools, teachers, and students are simply not prepared to implement a "hybrid" learning setting. On top of a confusing "hybrid" schedule, my school has released no plan on how to go about the logistics of a typical school day. How are we expected to enforce social distancing inside & outside of our classrooms? How will I manage my classroom in person and virtually at the same time?

We must reconsider opening school in two weeks. Do we really want to risk having to go through the process of completely shutting down again? If we start off virtually, we will have a better chance at getting it right this time.

The anxiety of returning to school at this moment is overwhelming and daunting to me. Please, I urge you to reconsider plans to open school on August 4th.

Thank you,
Ellen Zanetos

Testimony BOE

From: Courtney Arnold <carnold12@hotmail.com> on behalf of Courtney Arnold
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My name is Courtney Arnold, I teach at Lana'i school. I implore the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to delay the opening of school buildings to students. The HDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online environment.

Given the numerous unanswered questions and teachers scheduled to report to campuses on July 29, I have no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

Also, please consider alternative options to pulling funds for teacher differentials. These differentials are critical to keeping quality educators here in Hawaii. If there is a funding crisis please consider a top down approach. Pulling money from high paid administrators not from vulnerable teachers.

Thank you,

Courtney Arnold

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Testimony BOE

From: r2csmiths@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Dear Board of Education:

I respect the enormous task of opening the schools, but it MUST be done. As the experts state, the harm to students is much worse than the risk. I feel for the teachers, but we must learn to cope with this pandemic, as it will be around for a year or more, and we cannot keep our children home for that length of time.

Human nature languishes without interaction with others, and especially for children. Zoom is not a way to receive an education. And teachers I have talked to prefer live teaching, not Zoom.

Children need school, and parents NEED their children in school.

Sincerely,
Cynthia M. Smith
Kailua, Hawaii

Sent from Windows Mail

Testimony BOE

From: Haley Jarczynski <haley.jarczynski@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Haley Jarczynski
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:04 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: oppose agenda item G

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Haley Jarczynski I am a 3 year teacher at Pa'auilo Elementary School in the Hamakua District on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony to oppose agenda item G. [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

Please continue to provide the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that this BOE of Hawaii continues to value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki and the future of our state economy. Temporarily discontinuing this compensation for this next school year will continue to impact our profession and communities in these areas significantly.

The differential we received for the second half of this past school year made a tremendous difference in being able live a little easier financially. I know you hear many teachers are living paycheck to paycheck. It is still continuing even with the current differential we are receiving because I am one of them. I have bills and work overtime daily due to the lack of resources in my community. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Haley Jarczynski, Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

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Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Ford <jessica.ford05@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jessica Ford
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:04 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY on delaying student start date

PLEASE push back the students start date! I am on a Webex meeting at this very moment with my grade level and we are overwhelmed beyond belief on how to make this work for our students and their families. Teachers are ready to go back to work, this is not the issue. We are just not ready to adequately meet the needs of students. We need more time to plan and and prepare for success. Please delay students start date.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ford
Frist Grade Teacher
Pomaika'i Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: John Costales <jcostales@hgea.org> on behalf of John Costales
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Joy Bulosan
Subject: Relating to Reopening of Schools
Attachments: BOE Testimony.docx

John Costales

Union Agent

Hawaii Government Employees Association / AFSCME Local 152
2145 Kaohu St., Wailuku, HI 96793-2257
Main 808.244.5508 | Direct 808.243.4465 | Fax 808.244.3621
jcostales@hgea.org | www.hgea.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



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State of Hawaii
Board of Education
Testimony by
John Costales, Jr.
Retired School Principal

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

As a retired School Principal, I hear the pain and concerns of my former colleagues, staff and faculty. While there are many comments which can be made as to what should have been done to prepare, they are in the past and cannot benefit us now. However, what we can do is to look at what has not been delivered by the Department of Education and what must be done moving forward.

- The Personal Protective Equipment the Superintendent and her leaders claim are available and have been provided at all schools is not entirely correct. Principals across the state have acknowledged they do not have these supplies.
- The Superintendent has not issued comprehensive, clear and cohesive guidance to all public schools by July 1st. This lack of clear protocols and comprehensive and cohesive guidance has left the work to be done by School Level personnel.
- The Superintendent has not consulted nor solicited the input from principals; except from a very few, which did not reflect the general feelings of the field.
- The Department of Education has not worked hand-in-hand with ALL Labor Unions. Simply having meetings to address concerns is NOT working together to find a workable solution.

The Superintendent said in a video she provided that the Legislators listened to the concerns of the people and is holding off the opening of our state to tourism. The Superintendent also said that we need to use the two weeks of half day instructions starting August 4th to practice the protocols for a safe reopening. Well, it's time for the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent and all the Assistant Superintendents to listen to the School Leaders and their staff and faculty that schools are NOT ready to reopen SAFELY on August 4th.

Principals have always been good soldiers; willing to go above and beyond to do what is best for their students and school community. The DOE Leadership needs to respect their leadership and hear their voice when considering any actions as they will be the ones in the front line implementing the plan. I have no doubt that the Department has a plan for reopening and the Superintendent stated that they need those first two weeks to practice. Those first two weeks is nothing more than adhering to the 180 "instructional student days!" So, with any good plan it has to be practiced so that all the players have a common understanding as to their roles and responsibilities.

Delay the return of students on August 4th and have the schools use that time to practice implementation of the plan. Run through a typical day without students so every employee at the

school, from the Principal to the Vice Principals, Teachers, to the Office Staff, Cafeteria Workers, Health Aides, Security, Counselors, Behavioral Health Specialist and Educational Assistants all know what to do. Those two weeks can also be used to train teachers in distance learning and virtual learning as many teachers need help in utilizing the technology. This time is crucial because teachers, security, educational assistants and even the vice principals have all been on summer break. Training and preparation could not have taken place with just the principal and his/her office staff!

We keep hearing, "We are operating in unprecedented times." "Everything is dynamic and constantly changing." This is all true. So, now that the Department has drawn up their plan, the time to practice this plan is this first two weeks without students. Then come game time, when the students arrive, the plan can be implemented. This is what good coaches do with their teams. However, this is much more serious than a game. In a game, failure to execute may result in a loss. Failing to execute in life may result in serious illness and possible death. Is this the risk we as a society are willing to take?

Delay the opening of school for students on August 4th and allow the School Leaders to work with their faculty and staff to prepare as best they can.

Final comments:

1. It's tough for a Leader to stop, reflect and realize they may have to change their course, but that is what good leaders are able to do. To be stubborn and stay the course when all those implementing the action, those on the front line explain why they are not ready and when the Complex Area Superintendents explain that their schools are not ready and it falls on deaf ears, that's not leadership, that is Dictatorship!
2. Finally, please require the superintendent to speak to her principals...and not let them find out information in the news or on social media! That is disrespectful to the principals!

Testimony BOE

From: Monica tudela <monica1773@gmail.com> on behalf of Monica tudela
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we, an alliance of parents, educators, school staff, concerned community members, and health officials, are writing to express our strong opposition to the State of Hawaii's current reopening plan announced in July 2020 by the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE). The current plan is unacceptable; it does not follow CDC guidelines on safe school reopenings, was designed and promulgated without adequate public input or transparency, and needlessly puts the lives of our community at great risk. It is nothing less than a recipe for a public health disaster. We propose instead a Phased Reopening Plan for Hawaii Schools (PRP-HS) that more closely adheres to recommended public health protocols for school reopenings, and will mitigate health risks much more effectively. We also call for a mandatory mask requirement at the state level (not leaving it to teacher discretion), social distancing requirements as currently envisioned, and for each school to carry out an assessment of how to improve classroom ventilation to mitigate airborne spread of COVID-19. Briefly, our PRP adds two initial steps that must be successfully completed before the proposed state "hybrid/blended" reopening can safely be carried out. Phase 0 involves the rigorous training of teachers and administrators in the following: specific teaching protocols required to teach online classes; training of school staff and teachers in the effective disinfection of school infrastructure; COVID-19 protocols, such as how to assess and monitor student health status and steps required if teachers or students become ill. We anticipate Phase 0 to take approximately 4 weeks. Phase 1 will begin 100% online distance learning for all Hawai'i public school students. Exceptions for students in need who must attend in-person classes will be arranged with each school, but the default is for total remote learning. Those teachers who must conduct exceptional in-person classes must receive special training and equipment to ensure their ability to conduct their classes safely. Phase 2 will essentially be the state's current proposed reopening plan: blended online/in-person classes with students grouped into A & B and rotated daily. Phase 3 would involve the resumption of 100% in-person classes. The transition from one phase to another should be determined by specific benchmarks that indicate it is reasonably safe to progress to the next phase. These benchmarks should be based on the documented level of COVID-19 community-spread, and based on input from public health experts working with educators. As an illustration, Phase 2 would take place only after a rolling 30-day average number of daily new COVID cases is ≤ 3 per day; Phase 3 would be triggered only after a rolling 90-day average number of daily new cases is ≤ 3 per day. Note that these figures (" ≤ 3 day") are provided as illustration only; the specific thresholds should be determined via transparent dialogue between recognized public health experts, state educational authorities, and other education-related entities. These criteria should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy. The phased approach we are calling for will allow us to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school. Each of the three main phases (1, 2, 3) must include an option for parents to keep their children at home and to provide those students with full online schooling conducted by real teachers – not automated teaching programs. We feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different. Our greatest concern is for our teachers and their families and elders, as well as parents and their families and kupuna. Although it is evident that the risks of COVID-19 disease are generally much less severe than for adults, the risk to children is not zero. We also now know that children, especially those over the age of ten, can transmit the virus as or more efficiently than adults. As such, the risk to general public health posed by school-driven outbreaks of COVID is an unacceptable risk to society. It is also a fact that we do not yet know the long-term impact of COVID infection on the health of children or adults – but we know that some patients who have recovered are believed to have suffered permanent damage. In short, the risks of a recklessly fast school reopening plan are far too great to be acceptable to any reasonable, informed person. Until the COVID pandemic is under control in Hawaii, we strongly support the PRP-HS plan, and urge the Hawai'i Governor, Department of Health, Department of Education, and Board of Education to address these concerns as outlined above and to implement the PRP-HS in order to prevent a public health disaster for which we will otherwise hold them accountable.

Testimony BOE

From: Lucas Dembart <lucas.dembart@wheelermiddle.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lucas Dembart
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha e Members of the Board,

My name is Lucas Dembart, and I am a 7th grade faculty member at Wheeler Middle School. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

While I and all my fellow faculty members take pride and joy in our work to educate the haumana of Hawaii, we do not yet feel it is safe for either teachers or students to return to school under the current circumstances of many schools across the islands. Many teachers have not been properly informed about their rights to ensuring safety measures in the classroom, nor has the DOE clearly established protocol for families and teachers who are immunocompromised and cannot attend school at all. In addition, many schools have been busy operating ESY and summer hub programs, as well as constantly needing to change their curriculums due to fluctuating agreements between the DOE and HSTA. At the highest case count we have seen since the outbreak of the pandemic, it would be irresponsible to send tens of thousands of DOE workers and students back to campuses given the amount of uncertainty that surrounds the state of COVID-19 in Hawaii. The DOE should take extra measures to ensure teachers have additional professional development and planning time to prepare for hybridized learning, as well as develop a concrete plan for what should happen if schools must return to fully-virtual programming upon the appearance of community transmission.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Lucas Dembart

Testimony BOE

From: Robert Lozano <rnalozano@yahoo.com> on behalf of Robert Lozano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

My name is Robert Lozano. I teach at Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School, and my child attends the school as well. In my seventeen years at Waikoloa, my school has consistently struggled to maintain its teachers. We lose an average of ten teachers each year. The pay differentials for hard-to-staff geographical locations would help to offset our school's high turnover rate. It would allow for our students to continue to have experienced and well-qualified teachers remain in our ranks. It would also allow for teachers to maintain their professional learning teams, which help to create stronger curriculum and instruction.

The extra money would go a long way in helping teachers to offset the high cost of living in our communities. In my own case, it goes towards my college-aged children's college tuition. It's nice to be able to contribute to their higher education, as that is the goal of our educational system: to prepare our keiki for higher learning and career readiness.

Please consider the continuation of the pay differentials to keep our schools staffed, our communities stronger, and our teachers taken care of.

Mahalo,
Robert

Testimony BOE

From: Cara Tsutsuse <ctsutsuse@gmail.com> on behalf of Cara Tsutsuse
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Cara Tochiki and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Ka'ala Elementary School. My husband, Kevin Tochiki, is also a teacher at Leilehua High School. We are testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

We do not feel that Hawaii's public school campuses are prepared to reopen to students on August 4. We are especially concerned with the lack of guidance as to what to do when a student, teacher, other school employee, and/or one of their household members tests positive for COVID-19. Who takes responsibility if a person is hospitalized and/or dies from COVID-19 and it can be traced back to contracting it at school? There is also no guidance for how many cases it takes to shut down a school campus and move to distance learning. If we need to shut down schools and go back to distance learning, how will the state ensure adequate internet access for all students, especially in the low-income areas such as the schools my husband and I teach at? Another major concern is how schools will transition to 100 percent distance learning when teachers have had no time to prepare for this. The four days (7/29-8/3) before asking students to return on August 4 is not enough time for teachers to plan and prepare for distance learning. The next nine days of half days will also not be enough time. Expecting teachers to plan out a whole year's worth of high quality education through distance learning in just 13 days is insane.

I want you to know that I love teaching. I have wanted to be a teacher since I was four years old. I want to be with my students. I want to be in my classroom. But, I also want to feel safe at school and I want to tell my students with confidence that we are doing the best we can to keep them and their families safe. However, in the current reopening plan, I do not feel confident I can tell myself or my students we are safe at school.

My school, for example, created a blended schedule with half face-to-face instruction and half distance learning. This sounds great in theory, but trying to keep students in this "ohana bubble" is unreasonable. Young students cannot follow the social distancing standards and crave socialization. At the high school, they came up with schedules that allow half of the students to come one day and the other half the next with distance learning on the days students are not in school. Those conditions may sound appropriate for in the classroom if they can be separated 6 feet apart, but what happens when that bell rings? All of those students will be released into the hallways and they will mingle and talk. There is no guarantee that they will keep their masks on

and there is not enough staff to be monitoring every hallway on campus to ensure students are practicing safe social distancing when not in the classrooms.

What should be concerning to the Hawaii State Department of Education is the increase of teachers writing wills in preparation for going back to school. How is that right? How can you expect teachers to be teaching at their fullest potential when they are so worried about their health and safety that they are writing their wills? Teachers are retiring and/or planning to use their sick leave because they are in a high risk category and do not wish to put themselves at a greater risk by returning to their classroom in a confined space with students. The families of students are also at risk with so many families living in multi-generational homes and although the students may not be in a high-risk category, they may be living with a family member who is. Students who understand this risk will not be learning at their full potential alongside teachers who are worried about their health and not teaching at their full potential. It will create such a worrisome environment for both teachers and students where no quality teaching or learning can occur.

We urge you to delay the opening of schools campuses to students. With the many concerns from teachers and the communities they serve, we are not prepared to reopen the schools on August 4. Please give us the time to sufficiently prepare so we can return to our passion of providing Hawaii's keiki with a quality education.

Mahalo for your time.

Cara Tochiki, Ka'ala Elementary Kindergarten Teacher
Kevin Tochiki, Leilehua High School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Ku'ikahi Baricuatro-Rae <kuikahi_baricuatro-rae@anuenue.org> on behalf of Ku'ikahi Baricuatro-Rae
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for keeping pay differential

Aloha kākou,

I am a Hawaiian immersion teacher who depends on my measly teacher income to help support my family of four. We all know that teachers are sorely undervalued and underpaid. Receiving the pay differential the last half of this past school year made a difference to our quality of life.

As an immersion teacher, I spend countless hours translating and creating work, classroom posters, and games for my students. Other teachers can easily find resources online, but if an immersion teacher finds a good resource online, that kumu must then translate it and make it relevant to the Hawaiian way of thinking. I spend good money (from my own pocket!) on online resources, but I also spend even more time trying to translate those resources. Teaching is not a cheap profession.

This year we are also in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many of us worried for our own lives and the lives of our families that live with us. I know many teachers that are reluctant to go back to the classroom because of the ever-escalating numbers here, and our pay differential is a little more incentive for us to return.

We live in Hawai'i. It is important for our keiki to learn the language of our land, 'oia ho'i ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i. Please continue to support us in raising the future generation of our beloved Hawai'i.

Me ka ha'aha'a,
Ku'ikahi Baricuatro-Rae

This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni 'O Ānuenue.

Testimony BOE

From: Charlotte Menze <10081719@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Charlotte Menze
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:06 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Romeo Eleno
Subject: Differential

Aloha,

I am an elementary school counselor in bargaining unit five. Without this differential it is pushing me to get my license and leave the DOE system to find employment that will make living in Hawaii doable. I am born and raised here on the island of Lana'i, This is my home and I graduated from Lanai high and Elementary school. I work you because I care about our community and our students but without the differential and potential pay cuts I cannot afford to live in my family home. I am not willing to take a second job to support myself when I could find another job that would be able to make living here in Hawaii doable. I am a professional I should be able to just have one John and be able to live on that salary alone, like many other professions. I feel that our state system does not value teachers as a profession and constantly cuts our salary and makes it difficult for teachers to even want to be here in Hawaii. We are losing teachers because people can't live here. Please reconsider taking away her differential for her to staff areas. Lāna'i not only has a hard time keeping teachers but also has high living expenses. Please reconsider removing the already promised differential. We need to keep our teachers here on the island because their students deserve it. Thank you for your time.

Charlotte Menze 🌸

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Testimony BOE

From: Laura Buzzell <lalabuzzell@gmail.com> on behalf of Laura Buzzell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Lala Buzzell, and i am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Please consider delaying the opening of school buildings to students. The HIDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online environment.

Please allow me to quote our

Lt. Gov. Josh Green:

"We owe our teachers a comprehensive healthcare plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk"

"We have to make sure it's safe to open schools and some of our teachers would be vulnerable without a comprehensive health plan. I think we should insist on that before we put anyone into harm's way,"

My dear friend is a teacher at
Washington Middle School.

Another dear friend is a teacher at
Farrington High School.

I am concerned for their well-being + the well-being of the students, and their families.

I appreciate your consideration.

Malama Pono

Lala Buzzell, Aina Haina

Testimony BOE

From: Jo Moser <moser@kaelepululadybugs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jo Moser
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:07 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: testimony opposing the discontinuance of pay differentials .docx

I am attaching written testimony for the BOE General Business Meeting, June 23, 2020.

Name: Jo Moser, Special Education Teacher, Ka'elepulu Elementary
BOE Meeting: General Business Meeting, Thursday, June 23, 2020
Re: Agenda Item G
Discontinuance of extra compensation for Special Education, Geographically hard-to-staff, and Hawaiian Immersion Language Programs
Position: Oppose

If possible, I would prefer that my name and position are deleted from public posting on BOE website, so that I might remain anonymous.

Mahalo,
Jo Moser

BOE Meeting: General Business Meeting, Thursday, June 23, 2020

Re: Agenda Item G

Discontinuance of extra compensation for Special Education, Geographically
hard-to-staff, and Hawaiian Immersion Language Programs

Position: Oppose

If you truly care about working to close the gap between the educational outcomes of our vulnerable keiki and their peers, you must **recruit** and **retain highly qualified** and **experienced** teachers! Your most immediate and powerful tool for doing so is the differential pay supplement!

I am a 30+ year special education teaching veteran, the most recent 10 years spent back here again in Hawaii. Please trust me to share that the landscape of special education teaching has changed tremendously over the course of recent years. While Intervention Specialists continue to valiantly try to serve special learners and their families, more and more duties, meetings, and paperwork are thrust onto our shoulders. Lack of financial resources already leads to manpower shortages that impact the quality of our interventions with students. Add to that the endless paperwork and incalculable meetings that only begin at the end of already stressful teaching days, and it is no wonder that once newly certified teachers get a real taste of what the position truly entails, they flee to general education positions. In these past 10 years I have personally witnessed 100% of all newly hired, dual qualified teachers in my schools spend only 1-2 years in Special Education positions before transferring out to general education positions.

I am also dismayed that during this spring's transfer period, many general education teachers did opt to move back into Special Education, with the incentive of the differential pay supplement. (This is clear evidence that the differential pay initiative was effective!) Our school year hasn't even started yet, and already eliminating that incentive pay is being considered? It's difficult to think of a more egregious example of "Bait-and-Switch!"

Our exceptional learners deserve highly qualified, experienced teachers! We will never close the gap in achievement between our vulnerable keiki and their peers, unless we correct the current educational landscape. You must compensate these teachers who are doing a job that very few other teachers choose to do!

Testimony BOE

From: Kristin A <kris_yellow72@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristin A
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Paul Holcomb <paul@hd.paulhawaii.com> on behalf of Paul Holcomb
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Support for Phased-In Reopening
Attachments: Recommended-Phased-In-Reopening.pdf

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Paul Holcomb and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because there is increasing evidence that our keiki may be at significant risk to 2019-nCoV (COVID-19).

While typical symptoms of this disease are believed to be lower in younger people, transmission is now understood to have been understated in past testing. Most importantly, it is now believed non-symptomatic carriers of the virus may be at significant risk for long-term disabilities and premature death. In short, we don't understand enough about this new disease, and we must not sacrifice the lives of our keiki. We must proceed with responsible caution until we know more.

I strongly urge the board to adopt a policy similar to the ones of schools across the nation and the world. One such example is the one from Milwaukee Public Schools, attached to this email.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Paul Holcomb
Concerned business owner, resident, parent Kāneʻohe, HI

--

Paul Holcomb

Recommended Phased In Reopening

The movement from one phase to the next will be dependent on monitoring the spread of COVID-19 as well as health and safety guidance.

PHASE 1: FULL REMOTE LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar, will begin school on August 17, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar, will begin school on September 1, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- No students in the school buildings. All instruction will be delivered virtually.

PHASE 2: HYBRID LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
 - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
 - Students learn online outside of school 3 days a week.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
 - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
- Students will rotate between face-to-face and virtual instruction.

PHASE 3: FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (VIRTUAL OPTION)

- When safe, all students will return to in-person instruction with a virtual option.
- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety guidance.

Testimony BOE

From: MattSue Masuyama <mattsuemasuyama@gmail.com> on behalf of MattSue Masuyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

Testimony on Action Item:

H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Prepared by:

Sue Ann Masuyama
Teacher
Hawaii DOE - East Hawaii District Office

I am a teacher with the Hawaii DOE. I would like to clearly state that I believe it is currently unsafe to open school campuses for students and teachers to resume face to face instruction.

With cases on the rise both locally and nationally, the risk of contracting the coronavirus is high. The likelihood of getting COVID-19 is high. As teachers, we should not be exposed to such hazardous working environments detrimental to our health. All teachers' lives matter, regardless of their age or health background.

We know the virus is highly contagious. My husband and I are both teachers. We have 6 children in our household who attend Hawaii DOE schools and we both have elderly parents. If we are forced to return to school campuses, we are endangering our lives and that of our loved ones.

As I heard one person put it, "it is ludicrous to think that because this virus is so dangerous we must let convicted criminals out of prison, yet it is okay to send our children and teachers back to school." This statement is so true, especially because there are no clear mandated safety guidelines which are strict enough to even begin approaching a safe threshold of school practices including the wearing of masks, adequate access to personal protective equipment and supplies, and professional development in using PPE and practicing safety protocols.

I implore the Hawaii DOE and BOE to delay the re-opening of Hawaii DOE school campuses for the safety of our teachers, keiki, and ohana.

Testimony BOE

From: Susan <kaala31@gmail.com> on behalf of Susan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:08 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Susan. I am a teacher at Kalei`opu`u Elementary School and I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawai`i Board of Education and Hawai`i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a 25 year veteran public school teacher and a parent of 2 young boys that attend public school. My 2 sons and I are asthmatic which makes us more susceptible to COVID-19.

With that said, I am demanding that the reopening of schools be postponed! This is complete ignorance to send thousands of Hawai'i school students and teachers back to school in the middle of a pandemic where there is still so much uncertainty, unanswered questions, lack of training, guidelines, and support!

We're not asking to keep schools closed forever but to push back the reopening and face to face schooling until at least September. Provide the teachers and schools time to be trained and prepare for a safe environment for all.

The HEALTH and SAFETY for ALL should be of utmost importance!

Susan Powell

Teacher at Kalei`opu`u Elementary School

Parent of children that attend Palisades Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Kelly Calistro <kailuahotvw@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelly Calistro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha kākou,

I am writing testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modification to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a 31 year veteran teacher at Moanalua HS and a grandparent of a newborn living in my house. Everyday I worry about my grandson getting COVID at school and possibly catching COVID or bringing the virus home to my precious grandson. As a teacher, to me and others, I want a better plan to open schools. The plan we have in place is not comprehensive and does not involve all stakeholders. I'm advocating for a delay of the return of students to allow for more preparation and more training of staff.

As of right now, there is no plan. Period. Teachers do not feel safe. I want to retire RIGHT NOW, and can, but my principal with another burden of hiring a qualified media/social studies teacher.

I am also testifying on action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Extra compensation would deter qualified teachers from accepting positions most in need. If our students are not getting the best education, we are not doing our job. Qualified teachers deserve fair pay. We are not paid fairly, however, the extra pay is a step in the right direction.

I am advocating to delay the **opening of school**, keep the extra pay for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Do the right thing for our students and teachers.

Mahalo,
Kelly Calistro
Moanalua HS

Testimony BOE

From: Nancy Hilson <nancy.hilson@ewamakai.org> on behalf of Nancy Hilson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:09 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

Dear members of the board of education,

I am writing once again because I'm extremely anxious about the reopening of schools. I am a middle school teacher who falls into a high-risk category for both age and a compromised immune system.

Even with our best efforts to have students wear masks and stay apart the likelihood of transmission is quite high. I feel like we should wait until cases have gone down in the state. The number should be low for a week or two before we even consider having students return to school.

Another concern is that I'm hearing there are proposed pay cuts to areas that are hard to staff. There doesn't seem to be a clear plan for how those students will be taught in the absence of trained teachers.

I feel that when teachers return the first thing we should be doing is getting intensive training on distance learning—this time with graded curriculum. I feel that cases will go up again rapidly with both the reopening of schools and the reopening of tourism and we need to be prepared to be sent home again. I do not feel prepared.

Like many older teachers, I love my job and I'd like to keep doing it. But I am seriously considering an early retirement. There is so many unanswered questions. I think we need to do what's best for the families of Hawaii and not cave-in to political pressure to reopen our schools.

Thank you for considering my concerns and thank you for all you do.

Nancy Hilson

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jessie M <jessie_fishbio@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jessie M
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:09 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Opening

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am emailing my testimony for the Covid-19 and opening of our schools. I am writing as an educator and parent. I have two children in the Mililani school district and I teach Building and Construction and Natural Resources at Pearl City High School.

I have requested distance learning for both my children due to the changes in the state and the lack of information around covid-19. Within my family we have an essential worker; that works in a large retail store, myself a teacher, a high school student, and an elementary student. The odds of one of us bringing the virus home is high. .By having my children distance learn, we are reducing our exposure.

What are the DOE/ BOH plans for when a student, teacher, or staff tests positive? How about a family member?

What steps are being taken to prevent teachers, students or staff from skipping the state quarantine? I know one family where both parents are teachers at different schools. They have been in California since mid June and fly back this next week so they can go back to work on Wednesday and they are planning to send their students to school on the 4th.

What steps and training will be provided to our teachers and other staff?

Most cleaners need to set on the surfaces to be effective, are the teachers or students going to be in charge of cleaning the areas? How about surfaces and tools that are not easily cleaned? With Building and Construction most of the materials and tools are not easily cleaned.

There is discussion about the mental health of our students, but how will it affect them when a classmate, teacher, or other staff member gets sick with serious complications or passes away?

Death rates are low, but we do not know the long term side effects of this virus. There are studies showing organ damage, brain damage, and other long-term health conditions associated with the virus.

I want our schools to open, I want to be back in my classrooms with my students, but at this time in person instruction is not safe.

My suggestions are:

1. Delay the opening of school, few weeks or a month. Until more planning is done and staff trained.
2. Open schools on schedule, but with 100% distance learning. Teachers and students at home. Students have online one on one conferences with their teacher to check in on a regular basis.
3. Open schools on schedule, but with only teachers and staff on campus. Students can have online or in person conferences with teachers one on one or in very small groups.

I am more than willing to teach online from my classroom. I would actually prefer that because I would have access to my equipment and materials.

Please don't rush into reopening. The World is watching and the health of our community is at risk.

Thank you,

Jessica Stoerger
PCHS teacher
Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Stephanie Quay <stephaniemquay@gmail.com> on behalf of Stephanie Quay
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My name is Stephanie Quay, I am a kindergarten teacher at Jefferson Elementary School as well as a parent of a 4th grader at Jefferson Elementary School.

I believe that the health of our students and staff are not being met and there has not been adequate time given to teachers to prepare for a safe and effective learning environment. I believe that the start date for school should be pushed back until September to allow for proper training for teachers as well as ample time to prepare a safe learning environment.

In addition, the bell schedules for students are limited to parents who are teachers. I am required to be at work daily, yet my daughter can only go to school 2 days a week. There is not enough assistance for teachers with children who need to stay home and I am not in a position to take any less pay than I already receive to stay home with my child. Teachers should not be put in this situation. Either we go back with all students face-to-face or we go back 100% online with the proper training to teach our students.

Thank you,
Stephanie Quay

Testimony BOE

From: Randi Hayashida <randikh@yahoo.com> on behalf of Randi Hayashida
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Randi Hayashida and I am a teacher at Konawaena High School. I am writing concerning Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

There are many concerns I have for my fellow colleagues, students, and community regarding the current opening of public schools scheduled for August 4, 2020. Chiefly among them are the lack of protocols for schools and families to adhere to. The following are a list of questions and concerns I have about the upcoming school year:

The Department of Health has provided guidelines to follow concerning *individuals* who contract covid. However, no guidelines have been provided as to who should go into quarantine and how that process will take place. What happens when a substitute teacher who has unknowingly contracted covid goes to work at a high school and has been to various teacher classrooms? Do all of those students go into quarantine? When the same substitute goes to another high school the next day and covers more than one classroom, do all those students quarantine? What happens when this substitute is outside during recess or lunch without a mask on with 6-feet distancing (as allowed by Dr. Kishimoto) talking to students, staff, and faculty members? Do all of them quarantine? How will these individuals be identified? What happens when the substitute coughs/sneezes into their hand during this time, forgets to wash their hands and/or does not hand sanitize because none is available, proceeds to place laptops on desks for students to minimize movement in the classroom thus spreading germs to all students who are now at risk? Do they quarantine? Do the students they came into contact with quarantine as well?

In addition, when the tourism industry opens back up, what procedures will be in place for students who have transferred from high-risk states and the 14-day quarantine is no longer in place? Will there be any guidelines that they will be required to follow before going to school? If so, what are they?

Will there be available screeners and tracers for all public schools throughout the state?

When a faculty member or student gets covid due to being at school, will the state cover the medical costs? Covid care can run in the thousands and even over a million dollars. How are teachers who followed all safety guidelines supposed to pay those medical expenses due to contracting covid while at work? Who will cover the medical expenses and provide care for families who contract covid from their child who attended school?

How are faculty and staff supposed to ensure that hundreds of students are adhering to social distancing and wearing masks when they are not in the classroom?

In being proactive, it makes more sense to provide schools the time they need to properly prepare for the upcoming school *prior* to students arriving. Why are teachers learning about guidelines and/or how to best address students' academic and emotional needs when they are already in school?

The aforementioned are just some of the questions that cannot wait to be answered. They should have been answered and put into places weeks ago.

We all know instruction that happens in person is best for our students. That is not the issue here. We are all looking forward to being able to see our students and share space with them. However, the cost of endangering the health and safety of all stakeholders is too high. Guidance and structure are needed and it is nowhere to be found. Literally.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Randi Hayashida

Testimony BOE

From: Adam Tuifagu <adamtnakoa@gmail.com> on behalf of Adam Tuifagu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY Regarding Teacher Pay Differentials

Aloha,

My name is Adam Nakoa Tuifagu, curriculum coordinator at Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole Elementary & Intermediate School in Papaikou on Hawaii Island.

In regard to the agenda item "Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year,"

I strongly urge the board to reject the discontinuance of extra compensations for these teachers.

Teachers in these areas work with our most vulnerable populations and often spend large portions of their own time working outside of their paid hours. The extra compensation they received this past semester is a step in the right direction and to discontinue that extra compensation could lead to teachers leaving the profession or even Hawaii.

We need these teachers to stay in Hawaii for the benefit of our children and our communities. Please continue to provide the extra compensation for these teachers.

Mahalo,
Adam Nakoa Tuifagu

Testimony BOE

From: Jen Fordyce <jen_fordyce@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jen Fordyce
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action item G

Aloha,

My name is Jen Fordyce and I am a teacher and Board member at Hawai'i Technology Academy, a public charter school. I am writing to testify regarding **Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

I have been an educator on Maui for a decade, and I have been an administrator responsible for hiring and mentoring teachers at various moments throughout these past ten years. I also have nieces and nephews who attend Kula Kaiapuni programs which are, in my professional opinion, among the strongest educational opportunities available on Maui. In my position at HTA, I work with special ed students and faculty on a daily basis. I am writing to request that you KEEP the important pay differentials for special education, Hawaiian immersion, and hard to staff areas.

Special education teachers are some of the hardest to recruit and retain in Hawai'i. Their work is challenging, and they are fewer in numbers because of the particular training path they must take. Though I have a Master's Degree in teaching English/language arts and extensive experience and training in supporting students who struggle with literacy, I am NOT a qualified special education teacher. I value their unique perspectives and solutions, especially when it comes to working with our most vulnerable students -- many of whom come from Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander lineage. The decision to provide a pay differential for special education teachers is not only an equity issue for teachers, but also for our students. We need to make sure that every student has access to the best, most qualified experts in their field. If schools do not have adequate funding and support for special education, we are not only breaking the law, we are furthering institutional racism and ableism that already runs rampant. The pay differentials are an excellent step toward mitigating some of these issues.

Last year I heard from vice-principals and principals who were looking for "anyone" to staff vacant Hawaiian immersion positions, just days before school was to resume. They were doing their best to recruit, but there was a serious lack of qualified candidates. So instead of highly qualified educators who 'ōlelo Hawai'i fluently, I am afraid some of the kaiapuni haumāna spent their year with kumu who were not fluent and ready to teach a truly immersion-style class. Hawaiian immersion programs are a key component of the continued growth and vibrancy of Hawaiian culture. The 'ōlelo no'eau that is widely known among Hawaiian immersion students and families is "E Ola Ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i "; the Hawaiian language lives. For more than thirty years, this community has worked hard to build a strong education program that protects and preserves Hawaiian language and culture. And it has been a success! Nearly all of the youngest generation in my partner's family are becoming fluent in their native language -- mother tongue and legally-recognized official language of the state. Pulling supports from this crucial program would go against the Department's own priorities as mentioned in the 2030 Promise Plan:

Students will be educated within a public school system that is grounded in [HĀ](#), powers a multilingual society, and honors Hawai'i's local and global contribution.

— MARKERS: Nā Hopena A'o; languages; culture; context; place-based; safety & total well-being

The HSTA website points out: "According to the department's data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent. Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations." In other words, the pay differentials have been a SUCCESS, and hard-earned success, at that.

Now, in a time of national teacher shortages that will only be made more severe by early retirements and career changes due to fears of COVID-19, we need to hang onto our talented veteran teachers, 'ōlelo Hawai'i teachers, and special education teachers as a top priority if Hawaii's education system is to provide excellent opportunities for our Keiki, preparing them to not only fill, but also envision and create the jobs that will be the future of our much-needed diversified economy.

Mahalo for your time,
Jen Fordyce
Waikapū

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Shishido <danesh1985@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Shishido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:10 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on: H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

The past four months have been a roller coaster of emotions for me. The worst has been this month, as I waited to hear how our school opening would occur. I must say that I am very apprehensive of going back to school, as there is a lack of direction on the part of leadership.

As an educator, I do my research. I went to the DOE website and read that the opening of schools will follow the DOH and CDC guidelines. However, the DOH has not put out any guidelines to the opening of schools, as of yet.

I perused the "Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan" and discovered a chart provided by the CDC on page 59.

hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/HIDOE%20Pandemic%20Contagious%20Virus%20Plan.pdf

ite Campus Lotus Notes Login ORIGO Education... myLexia Lexia Student connectED Log in to Clever DreamBox

irus Plan.pdf 59 / 79

SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Should you consider opening?	Are recommended health and safety actions in place?	Is ongoing monitoring in place?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?✓ Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?✓ Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible✓ Intensity cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation✓ Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home✓ Plan for if students or employees get sick✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures✓ Monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area
ANY NO ↓ DO NOT OPEN	ANY NO ↓ MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST	ANY NO ↓ MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST
ALL YES →	ALL YES →	ALL YES → OPEN AND MONITOR

cdc.gov/coronavirus

If you look at the first column of this chart: "Should you consider opening?"

1. "Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?"

My answer - NO, as there are many inconsistencies, at this point.

2. "Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?"

My answer - NO, as there are many schools that have not received their PPEs, as of yet. Also, I, as an educator, have not been given instructions by the DOE of how to do this.

3. "Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?"

My answer - NO, how do I, as a teacher, screen for "history of exposure?" Also, who is to do the screening? At our school, for example, students will be entering from

7:40 - 8:20 am. Staff begins entering as soon as 5:45am, until 7:50 am. Will the health aide or an administrator have to stand at the entrance for that entire length of time?

It states that if there are any "NO" answers - "DO NOT OPEN". This is located in the DOE website, on a DOE publication. Why are they not following their own plan?

Yes, it is important for children to receive education. However, I feel schools are not ready to open to students. We should be safeguarding these precious contributors to Hawaii's future.

I would like to state that I do not know of any contingency plan. The superintendent states that we will go to distance learning if a school is shut down. I have yet to see any training put out by the department of such training. We should push back the opening of schools to use that time to allow for this training.

I love roller coasters, but currently, this is not a fun ride. My shoulders are heavy. I feel for teachers who have young children and are torn between going back and providing childcare for their children who are on a different school schedule. I feel for the new teachers who are on the lower end of the salary schedule, with the thought of pay cuts still looming over their heads or the two-teacher families, for that matter. I feel for all families who have to work out the logistics of childcare, when their children will be participating in home based learning.

Just as the public is reminded to get their two-week hurricane supplies ready, why doesn't the DOE also tell its parents to get their two week contingency plan ready, in the event that schools are shut down. Director of Health, Bruce Anderson stated at the previous Senate hearing that covid cases will rise with the opening of schools.

I implore you, Board of Education Members, to please help the Department of Education and lead them to take the right steps. We need more health guidance to the opening of schools and we, educators, need the appropriate training to provide the adequate educational opportunities to our keiki. Please consider postponing the opening of schools to students so the aforementioned may occur.

Mahalo, for your time and this opportunity for me to share,
Dana Shishido Kobayashi
Wheeler Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Annie Kitamura <annie.kitamura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Annie Kitamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:11 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work relate to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am writing to you to please reconsider opening the public school campuses on August 4, 2020. As an educator, I understand the importance of education and having students interact and build relationships with other students, but jeopardizing the health and safety of our keiki and our faculty is very concerning to me.

Looking at our school reopening plans, it is still unclear as to how our school will manage a potential COVID-19 case. What will happen to our students? The families and extended families of our students? Our staff? How will our safety be ensured? The decisions that our schools are making are very rushed and done without the input of all stakeholders, which may mean that important considerations are not thought of or accounted for. Our schools need more time to craft a plan that would allow students and staff to safely return to school.

With all of the uncertainty of what our future looks like, and knowing the potential risk, isn't it in the best interest of our keiki to keep our physical campuses closed and open the school year through distance learning?

This option would give keiki a safe environment to learn in and protect them from the potentially fatal COVID-19. This would allow teachers to be able to see and interact with all of our students on a daily basis through online classes (versus one day of 60 minute face-to-face instruction per class period per week). This would allow teachers to pour all of their attention into delivering high-quality lessons to our students (versus managing a face-to-face group, and remote learning group, and a 100% distance learning group all at once).

With so much uncertainty about how to safely reopen schools, I am humbly asking that you please reconsider the opening of public school campuses. Please, keep our keiki and staff safe.

Sincerely,

A. Kitamura

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Testimony BOE

From: Kristin A <kris_yellow72@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristin A
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:11 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I'm a third grade teacher at Kapolei Elem writing a testimony for:

H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I believe that school start for students should be pushed back for the safety and well being of teachers and staff. Over the summer we have not had training on new health protocols and need more time to do so! We want to make sure that we are fully prepared to teach our students in a safe environment and need more time to do so, since we are only going back next week Wed!

Thank you
Kristin Au

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Steven Moore <stevenamoore1987@gmail.com> on behalf of Steven Moore
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

My name is Steven Moore.

I am a special education teacher in the leeward district at Kamaile Academy PCS.

I do not agree with rushing to open to the schools.

Our schools will increase infection and the students will it home to their families and spread.

Also, how many teachers do you have over the age of 60 that are at high risk? Is this an acceptable loss to meet your political agenda?

Steven Moore

Testimony BOE

From: Carolyn Kuntemeyer <10008604@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Carolyn Kuntemeyer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Carolyn Kuntemeyer
Subject: Testimony from a teacher

I am a 32 year veteran teacher at E.B.deSilva Elementary in Hilo. I am writing in attestation to you about the importance of allowing schools more time to open school in a safe and most effective way for our children.

Many of our veteran teachers are in a quandary about taking early retirement because we feel forced into an unsafe situation and an unsettling feeling about opening and teaching in a way which we received no training on.

Please reconsider delaying the opening of school to Sept 1st where we would have enough time to receive in service training on distance and blended learning.

I also feel for parents who have so little time to seek childcare options for the days their students are not in school.

I feel Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto have made this a political issue. That has already proven disastrous for our nation.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Kuntemeyer

First grade teacher

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: Mireille Ellsworth <ellsworthhsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Mireille Ellsworth
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:12 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY - General Meeting July 23 at 1:30 pm

RE: Reopening of schools to students

POSITION: DELAY! We need a PHASED APPROACH to face-to-face learning of any kind! We NEED TIME to plan properly!

Aloha Chair Payne and Board Members,

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, a teacher at Waiakea High School for the past 17 years. I am willing to teach virtually online; however, my students have not been provided the tools to do so. One of the classes I teach is **ACTING**, and in order for my students to be afforded the opportunity to participate, they will need the ability to film themselves and meet synchronously online. It is **NOT POSSIBLE to make PACKETS** for acting class. The same is true for my speech and debate classes. Since I am applying for ADA accommodations to work remotely, it will not be possible to teach my students without webcams or cell phones with video capabilities. People think "all the kids have cell phones," but this is not true. Also, I have students whose parents can only afford limited "data," so students need to be very thrifty with their time online.

This **RUSHED** job is doomed to fail. I have heard the Department of Health **BRACING** the public for outbreaks and community spread which will lead to going back to 100% virtual learning. **WHY** is our Department of Health unwilling to come out with the written guidelines agreed upon in the MOU? Why is anyone allowed to set foot on a campus without being tested? Oh yeah! It's because we don't have enough tests. With our **dwindling supply of tests**, our whole community will be misled that our numbers of new cases is holding steady, but if we test less, we won't know where the virus is lurking.

We can have a better plan! We need a **PHASED REOPENING** that starts with schools doing the necessary planning and preparation. This is all too rushed.

I was appalled to hear our State Department of Health officials say that it's okay to open schools to students because it will be "easy to contact trace" the cases. Not only do we have a shortage of trained contact tracers for the anticipated surges, but that's a **HORRIFYING** way for our DOH to be approaching this challenge.

We need **PREVENTION, not reaction** to outbreaks!

Again, I **URGE** you to delay the reopening for at least a month so schools can gather input from their communities and for faculties and staff to work together to be part of the solution instead of **SACRIFICIAL LAMBS** for some **DYSFUNCTIONAL SYSTEM** that feels the need to **RECKLESSLY BULLY** our teachers to risk their lives!

SAFEGUARD TEACHERS or you won't have enough to operate at all.

Mireille Ellsworth,
Acting, English, and Speech & Debate Teacher,
Waiakea High School,
Hilo

Testimony BOE

From: Jaymi Pascal <hulagirlhawaii808@icloud.com> on behalf of Jaymi Pascal
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Training on Health & Safety

Aloha BOE,

My name is Jaymi Pascal. I have worked for the DOE since 1993 and have been a permanent Educational Assistant since 1997. During this time I have serviced many, if not all realms of Special Education.

Whether working with students with severe disabilities (tubal feeding, incontinence, PT, OT), with students who need limited assistance in an inclusion setting, small group setting, students with extensive behavioral management needs, students who are 1:1 for the full day, students under the spectrum of Autism and the list goes on. Which ever setting I have worked in, there has never ever been a time in which a student is receiving direct services from me where it is possible to maintain a 6 foot distance. Even in an inclusion setting, when a student/s needs assistance, EA's are to discreetly without interrupting the lesson get close give direction and circulate. When the lesson is done EA's often pull/sit with the group/individual to assist closely so as not to disturb the other students. This is the same as resource settings. It is also the same with students who have behavioral support plans and need a 1:1.

I do my job and I do it well, I care immensely for my students however I have no comprehension or have had no training on how to do my job while maintaining social distancing. If schools re-open without a plan that school leadership are held responsible to adhere to it will be dangerous. COVID-19 will spread and Hawai'i students and school staff as well as the 'ohana connected to all should not be exposed and used as the guinea pigs without strict safety measures and extensive training in place. We are educators not health care providers.

I am clear that my union is HGEA and the teacher's union is HSTA and how each entity supports it's members differs. However, often how EA's are utilized in the pass is blatantly beyond the scope of their job description. The guidelines that protect teachers often become chores in which EA's are "asked" to do. EA's often wear many hats. My concern with this now is more exposure and the possibility of bringing it home.

I am a single mother and a very high risk. My son has already suffered loss when his father died from a traumatic work accident a few years ago. He does not need more fear and worry of me getting sick and not having a parent. We as educators know abandonment or fear of being alone is one of the leading fears of children.

What we are facing with this pandemic holds dire consequences ultimately resulting in the possibility of death at it's severest. Please do not put Hawai'i's school students, their families and the staff at risk.

Who is going to take responsibility if my students or son or myself gets ill? Who will ease that pain? That is one of the questions that remain unanswered.

Until the state can answer all the valid concerns, questions and provide clear answers, protections and extensive training to support the health and well-being of All, the state should not be forcing endangerment upon us. Show us we matter! Take a stand for our keiki! NCLB, right? Please cross your "T's" and dot your "I's," be logical and intentional.

Aloha and Mahālo,
Jaymi H K Pascal

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: tiana young <tianakiyomi1208@gmail.com> on behalf of tiana young
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Regarding the reopening of schools

Dear BOE board members,

I am a concerned parent writing to you pleading to offer distant learning for our students. I have a son who will be starting 2nd grade at Benjamin Parker Elementary school. They had said they will not be offering distant learning to grades k to 2. Also what was said was either you homeschool him on your own or suck it up. I do NOT feel comfortable or safe sending my child to school during these times. We still do not fully understand this virus and I am not willing to gamble my son or anyone's child's life. I feel as a parent we should be offered a distant learning program. Have pickup/dropoff dates for schoolwork. In between dates do grading and packet assembly. Or even doing live chats with class to have the interaction with students that do attend school and teachers. I understand that you are trying to do your best but hope you really think about our children, teachers, our families, and our community's safety. You have all power to make a difference for us parents and our children.

Mahalo,

Tiana K. Young

Testimony BOE

From: Tigger Roo <tiggerroo2001@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tigger Roo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello, my name is Ann Uyehara. I am sending you a testimony regarding action item H. Board action on memorandum of understanding between state of Hawaii board of education and Hawaii state teachers association (school year 2020-2021 COVID-19 response): 2017 -2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a second grade teacher at Hickam elementary school. I also have nieces and nephews who attend various public schools on our island.

I am writing to you to beg you to please consider the health and safety of our children and the staff of our public schools, this must be paramount in any decision making. We are not human sacrifices or guinea pigs who should be just thrown back into school without training, guidelines and safety policies in place. With less than two weeks to go before we reopen schools, we have not been trained as superintendent Kishimoto stated in the press conference with our legislators that we were trained back in March, this is a lie! We were in quarantine back in March. So how could we have been trained? She also stated that they were a lot of positive comments about summer school, how can she compare that when most summer school classes only had 3-8 students compared to our 25 -30 students in each classroom during a regular school year? We don't have enough classroom space or teachers in order to accommodate all of the returning students. We feel we are under prepared to deliver a distance-learning program should the schools be shut down again due to the spread of COVID-19. The state of Hawaii and the board of education needs to delay the reopening of schools. We need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and schools need more time- much more time to prepare teachers for an online teaching environment. We have been going in on our own time during our summer vacations to prepare our classrooms but there is only so much we can do.

Please hear our cries and do not reopen schools on Aug 4, 2020!

Respectfully,
Ann Uyehara

Testimony BOE

From: Rebecca Swan <swan90@msn.com> on behalf of Rebecca Swan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Shortage differentials

Hi! My name is Rebecca Weisz. I teach pre-k special education at Kohala Elementary. This year will be my 19th year as a special education teacher in Kohala. I love my job but was planning on retiring this year because I have other business opportunities that would better support my family. I was very grateful when I found out about the shortage differentials. With the additional income I am able to almost make ends meet. I can justify my desire to stay I. The classroom, serving the needs of my students and their families. I am very disappointed that the state would even consider cutting the differentials. Teachers do not get paid what they are worth. We are raising and teaching the future leaders of Hawaii. That is where the money should be going..to entice and retain quality teachers. If the differentials are cut I will be forced to retire from teaching to make ends meet. I love my students and their families and I am dedicated to helping them achieve their dreams. Cutting the shortage differentials is not going to save the state as much as it is going to lose.

Thank you,
Rebecca Weisz

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Smith Simpkins <smith.simpkins@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Smith Simpkins
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE-

**I'm testifying on Action Item G / Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation... I have 23 years of teaching experience, the last four being with the Hawaii DOE... there is a shortage of sped teachers nationwide, but I was amazed upon my arrival here at seeing the enormous disparity if having qualified staff to fill the sped positions; I've seen first hand, the hiring of Teach For America members (who had no prior knowledge of special education) to be placed in sped teaching positions... As the data has shown, the DOE's attempt to address the major issue in providing Hawaiian students with qualified sped teachers has had a very positive impact... if we return back to "square 1", I'm sure that we will see an increase in sped teachers leaving Hawaii ("the same old, same old")... I understand that these are extremely difficult & unknown times, but I would think long & hard before negatively impacting the DOE's staff that feel a "special calling" to their teaching & their students... Thanks for your time!
- Smith Simpkins / SPED Teacher, Ele'ele Elementary**

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Testimony BOE

From: Hilarie Alomar <hilariealomar@gmail.com> on behalf of Hilarie Alomar
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - BOE Action Items G & H

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am the parent of three DOE students (elementary and middle). I am the product myself of the State of Hawaii public school system. Several family members in our household, including myself, are high-risk for experiencing life threatening COVID-19 related complications. I provide this testimony on two 2 Board Action items as a concerned parent and active participant in my children's education.

Action Item G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation

I write in opposition to the board action of temporarily discontinuing extra compensation for teachers in hard to fill positions. As one of my children receives special education services I recognize the great importance of recruiting and hiring qualified special education teachers. The data shows that pay differentials have been effective in securing and retaining competent qualified teachers. Do not reverse the progress made with this short-sighted reaction that will negatively impact my child's right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Please do not discontinue pay differentials and negatively impact the public education system.

Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii BOE and HSTA

I write to implore you to push back the start of school for students so that adequate plans and requirements can be developed and effectively communicated to teachers, staff, families and students. Please delay the return of students to school facilities until adequate progress is made. There are too many unanswered questions at the DOE and DOH level regarding COVID-19 protocols. Furthermore, school administrators and teachers need more time to plan and train before beginning the school year. Our administrators and teachers are on the front lines running and educating schools and they know it best but need more time! It is impossible to develop and implement best practices in the interests of everyone involved in the time left.

The lack of clarity and changing rules, as recently as July 14th, have made it impossible for administrators to develop effective plans and procedures. Staff and teachers need time to familiarize with new requirements and ways of learning so they can effectively communicate new behaviors to students. It is not possible to implement the physical improvements needed to ensure distancing and safety. The current rush pushed by the State and DOE is negligent and impacts the health, safety, and well-being of everyone involved. Ultimately this will have a negative impact on students' love for learning. **Please push back the start of school for students so that schools can plan and train effectively.**

Please listen and hear the testimony of concerned parents, teachers, and the community in making decisions for the students of the State of Hawaii.

Me ka ha'a ha'a,

Hilarie Alomar

Testimony BOE

From: Blaise Hanagami <blhanagami@gmail.com> on behalf of Blaise Hanagami
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Blaise Hanagami and I am a CTE teacher at Mililani High School. I am currently teaching grades 9-12. I am writing this message Testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I strongly advocate for the delay of students returning to campus to ensure the utmost safety of students, faculty and the community at large. As it stands, we are weeks away from the return to school. I understand that the common statement made by Superintendent Kishimoto is “we have a plan,” and we as teachers should be reassured that we will be trained on said plan upon our return to campus. Although there has been productive movement towards safety precaution and procedure by the BOE, there are still fundamental, school-level areas of concern or ambiguity that we as teachers should have more time to discuss, iterate and improve.

Logistically, there are a lot of questions in terms of how rooms should be laid out to meet the guidelines of a safe working environment. For example, my classroom is designed for collaborative, hands on learning that facilitates group learning. The furnishing and supplies reflect this teaching style, as I have work benches that are designed for eight students to sit in a semicircle for collaboration and sharing of equipment. With the current covid spacing regulations, I believe that I would need to make significant changes to meet these guidelines to ensure the safety for all. I do understand that my school’s faculty has been working hard over the summer to survey classrooms, but I would imagine we would need more than the usual four planning days to have a detailed conversation with faculty to confirm all teachers have a safe classroom situation and make needed adjustments.

In the Board Action of Memorandum, there are a lot of statements made involving PPE/ sanitation supplies that include the word “may.” I wholeheartedly believe that our faculty is doing everything within their power to ensure the safety of our community, but I also understand that supplies are finite due to budget. Teachers should have time to hear what our schools are able to provide for us, assess how this fits to our daily operations, and have time to acquire additional supplies that are class specific. In my current situation, students work with routers and switches, along with cables and wires, that are commonly shared between classes due to cost. Using this industry-relevant equipment would require cross contact amongst different “social bubbles.” I would not expect that administration had the manpower or time to think of every possible class’ curriculum-specific equipment. Along that line of reasoning, I would assume that administration has not accounted for PPE/ cleaning supplies to use specific lab equipment safely. As of the time I am writing this, we have not had time to discuss these issues on an individual basis. This creates a two-tiered issue I must resolve in a short window of time before students return: Can common equipment be used, and if so, what supplies do I need to make them safely usable during the pandemic? The answers to these questions greatly impact my yearly curriculum and the time needed to find supplies.

After reading the Board Action of Memorandum and watching Superintendent Kishimoto speak at the hearing in front of the state Special Senate Committee, there seems to be protocol in existence to handle the situation if a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19. From my understanding, the entire classroom of students and teachers will be sent home if the COVID-19 positive student is on campus. This plan makes sense for elementary school settings where students are in one classroom all day, but this becomes much more complex when applied to the high school setting where students will typically move between three classrooms per day. We as teachers do not know what we must do in this situation, and I do understand that this plan will be given to us upon our return to work. However, I believe that Epidemiologist Sarah Park stated that the plan for high schools is “complex” and could not be explained in its entirety during the hearing. I am not opposed to a complex procedure that has clear instruction that is context specific, but I also would believe most teachers would like more time to study and genuinely understand this plan before we have students in our classrooms. If anything, we should be given the time to understand the plan well enough where we feel confident in our daily operations. Generally, teachers are not medical experts and we do not have a default skill set that can quickly absorb new medical-procedure with the ease of doctors or nurses; we need time to learn and discuss.

It is a fair argument that we have been trained to handle other dangerous situations, such as active shooters on campus or bomb threats, but these are scenarios that we have had weeks worth of workshops to learn about and even participate in mock scenarios. These types of scenarios, mind you, have blatant audio and visual cues that would inform a teacher that there is an imminent threat that must be dealt with. With that said, I do not understand how teachers are being asked to deal with a deadly situation, a COVID-19 positive student or faculty member that has no blatant cues of a threat, with less time and training than the ones that do.

I also heard there were questions from the public about summer training and why teachers did not take these courses. Many of us have summer commitments that were made beforehand that are work related, such as workshops, summer school and Professional Development. The classes offered that were COVID specific, to my knowledge, were all being offered before the DOE put out their official plan. What good would training based on “best practices” be if they are not based on official guidelines contextual to the specific environment that we will be working in?

I believe that education is truly the difference maker in our children’s lives, and I find great importance in my work. I look forward to returning to work, but I am truly sombered by the fact that we are quickly moving towards a deadline to have students return based on a pre-selected date rather than criteria met. By extension, I carry a sense of guilt because the public is being assured that we as educators “have a plan” to protect the children of Hawaii based upon guidelines and procedures that we have not fully seen ourselves. At the very least, I would advocate for more time to prepare my classroom and the understanding of guidelines, both state and school specific, to feel confident that I can do everything within my power to keep students and their families safe.

Thank you,

Blaise Hanagami
Mililani High School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Bryan Camello <bcamello@icloud.com> on behalf of Bryan Camello
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:14 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: bryan.camello@gmail.com
Subject: Differential pay for SPED, Hard to staff areas, and Hawaiian immersion

To the members of the BOE

I am a SPED teacher for over 15 years and feel that our student's education is very important. So saying this why is it that we can not attract good teachers to our profession? One of the main reasons I hear that teacher leave or potential teachers don't want to be a teacher is the lack of compensation. If we value education so much why do we not value the people responsible for educating our young children. Why should these young potential leaders choose to be a teacher if our society (government) does not reward their commitment to our children? How can we say that we value education when the first place that is cut is education?

As a SPED teacher we deal with the most difficult students in the school and my fellow teachers will refuse to work with my students. Our hard to staff areas need good teachers. If not these areas will not have a chance to make their families and communities better. Without our Hawaiian immersion teachers our Hawaiian culture will disappear.

So to our elected leaders, I tell my students the way to control and keep a group of people down is to limit or take away their education. What will be doing if you take away attracting good young teachers to this important profession? How can we survive during this crazy time of this current pandemic if we continue to have a less educated population. How can our community thrive with a bunch of low skilled workers in our community? Education is the key to all our issues. Please value our teachers because they are the gate keepers of our future.

Thank you
Bryan Camello
Aiea High School
SPED teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Samuels <wailupe49@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheryl Samuels
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:14 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Give us time to get ready.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am asking that you push the start day for students for a later date. There are so many things coming into play and we need training for them all in order to be ready to receive our children.

I go home to a husband who has medical issues and care for elderly parents. Not only do I need to keep the students safe, but myself as well. Please do not make schools a science project to see how things go. Yes, kids are more resilient to this virus but adults are not.

Here are some questions and topics that concern me.

1. What is the plan when a child or faculty gets sick at school?
2. What is the plan if they test positive for COVID19?
3. Will teachers be tested multiple times a week to ensure we are healthy and the school is too? I would like the peace of mind that I haven't been infected and I'm not bringing anything home to my family.
4. How are the teacher being taken care of during this time, and when we start teaching?
5. Distance learning is something I would like the state to consider for all students. Since we are looking to open the state we should be as careful as possible. I am all for opening the state. This is how I get paid. Please consider all options and protect the teachers.

I've been going into school to get things ready as best I can. Please have teachers best interest in mind.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Samuels

Aina Haina School

Testimony BOE

From: Torrie Mckeague <leialoha018@gmail.com> on behalf of Torrie Mckeague
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Torrie Bowman and I am testifying on action item H. board action on memorandum of understanding between state of hawaii board of education and hawaii state teachers association (sy 2020-2021 COVID-19 response): 2017-2021. Contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for bargaining unit 5 employees.

My daughter is currently enrolled at ben parker elementary school entering the 3rd grade. I have major concerns for her returning to school on aug 4. I have only received 2 letters from the school informing of the somewhat new procedures they have in place for reopening. But I still feel sort of in limbo because its not a black & white plan. I understand that adjustments may need to be made at a later time depending on how the covid situation continues to develop but, I am not at all confident that the timing is right nor that the State/schools have any real clue what they're doing. I am not comfortable with my daughter going back to school physically while Covid-19 cases continue to rise. I am not comfortable sending her to school knowing that she will have to wear a mask all day, I work full time and I myself cannot wear it the entire time at work. I feel like the kids are being used as guinea pigs to start the phasing in of tourism in hawaii, its my own personal opinion but nonetheless I truly feel that schools are not ready for reopening on aug 4. I am definitely thinking of un-enrolling my daughter to home school because I dont have confidence in her safety, her classmates safety, or teachers and staff. I hope you reconsider and push it back until the state can get a grip on stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you,
Torrie Bowman

Testimony BOE

From: Colleen Sullivan <sulli97@gmail.com> on behalf of Colleen Sullivan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

22 July 2020

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is Colleen Kendig-Sullivan and my wife is a Biology/Honors Bio/AP Bio teacher at Roosevelt High School. She and I are expecting our first child; I am due in October. During any other year this would be a fantastically exciting journey, however, during 2020 this journey has been fraught with quarantine and worrying about coming into contact with Coronavirus. In addition, my wife has to now go back into the classroom where she will come into contact with 180 students a week. This will mean she MUST quarantine herself from me for the rest of my pregnancy, she MUST quarantine herself once we bring our son home having no contact with him or me, and also runs a very high risk of not even being able to attend our son's birth. I can't begin to put into words how stressful, sad, and overwhelming these things are to us. As a Biology major myself who focused heavily on immunology and Chemistry I can attest that a virus as virulent as Coronavirus AND with community spread is not something to take lightly. Why then, are we putting our teachers and students at risk? You and the Hawaii DOE have had since March to come up with alternative online learning programs yet you have not done so. As a citizen of Hawaii and someone who will send her children to Hawaii Public Schools, I am deeply saddened by your inability to come up with alternative plans for our keiki. In my wife's case, you have a young/driven/motivated/excited teacher who loves what she does and is beginning to consider other forms of employment where her superiors won't put her in dangerous situations (aka, exposing her and her family to coronavirus). Why does it need to come down to this?? She loves teaching, but doesn't see the point in putting herself or family at risk at this juncture. If there were suitable online alternatives given to her from yourself and Hawaii DOE she would champion them and guide her students through them expertly. You have the resources and the teaching force to tackle the issue and to proceed with an online learning environment led by innovative teachers where both teachers and students are kept safe and are able to continue their education.

I am writing because I am deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on 4 August. The current state plan not only does not ensure the safe return of our students to school, but indeed it actively jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. The measures announced by Hawaii DOE do not meet CDC recommendations, and do not adequately consider the risks to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with the current plan. It is unacceptable.

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces in which individuals are not wearing masks. (Thus it is not merely a matter of maintaining adequate physical distance.) Many of our classrooms exhibit precisely these qualities that we know, scientifically, to be unsafe. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the current DOE plan does not sufficiently address the fact that reopening our schools under the current plan will create exactly the conditions that are most conducive to transmitting the virus. It is a recipe for a public health disaster.

While it is encouraging the state and HSTA reached an agreement to maintain six-foot distance between students in the classroom, this is far from adequate to even minimally protect the health and safety of our community. Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for “universal masking”^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.
4. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.
5. Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan there is no possibility that I feel comfortable with my spouse teaching under the proposed classroom rules and conditions.

Therefore, I am calling on you to announce and implement the following measures:

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;
2. Delaying the opening of schools until at least 4 weeks have passed with no Covid cases in our state;
3. A statewide mandate to require the use of masks at all times when on public school premises. (With reasonable exceptions only in the case of teachers and administrators who are alone in their classrooms and offices.)
4. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule.

I appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of Covid in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. Failure to improve the current reopening plan by adding the above additional measures would constitute a severe dereliction of your duty as a public servant to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns I have expressed.

Best regards,

Colleen Kendig-Sullivan
1030 Aoloa Pl
Kailua, HI 96734

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heather Gostage
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:15 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 109935958_10158963703602150_2175758521915817977_n (1).jpg

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Heather Gostage and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school. As a parent and teacher, I do not feel that we are ready to return to school in person and maintain everyone's safety. My children will be participating in 100% distance learning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Heather Gostage

James Campbell High School

Industrial & Engineering Technology Career Pathway Core Teacher

P-23

305-3798

"It doesn't matter if the glass is half empty or half full. Be thankful that you have a glass and grateful that there's something in it." ~Unknown

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Recommended Phased In Reopening

The movement from one phase to the next will be dependent on monitoring the spread of COVID-19 as well as health and safety guidance.

PHASE 1: FULL REMOTE LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar, will begin school on August 17, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar, will begin school on September 1, 2020, for virtual instruction for 30-45 school days pending further health and safety guidance.
- No students in the school buildings. All instruction will be delivered virtually.

PHASE 2: HYBRID LEARNING

- Students attending schools on the early start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
 - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
 - Students learn online outside of school 3 days a week.
- Students attending schools on the traditional start calendar will begin face-to-face instruction pending further health and safety guidance.
 - Students will attend schools for face-to-face instruction for 2 days per week and virtual instruction for 3 days per week.
- Students will rotate between face-to-face and virtual instruction.

PHASE 3: FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (VIRTUAL OPTION)

- When safe, all students will return to in-person instruction with a virtual option.
- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety guidance.

Testimony BOE

From: mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:16 AM
To: 'testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: testimony-delay reopening of schools.

Dear BOE Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns about the reopening of schools for students scheduled for August 4th as it relates to

H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Misty Tsukayama and I am an SSC at Eleele School, a parent of two boys who attend Waimea Canyon Middle and Waimea High School, and the wife of a technology coordinator at Koloa Elementary School. We all have high or higher risk conditions. We have grandparents on both sides in their 70s and a great-grandmother who is 102 and lives in a care home which was just reopened to visitors. I will be visiting her this week and probably not again if schools reopen due to the risk I may pose her.

I am concerned about reopening campuses. I feel anxious every time I think about it and have lost sleep and my appetite over the thought of walking on to campus and dropping off my children onto their campuses. While I truly understand the value of conducting in-person learning, doing so unsafely should not be an option. Currently there are so many unknowns that no one can answer, and more questions come up daily as we attempt to plan for a reopening that may be premature.

The entire process seems to have been done backwards...beginning with a start date for reopening schools, followed by choosing a model within about a week's time and then determining how to make that work is causing stress and confusion. The state and schools needed to consider all the needs for reopening first. What is our cleaning capacity? How many students do we have to service and what are their needs? How much space do we have in classes? What will we need to stay safe? Can we even be safe?...and so forth. Then a model, then a date. The state DOE talks about data driven decisions all the time however that does not seem to have happened here.

My specific concerns are...

Cleaning and sanitizing: Our school currently has 3 custodians, wonderful hardworking custodians that are part of our school's family. How do we realistically expect them to clean thoroughly throughout the day and at the end of every day with the new guidelines they are expected to follow when we know that it was nearly impossible even before COVID-19 requirements. At the middle and high school levels, how will the classes be cleaned in between periods before new students enter. I have been hearing students may have to bring wipes and clean themselves. While I'm all for being a community contributor, is it safe to have students use wipes with chemicals throughout the day? Who will provide the wipes? What kind of wipes will be allowed?

Heat: During the first quarter, the classrooms can be stifling. At Eleele School we were in the process of installing AC's for our classrooms. Now we are told that well ventilated areas are safest. Students and teachers will be wearing masks in 90+ degree weather. Students will likely drink less water due to wearing masks and

what will be the procedure for drinking water in a classroom with mask requirements? I imagine we will have even more cases of heat related symptoms including dehydration that we heard about during the hotter months even before masks were worn.

Increasing cases of COVID-19: One of the requirements to consider reopening schools was a two week downward trend in cases which did happen for a while. However, there has been an upward trend for more than two weeks. That should cause them to pause and rethink. And the fact that there is really no concrete plan for dealing with positive cases in the schools is cause for concern. The current process requires a number of steps. What will teachers and schools do while the DOH and DOE are figuring out how to proceed? Also, DOH's Dr. Anderson, in a news interview, said he does expect cases to be found in schools shortly after reopened. How can they even consider sending us in to a place that will likely, as an expert says, have the COVID-19 virus? In another discussion by DOH, Dr. Park focused on the impact to the state. While I understand that in their positions they must consider it that way, schools do not. It is not okay to have even one person get the virus if we have options to prevent it. We do not accept that it's okay to sacrifice a few of us for the good of the group. That is not the way educators think. We cannot play Russian Roulette with our teachers and students. Beyond health is the emotional stress and trauma of trying to protect students and the guilt teachers will feel if one of their students gets sick, even if they know it's not their fault. And who will parents question and blame if their child gets sick and they are angry? The teachers and schools, not the state departments who made the decisions to reopen schools too early.

Ohana Bubble: Every student and adult in an ohana bubble has a home bubble, many of which mingle with other bubbles and so forth. My children have been at home almost completely for the duration of the school closures, only going beyond our street for a haircut once and a few car rides where they did not leave our car. We then hear of children playing in the parks and families having get togethers, see large groups at beaches etc and these are the children that will be in my children's bubbles. We cannot control what others do, only what we do. Therefore, we should not be placed in a situation that allows students to be "like a family". This is yet another thing that has not yet been well thought out and there are different messages from different sources. While I've heard some say masks and social distancing will be required in schools at all times, DOH and Dr. Kishimoto continue to talk about this bubble that is "safe" for students to interact without all safety measures enforced.

Mental Health of Students: This has been brought up in a number of news conferences as though it outweighs physical health and safety. When I think of schools opening, I picture drop off. At this time, I cannot imagine students jumping out of their cars ready to go back to school. Some will of course, but many will be afraid and worried. Parents who have been following the safer at home orders have been telling their children it's not safe to go out and have left home as little as possible. Now, they will need to tell their children that despite very little change, or a change for the worse, school is the exception. They will have to say this without confidence that schools will be able to keep their children safe. How will we deal with crying children who won't get out of their cars when we cannot get within 6 ft of them? What kind of comforting words can we share when we too are as worried as they are and have no answers? What about the kindergartners that have never set foot on campus and suddenly will have to be dropped off at the curb to strangers wearing masks and shields? As a certified and former school counselor I think it could be as traumatizing, if not more, to force students into a scary situation when we cannot ensure their safety. Returning to on campus learning once things are really and truly safe and able to look like school again may be better in the long run. Students who are worried will not be able to fully learn. The concern about the loss of learning from distance learning might actually be less than the loss of learning in a scary and uncomfortable classroom situation. I very worry about how we will comfort and counsel elementary students during this time with one counselor who cannot be within 6 ft of a student.

Readiness of Schools and Teachers: In a recent interview or briefing with Dr. Kishimoto, she stated that the teachers who taught during the Summer Hub said they felt it went well and they are ready to reopen. The teachers who I spoke to said they were never asked and have a lot of concerns about how things will go when twice as many students are in their classes. Also, there was no report of Kekaha School's positive COVID-19

case during the summer and the subsequent closing of their on-campus summer learning programs. Why has this not been shared? It seems like there is an attempt to keep it quiet when really it should be used as a learning and planning opportunity. Keeping it hush hush makes me feel as if there is something to hide. As though the only objective is to reopen in person learning at all costs. Teachers are not ready, schools are not ready, classrooms are not ready. We should not reopen until we are. In an ideal and theoretical world maybe, but not realistically. Teachers are not robots programmed to follow commands. Students are not tree stumps that we can set in one place and expect them to stay still and soak up whatever is given to them.

Safer at Home: There is still the recommendation of being safer at home so why is school the exception? If it's safer at home, then students and teachers should be at home. Safety should be our primary concern at this time. There has been a lot of talk about vulnerable students in regards to education and somewhat of a brush off of vulnerable teachers in regards to health. Until there is a vaccine, or at least regular testing due to the number of asymptomatic carriers, learning should be done safely online. That may be an extra quarter or semester but time should not matter. If there is anyone who disagrees I ask them to pack up their offices and move it on to one of our hotter campuses in the middle of a classroom and experience what we all will.

While I do have a lot of strong feelings, I don't feel anyone is to blame. Everyone has roles and responsibilities as well as their own personal thoughts and feelings about the dangers of COVID-19. However, everyone should be accountable. Not to the pressures of politics or money but to the people they are serving. I have heard all parties say health and safety are our first priorities. Please make decisions with that at the forefront. I ask for your support in keeping us all safe so that one day, when things are more normal, we can all return with more confidence and certainty of a safe and healthy school environment.

Thank you for your support!

Testimony BOE

From: Juli Teves <hilohapa@gmail.com> on behalf of Juli Teves
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: No school please

Please don't start school till the numbers slow down. Talk about staying out of clusters you are Forcing clusters. I see it like you're setting people to slaughter. Strong words but this whole thing is scary

Aloha,
Juli Higa

Testimony BOE

From: Robin OHara <moanianilehua@yahoo.com> on behalf of Robin OHara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on agenda item G and H
Attachments: testimony on compensation & opening schools.docx

Attached is testimony opposing the discontinuation of extra compensation and opening of schools August 4th.

Robin O'Hara
Kealakehe Intermediate

Robin O'Hara

Kealakehe Intermediate School

RE: Testimony on items G and H of the General Session

Dear Board of Education Directors:

As I write this, it is 3:00am, one of many sleepless nights these past few months from the anxiety I feel about returning to campus with students when our schools are woefully unprepared to deal with it, and most recently the threat of discontinuing the extra compensation for hard to staff positions. I wake up and can't get back to sleep worrying if I will make it through this school year without contracting covid 19, and added to that if I will make it financially another year in Hawaii.

I can't believe I am here testifying again just two weeks after having to plead for the board's support to get the DOE to live up to their end of the MOU we worked so hard to get. Now, the DOE is asking that our extra compensation for hard to fill areas be discontinued. Is this punishment for standing up for ourselves? Not only is it demoralizing to take away compensation we bargained for, but it is disgusting how the DOE conducts itself in how it treats its employees. First, they try to cut corners around our MOU, and when that didn't go over well, they are asking to cut our pay when the teachers' workload is increasing substantially to accommodate what is expected this school year.

Each year at my school we end up having to replace about 20-25% of our teaching staff. We hired new teachers who moved here to take the job just this month and now, after they have already accepted the job, we have to tell them they won't be getting the extra compensation they were counting on to pay their expenses to live in Hawaii? It's hard enough to keep teachers as it is and now the DOE just wants to cut the rug out from under them after they have committed to a job they thought would pay them an extra \$15,000 for being in special education and a hard to staff school?! Well, we can kiss them goodbye because after they struggle all year to make ends meet, they will see they can't afford to stay here.

I have been an educator for 25 years and have been through the strike, the three years we suffered pay cuts in the form of furloughs and an across the board pay cut, and countless times of going out of contract because the DOE pushed back so hard on any raises the teachers would request. A decade ago, when we had furlough days forced on us, I lost my tiny 300 square foot condo, the only thing I could afford on my teacher salary in spite of working two other jobs at the time, because I lost a significant amount of my pay for three years in a row. I built my life around what I was promised to be paid according to my contract, and in turn, I promised to pay that mortgage, but the state did not make good on their promise and took away some of that salary for three years, which led in turn to me having to break my promise to the bank, and I lost my home.

Finally, after 10 long years, just this month that bankruptcy came off my credit record and I am terrified I will lose what little I have gained since then. I can't go through this again.

It is only me supporting myself. I don't have a spouse with an income; it is just me paying all the bills, so cutting pay when all other expenses continue to rise in this state, will be a hardship for most of us.

What I don't understand, what I really just don't get, is why the DOE spends so much effort working against its employees instead of with them. Why do we have to continue to fight for every breadcrumb and scrap thrown our way? Shouldn't they be advocating for their employees to have excellent working conditions and compensation so they can attract and retain the best and the brightest? Instead, it is the opposite, so that tells me that the DOE doesn't even value the very business they are in, education. It's just ludicrous!

What needs to happen is that the state needs to stop trying to balance the budget on the backs of teachers. We are always the ones who lose out when the state isn't doing well fiscally, and it should not keep being our burden. The state needs to find other funding sources and start cutting the fat at the top. Let's start with the superintendent's salary. She can take the salary of a new teacher for this year to start with, so she can really see what it's like to try to survive in Hawaii on a teacher's salary. I bet she will not be asking to cut our pay if she's making the same. Next, the state needs to support and advocate for their teachers instead of looking for ways to get one over on us year after year. Write grants, beg the federal legislators, call Jeff Bezos for a bail out, figure it out, but please just stop with the threats of pay cuts and trying to wiggle your way out of your end of the MOU. Just stop!

On Sunday, a friend of mine who is in liquor sales here in Hawaii sent me a text that said, and I quote, "I just got a hell of a raise!" I responded that we are looking at losing our extra compensation we bargained for. What does that say about our society when people working in liquor sales are getting large raises in the midst of a raging pandemic, but the teachers who have to walk into a classroom and spend long periods of time with students, with minimal protection are facing losing pay? I'm just so disgusted.

As for the working conditions and other issues brought up about our MOU, this needs to be dealt with as well and I am begging the board to hold the DOE accountable for their disingenuous actions. We are not ready for school to open next week. Schools are struggling to get PPE and are competing with each other for the same supplies, competing with schools all over the country, all over the world, in fact. We have yet to receive our orders. Today a clerk is going down to Costco to see if we can purchase hand sanitizer in bulk because we can get any anywhere else. There has not been 14 days of declining numbers of covid cases. There is no way to keep "bubbles" as the Department of Health suggests when secondary students change classes and mix with other groups, then go home to mix with their elementary siblings. It's just not possible

to keep this contained in any meaningful way. What is our DOH even thinking? All the measures they are expecting people to take such as social distancing, wearing face masks when outside your home in public places, not to gather in groups larger than 10 indoors or for periods more than 15 minutes, all flies in the face of what is being asked of the teachers. We will be in classrooms, in close quarters, all day, 5 days a week interacting with 100-150 students a week in secondary schools. Try containing a pandemic in that environment!

Schools are not getting cleaned. The office where I work has yet to be sanitized and is not getting cleaned at all. One of the clerks is the one who is wiping down everything after a person leaves. She doesn't have time to do that and her job. The SBBH at our school had to get on her hands and knees to scrub her floor and chairs in her office because she was required to report to her office even though she could do all her work remotely, but she didn't want to work in an office that was filthy and still hasn't been cleaned to this day.

Teachers want very much to be with their students in person. Distance learning is not ideal, and we sympathize with parents about what to do with their children when they work; teachers are parents as well and will also be working, but schools are not prepared to do this safely. How many have to get sick or die? Do you really want to have to tell a child that their favorite teacher died of covid because the state didn't make sure they protected their teachers? Do you really want to have to tell a teacher she just lost one of her beloved students to covid because we couldn't keep them safe in school? I spoke to my doctor the other day and she said she would not feel safe going on campus with children. She said it is terrifying. Another doctor said he would not set foot in a classroom without the same PPE he wears in the hospital. Yet teachers are expected to be in a room for extended periods of time and rotate through all their students in the week. This isn't a trip to the grocery store where you have a lot of space to spread out and only be there for a short time. This is a recipe for disaster.

How about the Dept. of Health and the state figure out how to provide childcare for the parents of our community and school teachers who have children? Maybe the DOH can tell us exactly how we keep "bubbles". We know the kids are not staying even in their family bubbles. They are running around the neighborhoods hanging out with their friends. Teachers should not be the state's answer to childcare. We need to enlist the community and other resources to deal with this as part of the overall health crisis.

The more we try to push forward without all the precautions in place and plans for how to deal with an outbreak, the longer we will delay the country and our state getting through this pandemic. This is just insane to try to force the opening of schools. We don't even know what we will do if teachers call out sick or have to stay home to care for their children. We don't even have enough teachers to cover all our vacant positions, and we certainly don't have enough subs on a good day let alone during a pandemic.

We really need to take a step back and get the teachers trained to do distance learning well because the only thing the administrators have been working on is a way to blending learning when we should be preparing for distance learning since it is just a matter of time, after opening up, that we will see more spread and have to shut schools down. Do you want to see what happened in Quarter 4 last year happen again? We just down suddenly but aren't set up for full distance learning? Let's roll back the opening at least a month to prepare and so the state can come up with solid solutions to all the issues that will arise once the doors open to students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We need you to support all our employees.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin O'Hara

Testimony BOE

From: Makana Pundyke <makapundyke@gmail.com> on behalf of Makana Pundyke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School re-opening

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to who I hope is a listening and compassionate ear. I am an educator on the island of Maui in the elementary classroom. I disagree with the reopening of school on August 4th, 2020 as I fear for not only my safety and health, but my students, faculty, and community as well. I have not been given any training and/or guidelines should something happen in my school or classroom. I am not comfortable at all with this situation and question if I should return. I kindly ask that you put yourself in our shoes, do you really feel that you'd be so willing to go back? Should I or anyone in our school contract Covid-19 from another person in the school setting and then spread it to their family, who is at fault? Should someone die from it spreading from a school setting, who is at fault? A simple, "sorry" would not suffice. What if it's your family member? I hope my concern, as I'm on the front line of this as a teacher, will be heavily considered and not taken lightly. I humbly ask that you folks push back the start date of school until further guidelines, support, and instructions are provided.

Mahalo,
Makana Cabanas

Testimony BOE

From: Becky Burke <beckyburke2010@gmail.com> on behalf of Becky Burke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education Members:

I am a recently retired teacher and concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am testifying on action item: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a retired teacher from Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I appalled at the state's lack of action in creating a safe plan to reopen schools. I am outraged that the state, Superintendent Kishimoto, and the Board of Education adamantly pushed to reopen schools with no clear plan to keep individuals safe. They have lied to the public to create a false sense of security and safety in order to rush the opening of schools. Moreover, they disregarded the science and guidelines put forth by medical experts. Teachers have not been trained. Teachers should not be asked to work for free in the summer to accommodate the state's failure to act. Teachers are not being provided with PPE to keep themselves and others safe. Ohana bubbles are not grounded in science. Teachers are not medical experts. It is impossible to visually check for COVID-19! The current plan is full of pukas that endanger the lives on people in our community.

The health and safety of our keiki and staff of our public schools must be paramount in any decision making. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush. I testify that the Board should delay opening up campuses to students until teachers, students, and families feel that their safety is your top priority.

Becky Burke
Retired Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: evelyn gamez <evelyn.g_07@hotmail.com> on behalf of evelyn gamez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony.

Aloha,

My name is Evelyn Gamez, testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I have been a special education teacher at Maui High School for severe/profound students since 2015. I understand that these are unprecedented times, and many concerns are being voiced by all parties involved.

I am specifically writing to advocate for myself.

At Maui High, I will be expected to be on campus from the beginning of the school year because the population of students I teach face an immense amount of challenges with online schooling. Simply speaking, online classes does not work for them, and I completely agree with special education students coming to school for face-to-face instruction as long as protective measures are put into place for everyone, (6 ft distancing, protective gear provided, cleaning supplies provided, etc).

I admit I am a bit apprehensive about being in much closer contact with my students as many of them are sent to school even when they are sick. If this is going to be the case, myself and other sped teachers are going to be put at much more risk than our general education coworkers. As special education teachers, we must assist with changing diapers, toileting, feeding, and brushing teeth. Some students will attempt to bite us, spit at us, or scratch our skin. Some students will be unable to cover their sneezes or coughs. This is the nature of special education, and most of us are not worried or bothered when any of the above happens under "normal" circumstances.

I have come to accept that this is my new "work hazard" for the foreseeable future. It is my chosen profession, and I am not at a point where I am thinking of walking away.

Nonetheless, I can't help but wonder how guilty I would feel if any of my students were unknowingly infected by myself, my staff, or a peer. Many students in special education are among the most vulnerable for Covid-19 complications. These are the thoughts that are coursing through my mind as we look at starting the new school year.

However, when I was told that there was talk of cutting our differentials, I felt disappointed and unappreciated. When the board speaks of cutting differentials, I am hearing "you are not valuable to us. We don't care that you will be facing more hazardous conditions. We don't care if you don't have enough money to survive in Hawaii's economy." Cutting differentials will have a negative effect on teacher morale in a time when teacher morale is already at an all time low.

Being a special education teacher brings an immense amount of pressure, responsibility, and paperwork. I humbly request to consider cutting teacher differentials as an absolute last option. We are here to serve our students and continue to teach them; please understand that teaching special education students under current circumstances will be much more difficult and taxing, both mentally and physically, for all involved.

Mahalo,

Evelyn Gamez
Special Education Teacher
Maui High School

Testimony BOE

From: Xanthe Serafin <xserafin@volcanoschool.net> on behalf of Xanthe Serafin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education. I am a licensed teacher in the state of Hawaii and a member of the HSTA. I am writing to you to give testimony about the shortage differentials which are affecting me personally. I work for a charter school with limited per-pupil funding who cannot work full-time due to budget constraints. I Have worked at our school for 20 years. I used to be able to afford to live on a part-time salary but now I have to do other part-time jobs to make ends meet as a teacher. The shortage differential payment helps a lot for me to focus on teaching and without it I am afraid that I may be priced out of being able to live in My home in Hawai'i because of the high cost of living. Please fund the shortage different shows so that we who have served long term can be compensated equally. Also, please provide equal funding for charter schools. Thank you,
Xanthe

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Yasuda <nicole.yasuda@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nicole Yasuda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, my name is Nicole Yasuda, a Career and Technical Education Teacher of Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education at Farrington High School. I have served at Farrington for 12 years now helping shape our children to return back to our home as future educators themselves. I have always placed an emphasis on education and have dedicated my position as a teacher to not only be at the whiteboard but to fuel our depleted teacher pool of candidates.

As a teacher of teachers I know that educators are selfless by job title. This is a response to H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees, and the disregard of civil servants and the future generation of Hawai'i. I could explain the vast amounts of instances our educators have been taken advantage of but right now the most pressing one is of the department's urge that our teachers, schools, and staff are ready to provide a safe environment for our keiki--a basic need that schools are required to provide.

It was stated that our schools have been preparing. I can assure that our school had only updated the staff of any information about reopening on July 7th. In that OPTIONAL address the only concern was a decision creating a schedule. At that time training should have been administered, protocols should have been developed, relevant materials should have been distributed, and an open forum of question asking should have been established. Instead, that meeting was a flurry of questions that were not addressed due to a lack of answers that were distributed to our administrations. Essential and life-saving questions like:

- I am a "high-risk" case, what sort of protections are there if students refuse to wear masks that are not mandated?
- What is the actual procedure if a student seems feverish but there is no nurse to send them to, since in the past we were without one?
- What does a teacher do in case of non-compliance to safety rules and guidelines?
- Will we have access to CDC suggested items at the day we arrive in order to create protocols for our classrooms? These include the following:
 - Covered trash cans
 - Touchless soap/sanitizer dispensers
 - Proper furniture to maneuver 6 feet apart
 - Extra PPE for staff and students
 - Disinfectant
 - Floor labels for distancing
 - Approved posters and pamphlets to post in classrooms

We are given no extra time without our students to address these issues once we report back on the 29th. In my case I could not possibly see how I could be prepared with the given fact that my classroom would have to be physically altered to provide 6ft of safety precaution. I have a classroom that has tables as desk that give students the optimal environment for cooperative learning that are 6 ft in length. Currently my classroom houses 8 tables that would only allow me to have 4 students. However I could fit 8 with the exception of REMOVING EVERY OTHER piece of furniture out of my room. This is obviously not feasible. First, It would ruin the learning environment. Secondly, I would only have 4 days to do so (2 of which are meeting days).

There are so many logistical items like this that are issues at the front line of exposure that our decision makers are not considering. Is it not part of our job as educators to listen, plan, research/collect data, and assess before we execute in order to allow our students every opportunity to achieve success and excellence? All I am left with are questions of “why”? Why are we not listening to the teacher expert voices of their own classrooms? Why are we not planning for the best and worst case scenarios so that we can be the steady foundation that our students expect us to be? Why are we not using CDC data to predict and prevent exposure that could cost the health of students and their families?

This is a situation that is unjustly thrust onto teachers to make a choice. One that shouldn't have landed on educators. The supporters of restarting schools immediately are more concerned for our economy and are using students as leverage. The supporters of delaying are concerned for the very lives of Hawai'i's children and their families. You force our teachers to sacrifice everyday without a pandemic, and now you ask us to sacrifice our family and loved ones. Please consider all the options before taking a risk that would cost much more than our 100 million emergency fund can cover.

Nicole Yasuda

[W.R. Farrington High School](#)

[GPS-Teacher Program of Study](#)

Academy Coordinator

Tel: (808) 305-5049

Email: nicole.yasuda@k12.hi.us

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Testimony BOE

From: Mason Dimond <keli holokai808@gmail.com> on behalf of Mason Dimond
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, my name is Mason Dimond, a Social Studies Teacher at Farrington High School. I have served at Farrington for 20 years now helping shape our children to productive members of society. I have always placed an emphasis on education.

It was stated that our schools have been preparing. I can assure that our school had only updated the staff of any information about reopening on July 7th. In that OPTIONAL address the only concern was a decision creating a schedule. At that time training should have been administered, protocols should have been developed, relevant materials should have been distributed, and an open forum of question asking should have been established. Instead, that meeting was a flurry of questions that were not addressed due to a lack of answers that were distributed to our administrations. Essential and life-saving questions like:

- I am a “high-risk” case, what sort of protections are there if students refuse to wear masks that are not mandated?
- What is the actual procedure if a student seems feverish but there is no nurse to send them to, since in the past we were without one?
- What does a teacher do in case of non-compliance to safety rules and guidelines?
- Will we have access to CDC suggested items at the day we arrive in order to create protocols for our classrooms? These include the following:
 - Covered trash cans
 - Touchless soap/sanitizer dispensers
 - Proper furniture to maneuver 6 feet apart
 - Extra PPE for staff and students
 - Disinfectant
 - Floor labels for distancing
 - Approved posters and pamphlets to post in classrooms

There are so many logistical items like this that are issues at the front line of exposure that our decision makers are not considering. Is it not part of our job as educators to listen, plan, research/collect data, and assess before we execute in order to allow our students every opportunity to achieve success and excellence? All I am left with are questions of “why”? Why are we not listening to the teacher expert voices of their own classrooms? Why are we not planning for the best and worst case scenarios so that we can be the steady foundation that our students expect us to be? Why are we not using CDC data to predict and prevent exposure that could cost the health of students and their families?

This is a situation that is unjustly thrust onto teachers. One that shouldn’t have landed on educators. The supporters of restarting schools immediately are more concerned for our economy and are using students as leverage. The supporters of delaying are concerned for the very lives of Hawai’i’s children and their families. You force our teachers to sacrifice everyday without a pandemic, and now you ask us to sacrifice our family and loved ones. Please consider all the options before taking a risk that would cost much more than our 100 million emergency fund can cover.

Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Hoppe <hoshjoppe@gmail.com> on behalf of Joshua Hoppe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I am testifying on Action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Responses): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I want to add to my testimony to also consider the risks to the community at large by students who are exposed in school and then spread to their family members who might be at risk.

Testimony BOE

From: Sheala Nagamine <sheala.nagamine@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sheala Nagamine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am emailing you to reject the proposal to defer millions of dollars to special education teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools. The increase in pay has been helpful and I urge you to reject this proposal.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: MELISSA BEAVERS <mmbeavers001@gmail.com> on behalf of MELISSA BEAVERS
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY for BOE General Business Meeting July 23, 2020

To whom it may concern:

Below is my written testimony for the BOE's General Business Meeting Scheduled for July 23, 2020. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thank you,

Melissa Beavers
Social Studies teacher
Moanalua High School.

Testimony of Melissa W.L.S. Beavers For State of Hawai'i Board of Education General Business Meeting, Thursday, July 23, 2020.

Regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

Aloha Chairperson Payne and members of the Board of Education. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony today.

My name is Melissa Beavers. I am a social studies teacher at Moanalua High School. I am here to request that the Board of Education delay the reopening of Hawai'i's public schools. The schools and teachers need more time to prepare for the reopening of schools. Especially for those of us who will be teaching in schools that will be having blended campuses - a combination of in-person and online teaching - we teachers need more time to learn how to effectively teach and reach our students. Additional time would also allow schools and the DOE to work together to come up with consistent system-wide policies and methods so all public school students receive a consistent level of quality education.

Teachers need more time to learn how to effectively teach online. Without sufficient training, our students will suffer. Even though many schools are teaching in-person or in a blended situation, the reality is that we will still have to do some teaching online, and if the COVID-19 situation worsens, schools may have to go completely online again. In her "HI DOE Special Update" video which was emailed to teachers on July 21, 2020, Superintendent Kishimoto states, "Several thousand teachers sacrificed some of their summer break to receive and offer training on distance learning and blended learning models. Now we need to ensure that the rest of our staff is prepared." Dr. Kishimoto is correct that now the DOE has to ensure that the rest of its staff is

prepared. If “several thousand” teachers had some training over summer break and the DOE has approximately 13,000 teachers, that means approximately 11,000 teachers still need training. Yet, the time we have for training is insufficient. It is July 22, 2020, and we teachers are being asked to be ready to teach in a little over 10 days, with hardly any consistent training from the Department of Education (“DOE”). Teachers’ first day back on campus is July 29, 2020, which gives us 4 days before students come on campus. But these 4 days are what we usually have to prepare for a normal school year. It is not enough time for us to learn how to effectively teach in the midst of a pandemic. Even the 8 additional half-days (i.e., 4 days) at the start of the school year are not enough. We need more time and consistent relevant training on things like online platforms and tools and methods to deliver online instruction. We need time to adjust the lessons that we used to deliver in-person so that they are engaging and effective for our students in-person and online. We also need time to assess the needs of our students and teach them how to effectively learn online.

Thus far, the DOE has failed to purposefully provide consistent relevant training for teachers on how to effectively teach online. Last quarter, when we were forced to move to online teaching, we received training on how to use Webex as a means to hold online classes. Thereafter, it was up to the teacher to find useful and relevant training on their own. I attended one in-house introductory session on Google Classroom that lasted 45 minutes, and then I had to learn how to use Google Classroom on my own through YouTube. In addition, some training that is available through the DOE does not take into account teacher concerns about exposure to the COVID virus. For example, today (Wednesday, 7/22/20) and tomorrow, our school is offering teachers stipends if they attend two half-day in-person professional development training sessions. The training is voluntary, and pursuant to the federal grant restrictions that is funding the stipend, teachers, must attend the training in-person both days to receive the stipend. Many teachers would like to receive the training but are concerned about the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Some would like to attend the training through Webex, even if that means they will not receive the stipend. Our school is doing its best to provide a Webex connection and get the sound and video working, but we were informed that our school cannot guarantee that we will be able to see and hear everything that is happening. Also, while online attendees may be able to post questions in the Webex chat box, there is no guarantee that those questions will be answered. How is this effective teacher training?

Allowing more time before the reopening of schools will also allow the DOE and the schools to come up with consistent systemic solutions to issues that will help promote a consistent level of learning for all students. For example right now, with respect to students whose parents have opted to have them learn 100% online, some secondary schools are having students who opted for 100% online learning enroll in a completely online learning platform, while other schools are requiring teachers to not only teach their blended classes with their in-person students, but also figure out how to reach and teach those students who have opted for 100% online learning. Those online students whose teacher also has to teach a blended classroom will have less time for teacher interaction and instruction than their peers who are attending school in-person because, other than perhaps a 20-30 minute tutorial time that must be shared with other students, their teacher’s school day will be spent teaching their in-person classes. In this case, the 100% online student is in danger of receiving less instruction than their blended classroom peers or their peers in another school that provides learning through an online platform. The DOE could address this problem in a number of ways. For example, 1) all 100% online students would be enrolled in the same online learning platform throughout the DOE, or 2) individual schools could have those teachers who would prefer to teach 100% online, due to health or other concerns, be responsible for teaching those 100% online students, thus allowing consistent teacher time for online students. With more time to prepare for the reopening of schools, effective creative ideas such as these could be implemented.

If teachers don’t have consistent relevant quality training *and* sufficient time to figure out how to apply that training to their teaching, then our students will suffer like they did in the last quarter of this past school year, when minimal student learning took place because teachers were scrambling to learn new technology and figure out how to effectively reach and teach students on line, all at the same time. Last quarter, despite my best efforts, I was frustrated because I knew my instruction was not as engaging or effective as it is when I am

teaching in-person, and I also know my students were frustrated by their inability to get instant feedback and answers to questions from me like they do in a live classroom. Every day, it seems we teachers are receiving new information as to what is happening in our schools. We need time to learn not only technology and techniques to better deliver instruction online, but also time figure out how to apply those techniques and technology to our content and lessons. The Superintendent said in her video that the teachers need to show the community that “their children are our priority” and “[t]o transition to distance learning, at the same quality as in-person instruction, we have to do this right.” I’m writing this because my students and their learning ARE my priority. Please help us to “do this right” and give us additional time before rushing to reopen our schools.

Testimony BOE

From: Shelly Hecker <shellyhecker@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Shelly Hecker
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Delay opening of school & restore differential pay for hard to staff positions

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

I am a first-grade teacher at Waikiki School, and I am asking the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to delay the beginning of school. The HDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online environment.

As a classroom teacher, I am concerned for the health and safety of students, families, and staff, and I am unprepared to meet the challenges of the new COVID-19 teaching/learning environment. This is not a usual year. We are in a pandemic and we need more than the usual four teacher workdays to prepare this school year. When students are scheduled to return on August 4, for half-days in the mornings, it is too late for teachers to be learning procedures in the same afternoons. We need to have all our tools and protocols in place when we first receive students.

If schools, teachers, staff, parents, and students are not prepared in advance, we in Hawai'i take the risk of an increase of COVID-19 positive cases. We have seen this in mainland states when businesses have opened too soon without adequate guidance. Please, Hawai'i did very well during the time of self-isolation to bring down new COVID-19 community spread cases. During this present time of an upswing in COVID-19 infections we should delay school opening and take the time to plan and be thoughtful and systematic in our protocols and guidance.

Further, as an individual, I have not been able to find supplies of PPE to purchase for myself or the classroom. We need assurances that our schools can supply this protective equipment before we open classrooms.

Regarding training this summer, I have neither been invited by HDOE, nor participated in any training for the 20-21 school year. Our Waikiki School principal, Bonnie Tabor, has communicated with school staff regularly and has done well to keep us up to date with rapidly changing plans and concerns.

However, there is so much we need from administration above the school level. We need clear policies, procedures, and protocols to operate as teachers day-to-day. This includes clear and consistent protocol for when a student or staff member at school is sick, and if they would be COVID-19 positive. Many other questions posed by HSTA to the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education have remained unanswered as well, and the basic instructions on how to handle student and staff illness need to be in place, and staff needs to be trained, well before schools open.

I am also requesting reinstatement of differential pay for hard to staff positions. Please reconsider the recent cancellation of this differential pay. There is already an undercurrent of talk that many teachers are considering retiring or taking leave or changing professions, and in this time of COVID-19 pandemic our schools and students cannot afford to lose valuable staff because of cancelled differential pay.

Please delay the beginning of school for students, for the health and safety of all Hawai'i.

Respectfully,
Shelly Hecker
First Grade Teacher
Waikiki School

Testimony BOE

From: Gigi Goochey <giglia@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Gigi Goochey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:18 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening

Considering the reopening of school across the country has resulted in huge increases in Covid -19 cases, I urge you to considering making all schools online or at least delaying the opening of schools.

Mahalo

Gigi Goochey

Kealakehe High School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Technical Difficulties <techdif@gmail.com> on behalf of Technical Difficulties
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:18 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item H

Aloha BOE members,

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am a teacher at HAAS PCS in Pahoa and my daughter is a student at Keaau High School. I believe the current plan for having students return to school on Aug 4th is inadequate and dangerous. Please delay student's return date until the following questions are answered:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HIDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Thank you,
Trevor Veilleux
Keaau, HI

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Testimony BOE

From: Liz Bowen <love.lizzy.bowen@gmail.com> on behalf of Liz Bowen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Shortage Differentials

TESTIMONY:

I am currently receiving the differential for a hard to staff school in Lahaina. It is very expensive to live on the West side of Maui and I can assure that this differential has truly made the difference in whether we decided to stay in Maui or leave! My husband is only receiving unemployment benefits at this time, due to the COVID quarantine and is not expected to regain employment until sometime in October when our state's tourism industry begins to recover.

I am certain that many others have been experiencing a similar situation with regards to the payment of the differential and having to leave the islands. I urge you to continue supporting the promise the BOE made in December to payi up to \$10,000 a year in shortage differentials to thousands of educators in three areas with the worst shortages.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cheers,

Elizabeth Bowen
ELL Teacher
Princess Nahienaena Elementary
310.464.7809

Testimony BOE

From: deysha victorine <deyshavictorine@gmail.com> on behalf of deysha victorine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:18 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education.

We are not ready to open the schools.

We have not received training as Kishimoto says.

Our schools are not equipped, we need time to plan.

Our principal has not answered teacher questions regarding the opening of schools.

Our principal held a Virtual Townhall Meeting with parents before sharing any information with teachers. He is giving parents too many options and is unable to create a clear plan. We need more time to plan and have sound logistics to try and make the best of this year.

Here is his answer to some of the parent questions...

Parent Question: **Is Kindergarten full time?**

- PRINCIPAL ANSWER: "Kindergarten is full time and included in the Blended Rotation (Model B). Parents/Guardians may request a variation from the blended rotation."
 - Teachers were NOT told that parents would have the option of creating their own variation of Model B.
 - This is NOT a good plan. To give parents authority to create their own variations of Model B will be a logistical challenge and nightmare.

Parent Question: **Who is teaching online while their teacher is doing live teaching?**

- PRINCIPAL ANSWER: "The homeroom teacher will be managing learning for students both on-campus and on-line. During portions of the day, on-line students will interact with their teacher live (synchronous)"
 - Teachers were NOT told that we would be giving "synchronous" teaching to students that are distance learning and receiving face to face learning. Parents are now expecting teachers to provide virtual lessons WHILE providing face to face instructions.
 - Teachers HAVE not received training on this.
 - Kaneohe Elementary School DOES NOT have the technical capabilities to do so.
 - Kaneohe Elementary School DOES NOT have enough bandwidth to accomplish this feat.
 - Teachers do not have enough tech resources to provide virtual learning.

Parent Question: **So students will need to log in at certain times of the day?**

- PRINCIPAL ANSWER: "Students will be expected to remain on-line, engaging in both live and asynchronous learning for the full school day."

- In our faculty meeting, teachers did not agree to teaching virtual learning and giving face to face instruction at the same time.
- There is NO way that teachers will be able to provide both types of learning at the same time.

These are three examples that show, we are NOT ready to reopen schools.

1. We did not receive training.
2. Our principal is unable to answer teacher questions.
3. Our principal is creating a logistical nightmare for teachers.
4. We are in the dark when it comes to planning.
5. Kishimoto contradicts herself whenever she is in front of the media.
6. We cannot get answers.
7. We have not had training in sanitation.

We are not ready.

Regards,

Deysha Victorine

Testimony BOE

From: Caitlyn Yoshina <cyoshina@gmail.com> on behalf of Caitlyn Yoshina
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on reopening of schools

Aloha Board of Education,

I am emailing today to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Caitlyn Yoshina, and I teach English Language Arts and Latin at Kalani High School. I am urging you to postpone the August 4 reopening of school campuses because I need more time and so do you.

The superintendent has falsely claimed that teachers received training during the summer to be able to teach students through a blended learning model or in the case we go to 100% distance learning. Was there training available? If so, I was not aware. I did attend a few voluntary PD (provided by district) about some tech tools to use, but it's not the same as training for this whole new model of learning. I also attended an online Professional Learning Collaboration initiated by World Language Teachers across the state (including private school teachers and teachers from Maui and Kauai). Again, I sought out this resource that was teacher-initiated, not provided by the state.

Even though these resources were helpful and I've put in many unpaid hours to educate myself, I still feel underprepared. Today my most enthusiastic Latin student emailed me to let me know she was opting for distance learning this year. She asked me if she could still earn credit for Latin 2 by following along asynchronously and doing online assignments. I don't know what to tell her. I am not prepared to deliver a blended learning program and an online program in addition. I attended a voluntary stipend day last week where my principal said that teachers would not be expected to provide a 100% distance learning option in addition to our blended learning. But if our school cannot provide an e-school option that fulfills all the students' credits for the year, the student would have to withdraw from school and do homeschooling. There isn't an online Latin program, but what if the school cannot provide something for Social Studies? What happens to my Latin student? Is she even aware of this? Has the DOE provided transparent guidance to families on this matter?

It also seems like the DOE and DOH need more time to come up with and release a plan for schools when someone on campus (or household member) tests positive for COVID-19. I'm very frustrated that we're even talking about reopening without a detailed and concrete plan of action. It seems reckless and so not pono. The governor and superintendent are pushing forward with Return to Learn and they talk about how "everyone is going to have to make sacrifices."

I know I'm going to have to sacrifice some family time so I can work after hours to plan out a whole new program for this year (for three different classes). My students might not be able to see their best friends at school if they are in different groups rotating on campus and off. If the DOE doesn't provide actual training for online learning then I might have to pay for some myself.

But the "sacrifices" that the governor and superintendent talk about also include health and life! My parents are both in their late sixties and are going to be living with three teachers this year (my sister, my fiancé, and me). If I get sick, I'm optimistic that I'll recover (even though I see on Twitter every day an example that 20-something-

year-olds die). But what if I pass it to my parents and they die? I couldn't live with myself. What is the trigger point of closing school if people on-campus test positive? How can my students and I do our jobs if we're scared because we don't know the answer to this important and basic question?

I'm very grateful to have a job right now. I miss my students and I want to see them. I want to teach. But I do not feel supported by my employer to do my job right. Please do not just rely on the ingenuity of teachers to figure stuff out for ourselves. Help us. Provide detailed guidance. Provide training. We all need time to figure this out. Please postpone the reopening of school campuses until we can do our jobs right.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Caitlyn Yoshina
Kalani High School

Testimony BOE

From: Evette Gallant <evettegallant@gmail.com> on behalf of Evette Gallant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:20 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This testimony is regarding potential cuts to pay differentials for special education and hard to staff positions.

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

This morning, I watched the Superintendent's HIDOE Special Update that was released in the evening of July 21, 2020. After viewing this message, the lens of my testimonial has drastically changed. Supt. Kishimoto tried to appeal to our core professional values of collaboration and teamwork by ending her official update with, "Let's do this together." It is hard for me to believe that we are in this together while my leaders consider cutting the pay of my colleagues.

I ask you in earnest, how would you respond to a call to action by leaders who are simultaneously debating whether or not to pay you your promised, fair and hard-earned income?

I urge you to commit to the pay differentials that these teachers deserve. If not, it is your responsibility to mitigate the unavoidable strain that will take place once teachers leave these positions. Students will go without highly qualified teachers. Remaining special education teachers will be responsible for more IEPs. General education teachers will not be given timely guidance to support their exceptional learners as their SPED counterparts are inundated with cases. This decision will have measurable impacts on public education at all levels. Ultimately, student success will be compromised.

If cuts are approved, please understand the message you are sending to Hawaii's educators and the message you are contributing to the ongoing nationwide debate regarding teacher pay. Your decisions carry weight beyond our shores. Whether it is intended or not, the message will be received by many in a negative light. For these teachers who already work in difficult conditions, pay cuts could not come at a more detrimental time as they face additional workplace hazards due to Covid-19. Simply put, you are asking them to do more for less.

I stand in solidarity with my colleagues because I truly believe we are in this together, and I want my actions to align with that belief. Please deliver on your role in this team so we are affirmed in the notion that we are genuinely in this together.

Respectfully,

Evette Gallant
Social Studies Teacher
W.R. Farrington High School

Testimony BOE

From: d okawa <dokawavarsity@yahoo.com> on behalf of d okawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Testimony to Board of Education 072220.docx

Testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

July 21, 2020

Testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

Dear Board of Education:

Please delay the physical opening of school until it is safe for all students, teachers, and staff. It is unacceptable and inexcusable to require teachers to be in school before it is completely safe to do so. When schools closed right after spring break this past school year, the DOE stated that schools would remain closed until COVID-19 was no longer spreading in the community, defined by no new cases for four weeks (two cycles of the virus' incubation period). Our counts have markedly increased and have remained consistently high and yet schools are being opened? That does not make any sense! It is just a matter of time until someone in school gets the coronavirus and spreads it to others. It feels like Russian Roulette... Who will be the unlucky person who gets sick? Will it be fatal? I am not willing to put my life on the line with COVID counts up and no clear protocols in place. The three teachers in Arizona who were physically on campus while teaching summer school online got sick even though they followed safe practices and CDC guidelines. One of the teachers passed away within two weeks of contracting the coronavirus. This demonstrates how dangerous the virus is and how much we do not know about its transmission. It is not yet safe enough to be physically in school...and there are alternate virtual teaching and learning platforms and strategies that can be utilized. Loss of learning time pales in comparison with any loss of life. There will always be ways to make up learning but there will be no way to make up for physical illness or death. If parents are able to choose to keep their children home to do 100% virtual learning, then teachers should be able to choose to stay home and deliver lessons virtually. Every teacher should have the right to work in an environment that they feel is safest for them and for their family. This decision affects the entire family, not just the working individual...so shouldn't the choice be the teacher's to make?

If you truly care about Hawaii's students and teachers, please delay the physical opening of schools and have lessons delivered 100% virtually until COVID counts are consistently low and proper protocols are in place. If I am mandated to physically return to school and feel unsafe on campus, I will seriously have to consider taking a leave. ...as much as I do not want to. Please put safety and health first...of not only Hawaii's children...but also of Hawaii's teachers and school staff, many of whom are at much greater risk of contracting this virus and have devoted many years of their lives to serving students.

Thank you.

D. Okawa
Teacher
Farrington High School

Testimony BOE

From: Liz Ho <Lho@afscme.org> on behalf of Liz Ho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:20 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Liz Ho
Subject: Testimony - Item H. Board Action on MOU Between BOE and HSTA
Attachments: Scan.pdf



STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
Thursday, July 23, 2020
1:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Re: Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Dear Chairperson Payne, and Members of the Board of Education:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646 (UPW) echoes the concerns brought forward by the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA). UPW AFSCME Local 646 represents approximately two thousand employees who work for the Department of Education, and are tasked with keeping our schools clean and maintained while our other members deliver support in providing adequate health services to students statewide.

The Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) has proposed to reopen our schools without an effective plan in place to ensure the safety of the students, our members, and other essential staff. We view the safety and health of our members as a top priority and concern, especially as we see the recent increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Hawaii. Moreover, we view this as a warning, as we see a pattern of increasing cases already occurring on the mainland. As more people begin to reengage here in Hawaii, and more opportunities for the spread of the virus are created, we need to take every precaution to ensure the safest working environment for everyone concerned.

The UPW AFSCME Local 646 has attended multiple meetings with the HIDOE personnel to seek answers, yet no comprehensive plan was ever brought forward that would quell the concerns of our members. The HIDOE referenced two manuals which is supposed to be a "solution" to bringing students and staff back to school safely. The first manual is entitled "HIDOE Emergency Operations Plan," dated June 2019 and is over three hundred (300) pages long. Although this "plan" appears to be very comprehensive, only two (2) pages are related to a pandemic flu.

The second manual is "HIDOE Pandemic Contagious Plan," which was presented to the UPW AFSCME Local 646 almost two (2) weeks before the planned reopening of the schools. The HIDOE employees within Bargaining Units 1 & 10 were never presented with this material and

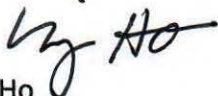
UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS
AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO
Administrator Liz Ho

TEL (808) 847-2631 **EMAIL** Lho@afscme.org 1426 North School Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

were never provided any kind of specialized training to ensure that our schools are properly sanitized, putting everyone including the students and other essential staff at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Based on the foregoing, the United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, respectfully requests that the Board of Education delay the reopening of the schools, until a meaningful and comprehensive plan and adequate training can be completed, to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the school community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Ho", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Liz Ho
Administrator

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberly Kahoonei <kimberlyliberato@me.com> on behalf of Kimberly Kahoonei
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response)

Aloha mai kākou e Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kimberly Kahoonei. I am a mākuā(parent) of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the date that students physically return to campus for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino is located on a small campus in South Kona. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in student enrollment, so much so that we do not have the physical space to house all of our haumana. With the implementation of social distancing, we are left wondering how our already overcrowded kula will be a safe space for our haumana and limahana. Our kula has not been given clear safety protocols, nor have all of our limahana had the opportunity to be trained on how to implement the vast amount of new expectations placed upon them for this school year.

We support pushing back the reopening date for in person education. We are concerned with contracting covid with no clear, rule abiding health guidelines in place. We are extremely concerned for our keiki and kumu. We acknowledge and respect the decision which 'Ehunuikaimalino and the DOE made in late March 2020 to offer distance learning for the remainder of the school year. This was done for the safety of our keiki and especially our kumu. The reason for this aforementioned decision was due to the rising numbers in COVID-19 cases and lack of knowledge of the disease. It seems that in July of 2020 we are in the same situation with numbers rising, even more so than in March of 2020, and still very little understanding of the virus with new information on the disease and it's long term lasting complications being presented to us daily. It is difficult to accept the narrative that at this current state, which seems no better than in the previous months, the school setting is a safe learning environment for our children, teachers and the families that they return to in the evenings. It is even more difficult knowing that many meetings are still being conducted via video conference or teleconference, yet we subject our children and teachers to the very real and prevalent threat that is COVID-19. As much as our 'ohana yearns to go back to kula and be apart of this papa hana, numbers are rising and it is not clear how impacted schools will be. I think that we should consider what is going on in America where they have seen a rise in cases among children just by attending summer school and use this as a teaching lesson for ourselves so our children are not subjected to the same outcome. I do hope the BOE hears the concerns of 'ohana like us and takes our mana'o into consideration to push back the reopening of school. We love our kula because of how 'ohana oriented it is and trust in the decisions of our leadership. Mahalo.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,
Kimberly Kahoonei

Testimony BOE

From: Kristy Hirahara <kristyhira@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristy Hirahara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a 12-month Student Services Coordinator (SSC) at an elementary school in the Honolulu District and I am testifying on Action H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

As soon as school ended in May, my principal sent out an email saying that I had to report to school as soon as June 1st. I was completely taken aback and incredibly apprehensive and had a lot of mental and physical stress. Luckily, I was able to work with my principal and CAS and am currently teleworking from home two days a week, but am still required to go on campus for the other three days. Although I am in the eighth week of working both from school and home, the amount of preparation I have to do every night before I go into work really takes a toll on me and my family mentally and physically. That also does not take into account what I have to do when I get back home to keep me and my family safe. I prepare myself as much as I can before I go in to work and for what I need to do when I come home, and I do all this when there is a very minimal amount of people at school. What will it look like when there are hundreds of people at school? Can someone guarantee me and my family's 100% safety?

The school and administration are doing their best with what they have and what they know, but it is not enough to ease my conscience and my family's conscience. I understand that the virus is far more serious for older people, but I currently live with my husband's parents who are older and have underlying medical conditions. I also understand that a lot of our younger students could carry the virus and can be asymptomatic, but what does that mean for teachers who work in an elementary school? Is there a way we can better "test" our students before they step into our classrooms to protect everyone and their families from getting sick?

There appears to be a lot of questions that have either been left unanswered or no action has been taken place. We are one of the first states to open our schools, but why? Is the state and each school 100% ready to open their doors to the virus? What is the plan of action when someone at the school is positive with COVID-19? Are teachers allowed to stay at home when someone is positive but it's not in their classroom? Will there be enough substitutes? Do teachers have to use all of their sick leave if students continuously come to school positive with COVID-19? Are the families and teachers ready to go virtual if someone tests positive?

In conclusion, there are many questions that professionals are answering on the surface, but can only answer based on what they think will happen. I'm not wanting to put my life and the lives of my family on the line to see what happens when COVID-19 are in the schools...that will be too late. Numbers are increasing and will increase more when schools open, why are we doing that to our community, families, and island? It is apparent that the state and schools need more time to prepare for a lot of "what ifs" and to ensure safety at the school for BOTH teachers and students. Teachers cannot teach if they do not feel safe and have to worry about staying 6 feet away, making sure students are wearing their masks and washing their hands. It's now

not just about students...it is also about the people who teach and work in the schools with students. Please hear and address our concerns and push back the start of school.

Thank you,
Kristy Hirahara

--

Testimony BOE

From: Maile Johnson <punaluusproat@aol.com> on behalf of Maile Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Funding for Teacher Shortage Differentials

Aloha,

I am Maile Johnson, a Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher at Ke Kula Kaipuni Hawai'i 'O Kahuku Academy. I am writing to urge the Hawai'i Board of Education to reject the proposal to defer funding for shortage differentials for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff school.

I oppose this request.

It is of the utmost importance that the HIDOE does not renig on this commitment.

Mahalo,

Maile S.K. Johnson

Testimony BOE

From: Nellwyne Young <nellwyneyoung@gmail.com> on behalf of Nellwyne Young
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of Schools

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Nellwyne Young and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because I personally do not feel that the educators of this state have been provided everything necessary to keep myself and my colleagues in all parts of the school community safe.

Although I do believe it's important to get our students back to school I feel that we need to relook at having them RETURN to the school buildings until such time that training, protocols, sanitation supplies, clear guidance has been established.

Without knowing it, aside from my age, I do have a blood condition that puts me at higher risk of complications if I do get Covid-19. As a mother of two sons and wife as well as a daughter that lives with my elderly parents, I do not want to put them at risk as well. Risk of having to care for me or even to expose them to infection.

Please consider the phased reopening of our education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nellwyne Young
Counselor
James Campbell High School

Testimony BOE

From: Kiani Yasak <kiani.yasak@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kiani Yasak
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Uphold BOE Policy 105-8 Goal #4 Kumu Kaiapuni Compensation

Board of Education, General Business Meeting

VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha e ka Papa Ho'ona'auao (BOE),

I am a 10year kumu kaiapuni at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kalama located in Makawao, Maui. My name is Kiani Yasak. I **oppose** the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and urge the BOE to **reject** the proposal. Please continue to **uphold BOE Policy 105-8 Goal #4**. The program's success is largely dependent on the capacity, capability and expertise of the program's professional staff. The Department will establish professional qualifications and develop training programs internally and/or in cooperation with stakeholder groups/universities. The goal is for program professionals to be qualified in both English as a medium of instruction and Hawaiian as a medium of instruction and **appropriately compensated** for these additional qualifications.

Our Kaiapuni programs continue to increase in student body growth which demands for more kumu. During these uncertain times, we need to keep the kumu we currently have and hire more. The compensations have helped to recruit and hire more kumu for the new teacher positions established for SY 2020-21 in more than seven immersion schools here on Maui. New teacher positions filled include 1 at Kekaulike, 1 at Lahainaluna, 1 at Lahaina Inter., 2 at Kalama Inter., 1 at Hāna El., 1 at Nāhi'ena'ena and more.

Please continue to compensate our Kumu and support the growth of our immersion schools.

Mahalo nui me ka ha'aha'a,
Kiani Yasak
Kumu Pili Kanaka Papa 6-8
Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kalama
Makawao, Maui

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Testimony BOE

From: elizabeth janicki <elizjan@yahoo.com> on behalf of elizabeth janicki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS ON AUGUST 4, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

Please, DO NOT open schools on August 4. This is an unsafe and potentially deadly re-opening students / teachers / school staff and extended families at home, who could be exposed to COVID due to the students' return to school, are being placed at unnecessary risk and danger.

Teachers are not ready for the mass opening of schools, even if there is half the class in attendance. There were no formal trainings or professional developments required of teachers, and if there were any suggested, they were offered over the summer - a teacher's contractual "off time", therefore, most teachers did not pursue these unpaid, uncredited courses. 4 days of teacher prep time prior to the beginning of any normal, typical year is standard. There is MUCH more time required for teacher COVID19 prep this year, beyond the standard 4 days.

Teachers are being asked to do health screenings, ask health-related questions, memorize procedures for if/when students display behaviors of sickness, and plan for instruction - all within the standard 4 days ... it's not right!

I would not feel safe sending my child to school with under-prepared and untrained teachers. They need more time. Why rush kids back to school if science and statistics prove that we need social distancing to continue? Lives are on the line for teachers who are on the front-line and the decision-makers at the DOE and DOH in their socially-distanced, air conditioned offices seem completely oblivious to that. Re-think your decision Science and medicine must be our guide

Please keep my identity confidential.

From,

Elizabeth Jewett

Testimony BOE

From: Carolynne Nakamura <cnaka2004@yahoo.com> on behalf of Carolynne Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Back to School

The schools are not ready with safety measures or with sufficient supplies to sanitize. For summer school a teacher was given one spray bottle of disinfectant to sanitize all the desks in the classroom for two classes a day. No paper towels were given. When asked if the school would supply wipes or sprays to sanitize the desks during the school year the answer was no and cleaning supplies would not be reimbursed. Parents are wanting their kids to go without masks. For younger children they don't keep social distances but crowd the teachers and students so more chances to spread the virus. The classrooms aren't big enough to allow 6 foot between desks each way and for K-1 the children don't spend the whole day at their desks so where are they to go, not enough room for floor activities. What happens if someone gets the virus? Does the school/class shut down for 2 weeks. What happens if it is spread to a teacher or several, there is a teacher shortage so who will teach as there are not enough teachers to begin with? Especially as a lot of the teachers are in the "older" age group and have health issues. I know parents are eager to get the kids back to school, but it must be done in a safe, prepared manner for all concerned especially with the rise in numbers of cases.

I want to know who will be responsible for properly disinfecting the desks and chairs for students? The custodians in most schools are few and only do limited cleaning. I've gone in with gecko poop on the floors of the bathrooms and walls and visited weeks and months later and it is still there. How will this work with sanitizing for the virus even the high touch areas, electronic equipment and desks/chairs. With only one bottle of spray to disinfect, no paper towels, hand sanitizers, wipes, are the teachers supposed to pay out of their pockets for these items in addition to the class supplies they have been paying for students work/crafts. They are like the rest of us trying to get supplies that are not readily available in the stores and when they are back at school, the supplies are long gone from the shelves by the time they get out of school to go to the stores to purchase? Cleaning supplies are cleaned out of Costco during seniors' hours so how do the teachers get these when not supplied and paid for by the school/DOE. I know that some of these are on the required items sent to the parents, but they are hard to find so they probably won't be sent in by the parents.

You say the teachers are all trained for this virus? When did they train? They are on summer break and don't go back until next week with the children returning the following week. There are only so many hours in a day and if the teachers have to set up their classrooms and the material for the children (folders, name tags hand outs and beginning curriculum for younger grades) when are they being trained for Covid? You have had numerous meetings during the summer when they are on summer break when the teachers have participated, but not been paid and now plan on taking their set-up time; when are they going to prepare for the students? If they have to go to distance learning who is going to teach the teachers about putting work on computers/ipads. The older teachers aren't very familiar or comfortable with the computer and internet. I've heard that some students during the last quarter of last year had 45 minutes of class a week. Some teachers only handed out some packets of work but otherwise had no contact with kids. Don't the teachers need training to be more flexible and able to "teach" via the internet? Maybe the teachers should go back next week, but to meetings to better prepare them for the new norm. After all, the teachers are vital in teaching the children in these times especially for those with learning issues and second languages.

I'm sure there are many other concerns and these are just a few.

Carolynne Nakamura

Testimony BOE

From: Melinda Odoardi <melnodie@gmail.com> on behalf of Melinda Odoardi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for continued funding for teacher shortage differentials

22 July 2020

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Melinda Odoardi and I am a teacher who teaches at Ilima Intermediate School. I have a BS in Special Education for K-12 for mild/moderate disabilities and I am a licensed teacher for the State of Hawaii, currently in the 6th year of teaching. My experience in the Hawaii Department of Education includes 10 years as an Educational Assistant at Lehua Elementary School, as well as Parent Community Networking Coordinator (PCNC), Lead Facilitator for a Pre-K program called "Hooray for Kindergarten, and a substitute for office personnel.

As a special education teacher, I have committed myself and worked beyond the required hours of my position. I have continued, and will continue, to service my special education students to the best of my ability, as well as work with their parents to ensure that their child gets the best instruction possible to be successful.

I have worked on weekends and late hours on the computer, on the phone, on virtual meetings with all my students and parents. Unfortunately, much of my responsibilities involve reports, documents, data, studies, graphs, analysis, etc. that take place OUTSIDE of the classroom, OUTSIDE of the school premises. I work countless hours from home. Countless and never-ending.

To take away Special Education differential pay would be a punch in the gut. I work so hard because I care beyond what is required of me and I show it because my parents are always appreciative and so are my students.

I deplore you. Do not consider reallocating the monies that were to be paid out to Special Education teachers. It will be very difficult for me to survive financially and emotionally as a Special Education teacher in the state of Hawaii. I would suffice it to say that I am flooded with thoughts of questioning my career choice. This is definitely a game-changer.

Best regards,

Melinda Odoardi

91-548 Pohakupili Place
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Testimony BOE

From: Jennie Matsuda <jennie.matsuda@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennie Matsuda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

As a concerned parent and teacher, I am asking you to delay the return of students to campuses.

We know for a fact that when the schools open, there WILL be infection.

Teachers are fearing the inevitable. Some are even writing their wills.

Consider the data: Though the rates of infection in children are not as high as adults - children DO get infected and children DO die.

Dr. Sarah Park says that children are much less likely to contract Covid-19. So if, let's say, only ONE child gets sick and dies, that must be okay, right? No - that is simply unacceptable. We have failed reopening "safely" and "successfully" if and/or when that happens.

We know that for adults who were severely affected, there is potentially LIFELONG organ damage. People who have contracted COVID-19, though "recovered", still suffer from shortness of breath and fatigue. Will they ever completely recover? Scientists do not know.

Will you be responsible for any illnesses or deaths that WILL occur?

Please look at the statistics. It is safest to open schools when there is no more community spread.

Please, I implore you to do what is right. Value human life. Delay the opening of campuses to students.

Sincerely,
Jennie Matsuda

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Uyematsu-senaga <lisa.uyematsu-senaga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa Uyematsu-senaga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying student start date

Aloha,

Please do not open schools until protocols are clearly in place. There are so many unanswered questions and unknown facts about COVID and rushing the students and teachers to begin school should be avoided. There are many questions that need to be answered;

- When will the state of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at school?
- What happens to the students and adults on campus if a student, teacher, or other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?
- When will there be proper training for the teachers to ensure their safety and the students safety?
- Can you ensure that school's air conditioning is clean and filters germs?

These questions need to be answered to fairly expect teachers and students to return to a safe environment. As an educator, I definitely do not feel comfortable or safe going back to school July 29th.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Uyematsu
Special Education Teacher
Castle High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Technical Difficulties <techdif@gmail.com> on behalf of Technical Difficulties
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item G

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

My name is Trever Veilleux and I am a teacher at the Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoa, Hawai'i.

I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. We cannot allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Invest in education and our keiki. As a state we should be putting ample and adequate resources into education, which is a public service that has been chronically underfunded for too long.

Respectfully,
Trever Veilleux

Testimony BOE

From: Megan landes <meganfauth@hotmail.com> on behalf of Megan landes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing as a 3rd grade teacher from Princess Nahi'ena'ena in Lahaina, Hawaii. I am also a parent that has two school age children. One attends Princess Nahi'ena'ena, the other Lahaina Intermediate. I live in Kihei, Hawaii. This means that each day I have to commute to the west side of the island. We chose to live in Kihei because there was housing that we could somewhat afford. There were no options for us in Lahaina. This is what makes my school so hard to staff. I love working at my school. I've been there for 16 years. The differential makes it less stressful to make the commute because now we have money for gas. I don't want to transfer and having the differential has made a significant impact for our family.

I am also concerned about reopening schools without proper training, equipment and procedures in place. We need more time without students physically in the buildings. THIS does not mean we can't work with our students virtually. We can conduct distance learning until it is safe to have the students physically at school. The superintendent said that schools have PPE, teachers have been trained, we are ready. THIS IS FALSE! I just met with my principal and we have starting ordering PPE, but it's not here yet! We haven't been on campus, how have we been trained? How do we have procedures ready to welcome our students? How will we do that in such a short amount of time? Please consider the safety and well being of our community.

Mahalo,

Megan Landes

Princess Nahi'ena'ena, Lahaina, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Chazley Baitlon <chazley.baitlon@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Chazley Baitlon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opposition of Pay Differential Cuts

Aloha,

I teach third grade at Kahakai Elementary school and I am contacting you to share my thoughts regarding the decision to decrease pay differentials for SPED and hard to fill complex areas. I am in opposition to cutting teacher salaries because I believe teachers should be compensated for the time, effort, and expenses they put into providing education and resources for their students. Teachers pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket for supplies and resources every single year for their students and classrooms and it takes a toll on our salaries. The pay differential will give teachers incentive to stay at their hard to fill schools and find greater satisfaction where they are at. I implore you to please oppose cutting teacher salaries.

Mahalo,

Chazley Baitlon

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Testimony BOE

From: Dorothy Anne Tabuso <dyrangco@gmail.com> on behalf of Dorothy Anne Tabuso
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: No to Special Education Differential Pay cut

Aloha BOE officers,

I am an elementary special education teacher and I am asking that you reconsider the plan to discontinue the differential pay for hard to staff areas and special educator positions. We need to retain licensed and highly qualified teachers to cater to our students' needs. There's been increase in the number of students who qualify for special education and related services and it should be in our best interest to attract and retain special educators, who as we know aren't sufficient, to provide specially designed instruction to address the learning deficits of our keiki. Given the roles and expectations of special education teachers, especially during the pandemic, I believe that we deserve the pay differential and not a cut on our salary.

Thank you for your consideration!

Testimony BOE

From: Donna Yamamoto <donnayamamoto17@gmail.com> on behalf of Donna Yamamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and HSTA (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017 - 2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a counselor at Moanalua High School and have been in the DOE for 25 years. My son will be a junior at MoHS. My daughter graduated from MoHS and will be a sophomore at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. I want the schools to open and for the students to be back in person, however, the safety and health of both the students and staff must be of our top priority.

Every year we have 4 prep days before the students return to school. This is the first time I am prepping for students to return during a world-wide pandemic. The teachers need to meet with their departments to discuss what material to cover and how. Our school needs time to determine which students need electronic devices or wifi. Each classroom has to be set up to be physically safe. I need to figure out how I am going to counsel and monitor my students with both academic and mental health concerns.

My school plans on having 500 students on campus (1/4 of the total student population) at one time. They will be changing classes. During passing time, recess and lunch, they will need to social distance. We cannot guarantee that 500 teenagers will comply with the rules we set. Leaving it up to the teachers to follow through with requiring masks in the classroom or on campus will be challenging. DOE or the state needs to mandate this.

Why is the Board of Education having a virtual meeting on Thursday 7/23 instead of having in person testimony or people in attendance? Are you worried about the health of those attending the meeting? Meeting attendees are all adults that are able to understand and comply with social distancing rules and wearing face coverings. Are we confident that 15 five-year-olds in a kindergarten classroom for 6 hours will be able to do the same?

I support the delay of the opening of schools. Give the schools more time to prepare. "Distance learning" is not a teacher doing in front of a camera doing s/he would usually do in an in person classroom and streaming it. Training and direction needs to take place. Schools need support and directives from the Dept. of Education on how to move forward. Schools need support and directives from the Dept. of Health on how to keep students and parents safe. The general guidelines schools have been given so far are not enough.

Donna Yamamoto, counselor
Moanalua High School

Testimony BOE

From: Tiffany Liao <tiffany.liao@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tiffany Liao
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Cuts to shortage differentials and delay of student start date

My name is Tiffany Liao and I am a teacher at Leihoku Elementary. I am emailing in regards to testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

One day while having a casual conversation with a student, he said something to me that I'll never forget. He told me, "You're the only teacher that I had that's still here. Everyone else left. You can't leave." Being in a hard to staff location, I knew that our teacher turnover rates were high and how it affects a child's academics, but hearing this made me realize it doesn't just affect them academically. This affects them emotionally and mentally. As the nation faces a teacher shortage, hard to staff areas are the hardest hit. New and tenured teachers alike are not jumping at the opportunity to teach here, they'd rather teach in town. When people hear that I am teaching in a hard to staff location, their immediate response is, "Well, you can transfer can't you? Are you going to transfer soon?" or the ever famous, "Oh." People aren't looking to keep their career here, they're looking at it as a stepping-stone.

Now more than ever, I've been hearing talk about teachers wanting to come to our community to teach because of the teaching differential pay. Tenured and experienced teachers want to come out here. That rarely ever happens. If you take away the differential pay, you take away the incentive for teachers to come down to a community that needs them the most. You take away the ability for teachers to stay here and teach to these keiki. I ask that you please reconsider taking away the differential pay not just for the teachers but also, for the sake of the keiki.

I am also writing in regards to testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As a teacher that is set to start the school year next week, I do not feel safe. Not only by the threat of COVID-19 but also by the lack of a plan by the DOE to address COVID-19 in our schools. I understand the importance of starting school again as the students have been out since March. However, the safety of students, faculty, and staff should be the highest priority, which doesn't seem to be evident in the statements and so called "plans" given by the DOE.

Teachers more than anyone want to return to the classroom with our students. We miss them. But, we want to do it safely. There are many important questions that teachers and parents are asking that DOE is still unable to answer. PPE has not arrived. School is slated to begin in two weeks. Teachers report back to work next week. There is not enough time for teachers to adequately plan and develop procedures and protocols that will ensure the safety of their students. Returning students to campus without safety procedures and protocols in place would be irresponsible. We need to delay student's return to campus so we can once again make schools a safe place for them to turn to.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Liao

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Testimony BOE

From: Noelani Kauahikaua <cchow78@hotmail.com> on behalf of Noelani Kauahikaua
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Board of Education, General Business Meeting

VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha e ka Papa Ho'ona'auao (BOE),

I am a parent of a Kula Kaiapuni or Hawaiian language Immersion student at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo. I also have 2 other children that were at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Puohala. I also serve as Secretary for Hui Makua o Pū'ōhala (Parent group for Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala) & parent rep for Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo on the 'Aha Kauleo consortium that supports our Hawaiian language schools. I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and urge the BOE to reject the proposal. Last December, we testified in support of the Hawai'i Department of Education's proposal to the BOE to provide an annual shortage differential of \$8,000 per each qualified and licensed Hawaiian language immersion classroom teacher, which we know has bolstered this critical, teacher shortage area. Furthermore, while we recognize that there are currently eighteen (18) Department operated Hawaiian language immersion programs, we also recognize and continue to advocate for the inclusion of qualifying classroom teachers from the additional six (6) Hawaiian language immersion public charter schools.

We acknowledge that throughout Hawai'i, we are all experiencing many extraordinary challenges due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which certainly includes financial and budgetary impacts. Nevertheless, we advocate in favor of the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and the BOE honoring their commitment to all qualified and licensed teachers in the shortage differential category of Hawaiian language immersion. Our kumu are being asked to continue their most honorable work in these extraordinary times and they deserve the full annual shortage differential that they have earned.

Aloha,
Noelani Kauahikaua

Testimony BOE

From: kimeona kane <kimeonakane@gmail.com> on behalf of kimeona kane
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha,

I, Kimeona Kane am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

As a concerned uncle of children expected to go back to unsafe schools at Blanche Pope Elementary School, Waimānalo Elementary and Intermediate School, and Kailua Highschool, a friend of many educators and staff members across the state who are expected to uphold safety without proper support and infrastructure, and community leader in Waimānalo and advocate across the state, who works in stewardship education with our keiki as well as believes that safety for our communities is of utmost important, I strongly urge you to delay the opening of schools until a later date. August 4, 2020 is shortly upon us, educators are expected to set up classrooms and ensure our keiki are safe, however this is unrealistic and should not be a responsibility of theirs during this pandemic. Proceeding with this reopening is blind of the risks, and these lives and others should not be risked in the failed process and unclear plan. Please delay this opening until a time where adequate resources, training, support and alternatives become available and or the threat to safety has ceased.

Additionally, time and time again our educators and staff members are cut short. Resources, support, financial means, general wellness, our educators and staff members go without and expected to make miracles happen despite these shortfalls. This is unacceptable. If you care about our keiki, our future, our educators, support them fully. Reject the proposal which is supposed to defer money. It is the right thing to do. If Covid-19 has taught us anything, it is that our educators and staff members are undervalued and rightfully deserve more. Additionally the system to support them and our keiki is broken. Do the right thing.

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Kimeona Kane

808 398 8989

kimeonakane@gmail.com

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Think before you print.

Testimony BOE

From: Dr. Marcia Howard <mdhoward.phd@gmail.com> on behalf of Dr. Marcia Howard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: SPED DIFFERENTIALS

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school**

THURSDAY, JULY 23,

My name is Dr. Marcia Howard. I am a Special Education Teacher at Waianae High School in Leeward District on O'ahu. I am submitting testimony in support of Sped Teacher differentials.

It is imperative that this committee provide enough funds to fix the teacher salary compression issue, and continue providing funding for the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. The Department of Education will need \$45 million more than this bill provides for a total of \$70 million plus fringe. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki.

I have been teaching special education for the past 26 years (20 here in Hawaii) and it has been a rewarding yet difficult experience at the same time. I enjoy working with students with special needs however there are parts of my experience in teaching that have been frustrating and mainly it's the pay. I received my Doctorate Degree in Exceptionalities from The University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2014 and was hoping that with this degree I could attain enough salary to sustain my living here in Hawaii, however I have not.

In Brooklyn, New York where I am originally from, teachers with 26 years of experience are making upwards of \$120,000. I can only imagine that with a PhD they are making more. It is sad that with a PhD and 25 years experience in special education here in Hawaii my salary is only \$68,000. I would implore this committee to keep the salary compensation for special education teachers especially when you consider the amount of paperwork that we deal with on a daily basis, the amount of time we spend in meeting that goes beyond the contractual hours on writing IEPs, grading progress reports, contacting agencies and service providers, gathering data, and conducting meetings that can have up to 8-10 people! I can't even stress upon the effort put forth to teach the students with special needs in hopes that they can grasp the concept enough to possibly move them into inclusion classes with their nondisabled peers. This compensation is needed and eagerly welcomed!

Lastly, I know that all teachers spend an insurmountable time in writing and creating lesson plans, tests, and projects, but if Hawaii is to tackle the issue of shortages in special education, by attaining and maintaining licensed, certified, and highly qualified Special Education Teachers, then continuing to provide funding for the amount of time and effort in the form of salary compensation is a excellent start!

Marcia D. Howard
11th & 12th grade
Special Education English Teacher
Waianae High School

Testimony BOE

From: John Fitzpatrick <fitzformau@gmail.com> on behalf of John Fitzpatrick
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Opening, Let's do Distance Learning

Aloha Honorable BOE Members,

I am a teacher at Maui Waena School and I feel scared to reopen because we are unprepared to do face to face learning beginning on August 4th. I check my emails regularly and there has been very little guidance as to what we will be provided when school starts in just a few weeks. We will be given just four days to prepare for the return of our students and having to learn all of the safety precautions we are taking in order to keep students, faculty, staff, and our community safe from Covid 19. For these reasons I feel we need to push the start date of in person learning back in order to provide a safe learning environment where everyone feels that they have the mental fortitude to learn effectively.

Please advise the DOE super intendent to do distance learning as we begin this new school year. This is the only way we can keep our community safe from Covid 19 and community spread of this deadly virus.

Mahalo,
Fitz

John Fitzpatrick
Fitz For Maui
email: fitzformau@gmail.com
phone: 808-268-1073
85 Mokuahi St.
Makawao,
Hi, 96768

Testimony BOE

From: Jennell Edwards <jennell_edwards@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jennell Edwards
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing this email testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Thank you for your continued efforts in supporting teachers and students during this time. COVID- 19 has brought about a change to our educational system forcing our teachers and students to be more resourceful and creative in this time of uncertainty. So far, our government has managed to prevent the widespread of this infection but I believe that there is so much more we have to do before our children can safely return to school.

As the start of the school year quickly approaches, cases in our state as well as the nation are increasing. To open schools now would be careless, especially since the number of infected people are greater than when we closed in March. I am very concerned that there has been little to no explanation or training as to how we are supposed to reopen. There is a severe lack of resources that have been provided by the DOE and without them it is very likely the students AND teachers will get sick and infected others. Without an abundance of recourses such as hand sanitizer, masks, tissues, space in the classrooms and even teachers, our classrooms will be affected negatively making these spaces unsafe.

I urge the Board of Education to postpone the start date of school. I am very eager to get back and teach but not if that means sacrificing students and teachers. A better plan must be implemented before we can reopen. We cannot send thousands of people back into a space that is unprotected and unsafe. Our keiki and teachers deserve better than this.

Jennell Edwards

MA. Ed.

Farrington High School

Math Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Heidi Veilleux <heidirvx@gmail.com> on behalf of Heidi Veilleux
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID 19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Heidi Veilleux and I am an elementary teacher at the Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoa, Hawai'i.

I believe that the best way to ensure the safety and continued effective education of our keiki is to delay the return of students to school. Teachers need safety training as well as time to collaborate and receive professional development training to ensure that we are delivering quality education using best practices.

I also believe the current plan for having students return to school on Aug 4th is inadequate and dangerous. Please delay student's return date until the following questions are answered:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Respectfully,
Heidi Veilleux
Elementary Teacher
Aloha Academy
Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science
Pahoa, HI 96749

--

heidirvx@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Susana Román <namoranasus@gmail.com> on behalf of Susana Román
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Susana Román I am a Special Education teacher at Kailua Intermediate School. I am writing to you as I am profoundly concerned about the State of Hawaii's reckless plan to reopen public schools on August 4th. Simply put we as a state are not prepared to keep our students and overall communities safe. Not all schools have PPE and all teachers will need more than two days to prepare for the new normal. We must delay students' return to campus. We all love our students, and I refuse to jeopardize their health for the sake of tourism.

Respectfully,

--

Susana Román

Testimony BOE

From: Lori Sasan <lorisasan@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Sasan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kalaheo Elementary School and would like to address the opening of school on August 4, 2020. This year is my 40th as a school teacher and feels in some ways like the first. I have no idea of what to expect due to the ever changing nature of COVID19 rules and regulations. Some say mask at all times, others say not in your immediate classroom. Some say 3 feet is okay, others say to distance 6 feet from others. What happens if someone in my class tests positive for the virus? Will I take it home to my husband with the compromised immune system? How do I teach in school groups at the same time as out of school groups? These are just a few of the questions that worry me. I think that starting school for students after only the normal four days of preparation is too soon. We should have a longer time to prepare for students on campus. Our schools need more time to be able to create a healthy environment for our students and our teachers. Opening our schools quickly is not something we should do in a pandemic.

I would also like to say that the pay differentials taken by certified teachers moving into hard to staff positions should be funded as agreed upon.

Sincerely,
Lori Sasan

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Lobl <jessicalobl@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Lobl
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teach virtually until October

Hello,

My name is Jessica Lobl and I am a teacher at Mililani Mauka Elementary. I am extremely concerned about starting on August 4 with in-person learning.

As someone with a partner who also works outside of the home, I will inevitably be bringing many germs to and from my classroom and home every day. I share my classroom space with someone who has a newborn in her family. None of us want to get sick, nor do we want our students and their families to become ill.

Clearly the Covid situation is not under control anywhere in the country (although Hawaii did seem to be doing a good job when everyone was actually still socially distanced, a few months ago). With numbers rising, it is unconscionable that we should go back to school in person right now.

Please push the in-person start date back. My suggestion is to teach virtually for first quarter (until October) and reassess then. This would give the BOE and schools time to come up with effective disaster plans and figure out what happens if teachers catch covid (any sick time or two week quarantine should not come out of my sick pay if I have been forced to work in a dangerous environment!). I think focusing on distance learning for the time being is the only safe way for the start of school to occur this year, as sad as that is.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jess Lobl

--

--

Jessica Lobl
e: JessicaLobl@gmail.com
m: 507.269.0073

Testimony BOE

From: Arri Milner-Nguyen <arri@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Arri Milner-Nguyen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testifying on Action Item (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response) - 7/22/2020

My Name: Arri Milner-Nguyen
Position: Elementary Teacher
School: Waikiki Elementary School
Grade level: 2nd grade

Aloha HI Board of Education Members,

With 11 more days until school starts, teachers, custodians, administrators, and other school staff are dealing with the chaos of planning the start of the school year with very little/vague policies/guidelines from our own state on how to deal with the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, training was said to be happening as well and I have not yet received training on the procedures to handle a student who may have symptoms of COVID-19, how to convert to online learning 100%/hybridized learning, or other training related promises or statements that were made on public news about Hawaii teachers/HIDOE. In our meetings this past month, a majority of teachers at my own school did not receive any training on such procedures/policies and did not hear announcements that there was training. There was mention of voluntary training via Webex this summer, however I believe that our teacher training for COVID-19 should be mandatory, online via Webex (to maintain social distancing) and paid for by the state, not voluntary.

There are too many unanswered questions and not enough policies or guidelines for educators/administrators to ensure the protection of our kumu, keiki, and ohana. I request on behalf of my school community, district, and state, that we delay the start of school by three weeks (or even until September like most mainland schools) to prepare our kumu with solid standards, policies, and/or procedures on how to deal with students who display symptoms/tests positive for COVID-19, a framework/resources for 100% online options for families, protocols for PPE (mask wearing at school, social distancing, sanitization, etc), as well as school shutdown procedures.

We have to look at opening our schools to keiki and ohana ethically. A major question I have regards ethics. Is it ethical to send our keiki to schools when COVID-19 cases are rising in our state? Lastly, what happened to sending keiki back to school when there has been no new COVID-19 cases for 2-4 weeks to ensure that our students are learning in safe environments/communities? (Example of how our community may be unsafe: Our recess fields are located right next to fences where tourists/residents walk by on the Monsarrat sidewalk everyday, how can we say our community is safe when the recent cases of COVID in our Kapahulu community have been community-spread or tourist-related?)

Our Hawaii teachers require detailed guidelines to protect our students and their families. It was only last week that Waikiki Elementary, where I work, just announced our plan for the new school year to staff and parents/guardians, with many teachers being unsure of the new school plan as well as having conflicting ideas on how to deal with these unanswered questions, unknown procedures, as well as the safety of our keiki. In fact, many parents/guardians are now opting for online learning for their keiki instead of hybrid/staggered learning, which shows either a lack of support to these new models, a rising philosophy on protecting one's family through social distancing through online learning, or a lack of trust in the DOE's plan for reopening. Parents/guardians I have had last year have emailed me recently with such concerns regarding how the DOE is handling the procedures towards keeping their keiki safe and protected, and one parent's words stuck with me as she stated, "I just do not feel safe with the new school year and would much rather homeschool (my

children) than have them possibly get sick and bring it home. We live with my parents, their grandparents, so I must consider the health and wellbeing of my kids and my parents."

Teachers, parents/guardians, and keiki will feel safer with more time so that our DOE/BOE/DOH can work together to create a better plan on reopening with strong policies, standards, and guidelines that enable teachers to better protect their students and themselves during this pandemic.

Mahalo for you time and I vote/pray for an extension toward planning better procedures to save our keiki, their ohana, and our communities/state from the horrors of having to shut down schools from COVID-19 spread/transmissions, the sadness of losing a kupuna from COVID-19 transmission, and the dangers of going back to school during a pandemic.

Arri M. Nguyen
Waikiki Elementary School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Martinez, Arnold <arnold.martinez@kalakauamiddle.org> on behalf of Martinez, Arnold
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopen Testimony

Aloha BOE,

My name is Arnold Martinez, I teach Health at Kalakaua Middle School. I have been teaching in Hawaii since 2003.

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the reopening of schools on Aug 4th for the 2020/21 school year. I would ask that you consider delaying and opening schools at least after the first qrt for the safety of our students, teachers and staff. Going to distance learning for qrt one can be done in such a way that is valuable and rigorous that will enhance student learning while we all stay safe and consider the pandemic factors longer, we can assess where it is in Oct, and delay if we have to, but reassess each qrt moving forward until it is safe. All teachers love their students and want to see them and teach but this is playing high stakes russian roulette.

My wife and I currently live with her parents who are 80 and 83 years of age. We offer care and assistance and they are high risk. We have maintained self-isolation during this pandemic because of the high risk it poses to my inlaws. Now that I have to return to work and be exposed to 67 students daily for 7.5 hours in a small poorly ventilated room I am worried about the risk of bringing the virus home, infecting my in-laws and possibly killing them. I have considered alternate living conditions, like living out of my truck and sleeping in the driveway.

I do have a few questions for you to consider as you decide on the next steps.

1. Who will be legally liable in the event that I catch Covid from a teacher or student while at my worksite? In the event that I get sick and die? Can my family sue for damages?
2. Will teachers have to sign a waiver that waives our rights to legal action against the DOE and BOE? (for example the waiver that Trump rally attendees were required to sign to attend, which states they waive legal right to sue Trump) if so, I feel that teachers will choose to resign.
3. Since you have left it up to the teachers to enforce mandatory face coverings/masks per teacher per class. Has the legal liability now been placed on teachers in the event a student gets Covid because some students may not be wearing masks in some classes and not others?
4. Will the BOE and DOE require our parents to sign a waiver if they choose to send their child into school?
5. Can teachers send home a waiver to students for their parents/ guardian to sign stating that teachers are not liable if their child becomes sick or dies?

There are so many more questions. I believe that the safest thing to do in this situation is to consider the health and safety of all students, teachers and staff. If only one teacher gets sick and dies, or only one student gets sick and dies, yes that is a small number on paper but a huge number in real life. Please do not minimize and marginalize risk with stats and numbers on paper. If you really think there is "Minimal" risk and it is safe for all to return to in person school (hybrid format), then I will leave you with these last questions.

1. Can Gov Ige, Dr. Park, members of the BOE and Superintendent Kishimoto spend 7.5 hours every day in our classrooms with us? (not just visit for 5 minutes)
2. Can you all please come share in the "minimal" risk?

Everyone knows the "Captain goes down with his/her ship" So please show courage and leadership, please join us in the classrooms if you decide to re open.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo

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Testimony BOE

From: Chanda Tsing <chandatsing@gmail.com> on behalf of Chanda Tsing
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony - pay differential

Thank you for considering my testimony as you prepare to make a decision regarding pay differentials. We could discuss the crazy times, but we are all in the midst of it and our experiences suffices.

Seeing teachers not planning to retire "for at least a few more years" choose to retire now and seeing teachers choose to take a leave of absence scares me. As a teacher, their knowledge and skills are valued and we will miss the influence they have on our education community. Their experience is lost to us too early. We then do not have this to pass on to our students. Ultimately the students lose. If the pay differential is taken away we have less of a pull to take teachers in the positions they are in. With current circumstances, ideally all teachers would be given a differential. Let's at least keep it where we are at and not take away. We need to keep as many teachers as we can and not give anymore reasons for teachers to leave.

I also want to speak from a parent standpoint. I have high school students who have had emergency hire teachers. It is not fair to the students to have teachers come and go without training. The quality of teaching is not there. We already have a teacher shortage state wide. If a pay differential lessens that at all, we need to keep it. We need to provide the best to our students whenever possible. This is a time we can. There is much to do to give our children a quality education. Let's not go backwards. Despite what is happening we need to move forward.

We need to keep the pay differential.

Thank you for your time, a concerned educator and parent.

A. Chanda Tsing

Testimony BOE

From: Marsha Taylor <waialuaculinary@gmail.com> on behalf of Marsha Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Action Item H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY20-21 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response

Aloha, I am testifying on Action Item H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY20-21 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees. My name is Marsha Taylor and I am a teacher at Waialua High & Intermediate School.

I feel that there are important questions that the HDOE has failed to address and answer concerning the reopening of school. In particular, as a CTE Culinary Arts teacher, I have yet to see any written guidance from the Department of Health or the DOE concerning safety and sanitation, social distancing, and food preparation in this setting. I have even called the DOH asking for guidance. There is nothing. I have met with and spoken to several Culinary Arts teachers about this since there is a general concern how to maintain a safe environment for our students. Also, I feel that we are currently unprepared to tackle distance learning. I have received no training nor was aware of any that was available.

The education of our students has already been impacted by uncertainty and loss of quality class time. We cannot haphazardly reopen schools just to have them close again because of trying to rush and push something through. As teachers, we are the front line and currently we are ill-prepared to take on this daunting challenge without the needed structural supports in place.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marsha Taylor

Testimony BOE

From: Kathy Lomont <kathlomont@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kathy Lomont
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:26 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Differentials

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kathleen Lomont and I am a Special Education Teacher at Honoka'a Elementary School. My school is a hard to staff location which makes my job more difficult when we don't have enough staff. Please do not take away the differential for special education and the hard to staff schools. My job is very difficult and to take away the differential, even temporarily, would be a devastating blow to me. I know that once the differential is taken away, I will not get it back. I need that differential even more so now that I am required to learn how to teach in a whole new way. And doing that will require much more work for me. Teachers are highly essential in our communities and they deserve to keep the differentials for special education and hard to staff schools.

Respectively,

Kathleen Lomont
Special Education Teacher
Honoka'a Elementary School
(808) 775-8820

Testimony BOE

From: Shel <kahom143@yahoo.com> on behalf of Shel
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:26 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopenings

Aloha,

So how are private schools handling the school reopening. I know Damien and KSBE (my kids go there) are scheduled to open using a hybrid system. I know they have the benefit of not allowing new enrollees, but they still face the other problems such as quarantine and social distancing. Gyms have re-opened and sports practices have started (my son has been going for 3wks now). Yes, push back the opening (maybe til Aug 10 or 17 like private schools), but not indefinitely or until EVERYTHING is answered. My special need students, especially those with social/emotional issues aren't just suffering academically. Maybe start with non-high need students online 100% while high-need students come face to face 100%. This would still reduce the number of people on campus. But we can't just keep waiting and saying, but what about this, what about that.

Testimony BOE

From: Eric Shaffer <eshaffer@hotmail.com> on behalf of Eric Shaffer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on MOU Between Hawai'i BOE and HSTA

COVID Testimony

Aloha, I am providing testimony for "H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees."

I am a kindergarten teacher at Lanakila Elementary School. And I have been a full-time teacher with the DOE for 16 years.

I join HSTA and teachers in requesting that the state of Hawai'i and the Board of Education delay the reopening of school buildings to students until HDOE and the DOH provide solid guidance and plans for a safe and responsible reopening of schools in this time of COVID-19.

In addition, before students return to the classrooms, the DOE needs to provide all teachers with time that is set aside for:

1. Professional development training in delivering quality "virtual learning." Virtual learning will be an extremely valuable and essential tool this year whether our campuses remain open for the whole school year or they must shut down because of this health and safety crisis.
2. Grade levels on each campus to collaborate and develop plans that will best meet the needs of the students on our individual campuses.

I ask the BOE to please stand by teachers and our concerns regarding DOE's current rush to reopen schools in early August. Raising our concerned voices as teachers must not be misrepresented or misunderstood as being unwilling "do our part." In a recent message to teachers, the superintendent sadly seems to misunderstand our concerns which have been clearly presented by HSTA and our own individual testimony to her and the BOE. It was painful to hear such an insinuation from the superintendent.

I want to emphasize that Hawaii teachers' "part" is not easy right now. Our job is to advocate for our students' safety and education, which is exactly what we are doing when we now ask for a delay in the reopening of Hawaii schools. We are asking that safety of students and teachers come first so that education can be delivered within the best environment possible.

On a personal note, I want to share that it pains me, as a teacher, to speak up on this issue and risk upsetting administrators that I have known, respect, and for whom I have great affection, as well as those administrators I do not know personally. But my heart and conscience push me to do "my part" and speak up on this issue.

Aloha,

Veronica Winegarner

To the Board of Education:

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of students, families, teachers and all school staff. My testimony pertains to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographic locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a district special education teacher of students with visual impairments (VI) for schools in Honolulu District. I have taught for 22 years, four on Kauai, the rest here in Honolulu. Many of our general population think that students in our state attend a program at Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind. However, that school is a school for the deaf and has not had a program for the blind for over 20 years. The ONLY specific and specialized instruction to students who cannot see is provided by district itinerant special education teachers for the visually impaired. There are only 20 of us in the entire state providing direct instruction services to blind children. There are no colleges in Hawaii that provide teacher certification studies in the area of visual impairment education. For this reason, Hawaii is completely dependent on recruiting these specialized special education teachers from the mainland or partnering with mainland schools for Hawaii teachers to participate in limited grant opportunities with mainland colleges. Our field is extremely difficult to fill when a vacancy occurs. It has taken an average of THREE years per vacancy to fill.

That is three years with NO teacher for the visually impaired for children. No substitute teachers have this certification, so existing staff have larger caseloads.

It is imperative that the DOE and BOE support ideas and funding needs to attract and maintain qualified teachers for one of the most high needs areas in special education-blind and visually impaired students. Only 20 teachers in our entire state teach these students braille, mobility with a cane, adapted math and tactile graphics (raised lined pictures), blind technology access, computer and online training, independent living skills and more. As teachers for the visually impaired, we adapt their materials, teach them directly in their classrooms on the school campus, teach the staff best practices of inclusion for these students, share skills and resources with parents and families and connect with community resources and non-profits that have saved our DOE more than \$100,000 in the past five years of technology costs alone. Our profession is worth preserving because our students are worthy of a 21st century education supported by a highly qualified educator.

For these reasons, I urge you to continue funding the teacher shortage differentials. The differential was effective in retaining me in my position, which is highly specialized and nationally hard-to-fill. Postponing the shortage differential would be an act of singling out this small, hard to fill, population of teachers. Over 22 years I, along with my colleagues, have endured hiring freezes, furloughs, a strike, pay freezes, vast changes in education

practices and high-stakes testing. Through it all, the kids, the students, have always been at the forefront of my thoughts and time. I teach to make a better life for them.

The three teachers in Honolulu had to do four teachers' work for THREE YEARS until a new teacher was hired. THREE YEARS of no option, but to make it work. THREE YEARS of no extra funding to compensate us in any way. THREE YEARS of endless new referrals and no help to us or the students. This is the norm and is shameful. Our one state resource teacher for the visually impaired position took SIX YEARS to fill. A shortage on the Big Island and Leeward Districts also took THREE years to fill each position. Currently, the Hilo side of the Big Island has had a VACANT VI teacher position for ALL of last school year and no new applicants. Again, that is shameful. Yet this is the norm. Providing the Special Education teacher differential was finally a shining hope that these positions would remain filled and would be easier to fill once vacant. The special education differential encourages us to stay in this field and not transfer to other positions within the state.

The shortage differentials made a difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in special education or at hard-to-staff schools. Teachers who would not have otherwise transferred, switched to these hard-to-fill positions because of the approved shortage differentials. The differential encouraged me to remain in my job teaching students who have blindness and visual impairments, even though it is very stressful. Due to the nature of the

job, I go into my students' schools instead of them coming to me at a specialized classroom. That means I have to go into 11 different schools to teach 26 student skills for blindness access to their school curriculum. The COVID19 online instruction was especially hard to provide adapted materials to students. Many had no access to wifi at home, so online content and hard copy content were expected and provided by me to students who were blind and visually impaired. This included live, online support for a blind student participating in the bilingual seal for his diploma in Hawaiian Language. School has not ended for me, it keeps going and I adapt as needed for all changes as do all of us. With schools opening next week, I have 11 different specific school schedules to learn and follow. I feel I need more protective gear since I have to go into more schools than the average teacher. I hope that will be provided to me. Although there are many stresses, I will show up. And I hope that the BOE recognizes that teachers and school staff are always in a 'make it work' mentality. Please also 'make it work' for our students who are blind and visually impaired by continuing to provide the incentive to keep 'making it work' for this population and all special needs students in our state. I have never seen the hollowed out special education departments at so many schools for the past three years especially. Please, continue to provide the differentials so that the most needy students can fully participate in the array of instruction offered during these trying times.

Finally, it is important to note that I have never stopped teaching throughout these global pandemic. Whatever needed to be done during 4th quarter, I did it. When summer ESY-Extended School Year listed blind and visually impaired students as Phase I for return to school services, I, along with other Visual Impairment teachers were there. Working in person, trying to stay safe as well as keep other safe. Practicing how to “hear” when others were at a safe distance. Stretching the cane out further to create more space between others. Practicing how to put on a variety of masks and listen closely due to the sound of voices being unclear. I also provided distance learning for students whose schools chose that route. Again, I show up to do the job I need to do. Please support me and others to keep showing up, knowing that our profession is valued and acknowledged by the special education differentials. Please do not add to the ongoing shortage and removal of these dedicated teachers to try something new with better pay. This would open the door to deeper shortages of hard to fill staff, which would impact the students to a dangerously high level.

Please stay committed to ensuring a high quality education to ALL students, including students who are blind and visually impaired.

Thank you for your consideration to this request,
Amy Downard
Special Education Teacher of Students with Visual
Impairments/ Orientation & Mobility Instructor

Honolulu District, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Alina Gutierrez <aj.gutierrez14@yahoo.com> on behalf of Alina Gutierrez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Alina Gutierrez and I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Mauka Lani Elementary and my children attend Ho'okele Elementary.

As a parent, I am weary about sending my kindergartener and third grader to school just yet, but being a teacher and having to return to work, I feel forced to send my kids to school. Parents are left in the dark as to what the plans are for keeping our children safe on campus and to ensure how social distancing will be implemented throughout the school day. We are told by the superintendent that schools are ready to open and teachers are eager and prepared to have students back in the classroom, and that teachers received training during the summer. These statements are deceiving to parents giving false comfort and information. I can speak to that because as a teacher, no trainings were offered to me this summer, I am not prepared to open my classroom, and I am clueless as to how school will open safely for staff and students. Parents deserve the right to know the truth that teachers are NOT ready or prepared to open classrooms to their children.

My school is one of the few that are going full back face to face instruction. It has given me anxiety and lack of sleep to worry about the safety and health of my own family and my students. I will be teaching 1st graders this year and I know I will be spending a lot of time making sure they are using their masks correctly, not touching others, and the other responsibilities I have as an educator.

As a teacher, I am overwhelmed and stressed trying to figure out how to set up my classroom to fit 18 students with 6 ft apart. We are able to remove furniture to make it work, but we can't remove them until we get the storage container delivered to our school. Our classrooms are NOT ready.

We were given no guidance as to how we will safely send students to the bathrooms, what to do when a child shows signs of sickness, how we will work with students with 504 plans or any special needs.

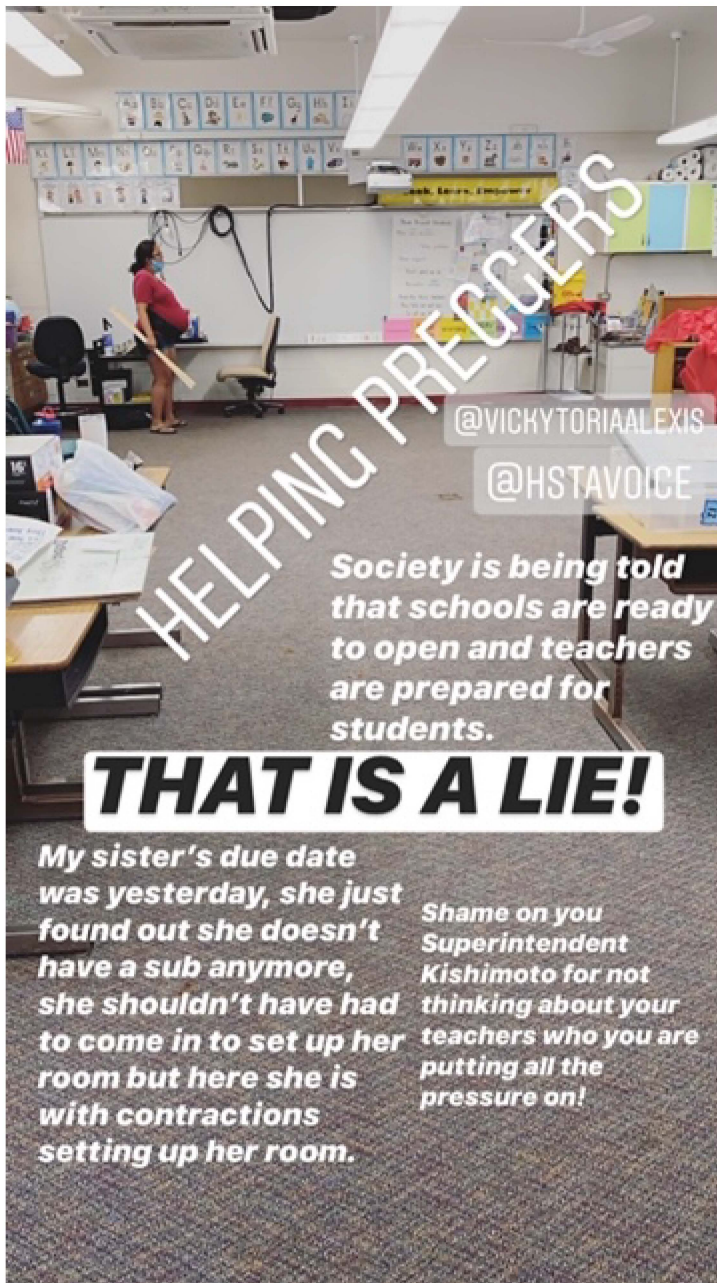
I am spending my own money to buy supplies and other things needed to make sure my students have their own supplies/materials since they can't share anything. I feel robbed of my summer to prepare and plan this school year because we aren't given any support or resources to help us.

And as I am writing my testimony to you, I am currently helping my sister at her classroom at Kaimiloa Elementary. She is 40 weeks pregnant, her due date was yesterday, and she's been having contractions on and off since yesterday. Yet we are here now trying our best to set up her classroom because she just found out that she no longer has a substitute. We are less than 2 weeks away from starting the school year and they can't find a substitute willing to do long term because they themselves are scared for their safety! What does that say about our preparedness and considerations to the teachers who have been spoken for from our superintendent?

We want to go back and teach our students, but not until it is safe to do so and we are properly prepared to do so. It was said that distance learning in 4th quarter was a complete fail with so many students not participating. I would like to remind people that it was OPTIONAL for students to participate and it was new to so many of us. Give us the resources and training to do distance learning successfully and give our students and families support, and you will see that distance learning can and will be improved.

Teachers have not been a part of the conversation of opening schools, so I implore our leaders to please hear our voice and take our concerns seriously.

Thank you for your time,
Alina Gutierrez



Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Victoria Kaleimamahu <vkaleimamahu@kaimiloaelementary.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Victoria Kaleimamahu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: hicams@aol.com
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. My name is Victoria Kaleimamahu and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Kaimiloa Elementary as a 2nd grade teacher. In March, when COVID-19 became a worldwide pandemic, causing fear and tragedy, disrupting our daily lives; I was entering my second trimester of my pregnancy. At this time, I felt relieved that schools were finally taking the necessary steps to close and transition to distance learning. Working at a Title I school, many of my students live in multi-generational homes with adults working more than one job. I knew it was only a matter of time for the coronavirus to reach our campus.

There are so many concerns and questions about the reopening of schools that have not been addressed and considered by the DOE. Along with my grade-level, we worked very hard in planning our distance learning for enrichment activities. We had a glimpse of what virtual learning is like, but that does not make us an expert. While not every teacher is tech savvy, neither is every parent/guardian and student. I had less than half my class participate and turn in the enrichment activities. The DOE has not thoughtfully gone through the options like the hybrid and blended models that require asynchronous learning. When were teachers able to plan and prepare for these models? The summer is meant for vacation and leisure; not for unpaid work. Teaching lower-elementary students, we need the time to help our students and families navigate the online platforms. We, teachers, do not have the guidance nor the training to plan for face-to-face and distance learning.

At this time, I am 40 weeks and 1 day pregnant, and preparing to welcome my newborn any day now. My long term substitute teacher can no longer make the commitment to teach in my place. She is also a mother of school-aged children who are on separate schedules. As of now, I have no qualified individual to take over my class. This leads to my next concern: Substitute teachers. Many substitute teachers are high-risk because of their age. They have also not been trained for this new way of teaching. What happens when teachers get sick and need a substitute teacher to come in on a moment's notice?

I continue to write this testimony, experiencing contractions, in the comfort of my air-conditioned classroom. With the help of my mom and sister, who are also elementary teachers, my room is slowly coming together to comply with social distancing of 6ft. Although I may be on maternity leave for the opening of school, I am still very concerned for my students, colleagues, and community. I implore our leaders to take the time to reconsider the opening of schools and giving teachers ample time to prepare and plan for a *safe* reopening.

Sincerely,
Victoria Kaleimamahu

--

Victoria Kaleimamahu, Grade 2
Kaimiloa Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Aimee Kahai <kahai808@gmail.com> on behalf of Aimee Kahai
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I am a teacher and a parent of three school age students in the public schools. My husband is a firefighter. We have many concerns. First the pay cuts for both of us will be a struggle for our family on a daily basis. Second, childcare. With this new schedule, we have no one to watch our kids for 3 days a week. One of us will have to take days off to be with the kids each week. Third, do we want to send our kids back to school with covid still out there with no vaccine to take? The schools still are in the planning stages and there are hundreds of questions still not answered and are still unknown. Is it really in everyones' best interest to open up school right now? Do the risks outway the benefits? Do I want to put my family at risk by widening our bubble when covid is worse now than when we shut down schools in March? What about the teachers that are at high risk? What about the teachers with family members at high risk? Don't our lives matter too? So we as teachers are putting ourselves in the line of fire, working harder than ever, planning more and more and accepting the fact that we're also going to be paid less? I love being a teacher, but I also love breathing too. Please make a wiser decision and wait to open schools until it is safer for EVERYONE involved!!!!

Thank you for your time.

Aimee Kahai

Testimony BOE

From: Sam Anderson <tampabaycover2@gmail.com> on behalf of Sam Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Safety and Health of my Family

To whom it may concern,

My wife is a high school teacher. I also have a daughter that attends High School and another attending Elementary.

My concern is for the health and safety of my family. I understand the importance of providing on site learning for our Keiki, including my daughters. But as a parent and husband, I value the health of my family over on site learning, and I'm sure this echoes the sentiments of all parents/spouses.

What procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of my wife and daughters?

What procedures are in place if one student/faculty is tested positive for COVID?

How many faculty/students need to test positive before the entire school reverts back to remote learning?

Who can I hold liable if my wife or daughters contract COVID and it's traced back to their school?

Don't risk the health of our teachers and children for the sake of on site learning. I plead that more time be provided for the DOE to implement clear protocol and guidelines on protecting each child and faculty. AND communicate this to parents.

Obviously more time is needed, delay reopening of school for the sake of our families. This is a reasonable request. What if this was your spouse, your children? Where would you stand?

Sincerely,

A very concerned spouse and father

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Eva Johanos <eva.johanos@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Eva Johanos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: We need more time and support

Aloha. My name is Eva Johanos, and I am a twelve-year veteran of the HIDOE, and have been teaching English at Iao Intermediate, a Title I school, for the last six years. Our community is unique in its diversity, and includes a large population of "under-served" students, including a large percentage that relies on the school for nutritional support, some students who are houseless, and many who live with elder relatives as we are located a stone's throw from the prison and from "Happy Valley," notorious for gangs, drugs and domestic violence. In addition, we have many students who are at high risk because their health is compromised by underlying health conditions: last year I had a large number of students with life-threatening asthma.

It is absolutely unconscionable to invite students back to school before we have designed a system which will protect them. We need time and resources to do this. Facemasks must not be optional: they must be required. Actually we should probably have face-shields as well! But who is going to pay for them?

According to the last written word I saw from HIDOE, the use of masks would be at the discretion of each individual teacher. That is simply not good enough! We need a coordinated response to keep our entire community safe, and we need proper resources to be allocated for this purpose. How are we going to keep the classrooms sanitized?

Face masks and/ or shields must be made available to all children, and additional janitorial staff should be hired to help with the disinfection of classrooms on a daily basis.

Also, we need more time to plan and prepare together, especially as this is completely uncharted territory. We need to coordinate our approach in order to be able to present a cohesive and comprehensible curriculum for our students, especially as the schedule is being modified and part of the learning will be online. We also need to figure out how the workload can be managed, as we are being asked to provide both in-person and online instruction.

Moving on with the traditional calendar for opening the school year is reckless and completely irresponsible, and shows a disregard for the lives and well-being not only of the students but also of the teachers and the community at large.

Please protect us and our keiki and kupuna. It is better to err on the side of caution than to sacrifice lives in an experiment.

Thank you for your time and consideration;
Eva Johanos

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Testimony BOE

From: hawaii charter <hawaii charter@yahoo.com> on behalf of hawaii charter
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - COVID-19 is a killer so keep students safe

Aloha Board of Education Members,

Please reconsider reopening schools where students are physically on school campuses. Although I am submitting this testimony writing as a concerned citizen, I do teach at Kea'au Middle School. If students were to physically attend, there is a very real probability of COVID-19 being transmitted at my school. Of my students, 45% are native Hawaiian. In casually talking with these Hawaiian students, almost everyone of them has mentioned having on or more 'ohana member with diabetes, typically an aunt, uncle, grandparent, or sometimes even a parent. When one of my students brings home COVID-19 through community spread transmission at school, it will be especially deadly for these family members, and their deaths will cause deep trauma in their lives that will seriously affect their learning.

Please have learning take place online until a vaccine is available, which is not an unrealistic dream at the moment with one expected to be available in Great Britain in September.

If even one life is lost from physically reopening schools, of a school staff member, student, or student's 'ohana, that would be one life too many. You would not want this on your conscience for the rest of your lives because you bowed to various pressure to open school on August 4, instead of prudently waiting a few weeks or months.

I do not feel schools will be cleaned properly and strictly follow CDC guidelines for safety, to ensure this COVID-19 transmission will not occur, to provide reasonable assurance that students, family members, and school staff, will be safe. Please act prudently right now to move learning online and later switch back as new therapies and a vaccine are developed, and as new knowledge about this deadly virus is learned. These new positive developments may come at any time, but once lives are lost, they can never be replaced.

Alex Cyran

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Var <sarahvar@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Sarah Var
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. **I urge you to push back the opening of the school year to allow teachers and administrators to ensure a safe opening of Hawaii Public Schools.**

My name is Sarah Var. My mother has been a public school teacher for twenty years. The decision to resume school and have children and teachers return to their classrooms amidst a global pandemic is completely irresponsible and life threatening. Teachers have been given practically no time to adjust to the new conditions of their daily routines. It is nearly impossible to expect teachers to safely return to their jobs so soon. The lack of time given to teachers to adjust will detrimentally effect the health and wellbeing of themselves as well as their students and all of their families. My mother goes home to her elderly parents and acts as their caretaker and has a 7 month old grandson. She has continuously protected her family and community by adhering to CDC guidelines by social distancing, remaining 6 feet from others in stores, wears her mask, and has taken the stay at home order very seriously. For months she has adhered to these guidelines to protect herself, family and community only to be called back and rushed to resume her duties at a public school that lacks all basic protection and regulation. By going through with current plans that frankly have not been thought out well enough, we are putting our teachers, keiki, kupuna, and community in quite literally, a sickening position.

While I think it is absurd for schools to even be thinking of opening while cases of COVID-19 are increasing exponentially, I urge you to push back the opening of the school year for the sake of our teachers and students. Please, give our teachers time to plan and prepare to open their classroom doors safely. Make the selfless decision to support our teachers who desperately need to be heard during this time for the sake of their health and safety. We must do what is right, it is no longer a choice not to. Protect our keiki. Protect our kupuna. Protect our teachers!

Aloha,

Sarah Var

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Allgaier <gaierall@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michael Allgaier
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay school opening

To Whom It May Concern:

Please delay school opening due to the pandemic. Let us not unnecessarily endanger all our citizens.

Thank you.

Michael Allgaier
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Karen McGraw <karen.mcgraw@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Karen McGraw
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha BOE,

Thank you for your continuous efforts to help Hawaii children thrive.

Did you know nationally more than half of new Special Education teachers will leave our profession in five or fewer years?

Did you know if these teachers last more than those five years, chances are, they'll still leave in ten?

Hawaii leads the nation in teacher turnover and the most likely to have unqualified teachers in our classroom, in comparison to other states. Special education is impacted by these facts, nationally and locally.

Special education needs your help! We cannot backtrack on our Phase 1 differential payments. We are only scratching the surface in closing gaps in special education. There is much-needed work, but getting special education teachers to commit is the first step. If you don't have us, then you have no solutions. Keep the incentive alive to help Hawaii special education and fulfill those promises to our special populations.

Mahalo nui loa for time and attention to my concerns.

--

Karen McGraw

FSC Solomon Elementary School
Room B116
305-1837

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Testimony BOE

From: jeremy polloi <jpolloi@hotmail.com> on behalf of jeremy polloi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing you to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teacher Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Jeremy Polloi and I teach at Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School on Kaua'i. We CAN NOT open school campuses to students on August 4th. We need more prep time to adequately plan for the return of our students.

Starting on Aug. 4th DOES NOT give the schools the needed time to prepare a safety plan that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading between the students, faculty, staff and our community!

Please reconsider a later start time for opening our schools!

Jeremy Polloi
Teacher
Sent from [Outlook](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Charlene Kincaid <charlene_kincaid@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Charlene Kincaid
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

We work hard looking after the health and welfare of our future generation. Please do the same for us so that we may all continue to do what we do.

Charlene Kincaid
Baldwin High School
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Candace Paul <candace.paul@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Candace Paul
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This testimony is in reference to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understand (MOU) between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work.

As a veteran teacher with 29 years of experience, I am once again dismayed by the lack of adequate planning, in particular, for such a serious circumstance involving the re-opening of schools in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The MOU provides only general and often vague guidelines. In addition, it fails to address daily concerns for the classroom teachers in order to keep them as well as the students safe.

First, what is the protocol if someone on campus tests positive? How will contact tracing be conducted and who will do it? Will all the student's classes and/or the whole school be tested? Who will pay for the testing? Have the schools been provided the manpower to clean all areas with fidelity? If I test positive due to community spread at school, I do not think my sick leave days should be used. Furthermore, teachers have not been provided adequate protection. I was given a small acrylic barrier maybe 30 inches high. Given the unknowns of the Covid-19 infection aspects, this makes teachers vulnerable to the virus.

Second, how are substitute teachers being trained? Will they know what to do if a student is not feeling well? What additional details will teachers need to include in the lesson plan? I have witnessed too many incidents where students take advantage or are out of control with a substitute teacher. Students will get out of their seats, shout out, eat or text in class, and even walk out of the classroom with substitute teachers. When this happens, social distancing goes out the window. In addition, there is a shortage of substitute teachers. This problem will intensify if teachers are out on quarantine once there is an outbreak at any school.

Third, the MOU provides nine half days for training, etc. What if a situation arises within those nine days and administration hasn't had the chance yet to cover that situation with the teachers? I taught this summer and it was a huge learning curve to learn and follow all the protocols. I actually had a student who answered 'yes' to some of the questions and had to send him to the health room. I forgot to disinfect the area he was in; thankfully, the summer director returned and asked whether I had done it.

Fourth, the MOU states that care coordinators for special needs students should have at least three hours per student per quarter (if I am interpreting it correctly). Does this mean special education teachers who have caseloads? What about the regular teachers who actually have these students in their classes? Special education teachers are provided time as well as the monetary differential, but the regular teachers do much of the work providing input and documentation as well as making accommodations and modifications with no additional support or compensation. What provisions will be made for the regular education teachers?

Fifth, how are teachers supposed to have the time to work with their students online with fidelity? As it is, the difficulty teaching and working with students in person is multifaceted. This past school year, I stood over a student while helping him with math and discovered he was making a computational error so I had to re-teach him. How do teachers deal with this aspect of foundational teaching? In addition, with the online instruction during the shutdown, many students struggled to read and understand the written directions, especially the special needs students. Other students had simple questions. The online format was difficult at best for the students. It also takes much more teacher time to prepare, and even with the preparation teachers provided, students were still at a loss. Can teachers be provided additional planning time built into the teaching hours?

There are too many unknowns to be covered in such a brief time. Teachers, students, and the public need to be trained and made aware of what it takes to administer such a huge undertaking of opening schools in such a high-risk situation. As it is, I personally feel that the two days used to cover basic protocols and trainings for opening school during the regular year is not enough. With the added burden of intense health protocols, opening school with half day trainings is unfathomable.

In order to reopen smoothly, teachers need to be trained in the new protocols and they need to be taught a consistent curriculum that we all teach the students when they first come back to school. In addition to teaching, I worked as the director for the opening of the in-person summer bridge program with only 90 students. It was truly challenging; I can't imagine what it will be like to open with ten times as many students. Perhaps even bringing back students gradually by, for example, teams of 150 students at a time would be more effective. It is a totally different aspect of education that we all need to consider for re-opening. Since I began teaching, I have always said I want legislators, representatives, and even the lay person to follow me at school and after to appreciate and understand all that I do as an ordinary classroom teacher.

Mahalo for listening, Candace Paul, Middle School Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Frederick Sasan <frederick.sasan@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Frederick Sasan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:29 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to School opening

As I prepare for my 41st year of teaching I have some reservations about this year's school opening schedule. Teachers begin on July 29 and will greet students 4 school days later. The four first days are filled with classroom preparations and reviewing and setting curriculum as well as fulfilling administrative and DOE directives. This year however, due to the COVID-19 situation, the four days will not be enough time to prepare for the first week of school let alone for the year.

There are numerous questions that I have about safety protocols. Among them are how are we to maintain social distance around our campus?. Students must enter and exit my classroom through one door. Do I monitor and control the flow of students during every transition? Will I need to disinfect the desks and chairs after each use? Do we need to develop a new system for bathroom and hall passes? I understand that our administration may have the answers when we return next Wednesday? But what about the questions that will certainly arise when we actually enter our rooms once again. Has someone already set up the classroom furniture to promote social distancing? And what happens should I require a substitute teacher for my class, will I need to prepare safety guidelines and instructions for that sub in addition to lesson plans or will it be provided by administration.

I could continue with more "what if" scenarios but I shall save them for my return to school. As a member of a high risk for COVID-19 group (65 years old, asthmatic, Diabetes on both sides of grandparents) I am ready and willing to return to work. However the return of students to the school should be delayed for at least 1-2 weeks, to ensure that everyone on our campus is properly trained and understands all the safety protocols that may be involved.

We've taken the time to practice fire drills, shelter in place, to evacuate campus to an alternate site and have had hands-on practice to confront an active shooter. We also need more time to prepare for this virus in our school.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Sasan
7th grade Science
Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School

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Testimony BOE

From: Young, Heather <hyoung@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Young, Heather
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for B

I am a preschool special education teacher and I am writing to you to convey my concerns with returning back to school on August 4th. I feel teachers should be given more time (paid time) to prepare their classroom and receive the proper training to keep themselves and children safe.

I agree with the following statements from HSTA. There are many unanswered points of concern. I am especially concerned with my safety and health and well being so that I do not contract COVID. I would like more guidance on how to keep preschoolers safe from getting COVID. I feel I am at high risk because naturally young children do not know or understand about social distancing and are unable to take precautions on their own.

I am concerned about military families who may/may not self quarantine and unknowingly contract and/or are asymptomatic carriers of the virus. Children do not take the same precautions as adults and can easily pick up the virus. I was alarmed at the insensitiveness of Dr. Bruce Anderson regarding the health and well being of the teachers and staff as he mentioned that children are low risk for getting sick with COVID but what about the teachers?

I also want to address the video superintendent sent at 8:15 PM.

The video clip I watched made me feel like we/teachers are being “selfish” about putting off the reopening of schools. This is not the case. It attempted to remind the teachers to remember that “we need to do our part” and “now it’s our turn”. It also clearly communicated that we did not lose our pay (yet) during this pandemic and just made me wonder about when it would be “our turn” for this as well. It made me upset because I did not need to be reminded of why I chose to be an educator, what my heart feels for the families and students who need the schools to reopen. I miss my students and grieve their loss of educational experience, I am very concerned about their social emotional wellbeing during this pandemic, and would like nothing more than to be back with them...teaching. I also did not appreciate the perspective the superintendent took trying to appeal to my raw emotions about this entire pandemic and although children have a lower risk for developing serious symptoms if infected with the virus I would be exposed and infected then would not be able to teach, and infect my family with the virus as well. Additionally, she stated that “all teachers had an opportunity to participate on their own time for distance training” reveals how disconnected she is from what is really happening in the schools. Further, whether I had known about it and was not able to participate during summer break should not be a reason to defer training for teachers once they return from summer and prior to children returning to our campus.

Rather than motivate me to begin the school year it made me think about how hard I worked during the end of the last school year, when my family and friends all said they'd never seen me look so tired. While so many people on unemployment were enjoying our island without the tourists I was given extra work that we'd never do while teaching in person. I was not impressed with the way that people in charge handled schools during the closing. The principals needed direction: some schools were very efficient and got a lot of things done and put things in place and then some schools did not utilize their staff to help get schools ready for reopening. I think

most teachers, (all teachers I know have said they want to be in the classroom teaching) would love to be back in the classroom with their students. Distance learning is not what special education preschoolers need but what is wrong with wanting a safe environment? Teachers are willing to work but what has been put in place to keep teachers/staff/students safe? The school board, principals, and other 12 month staff could have been getting things ready but when I went to school last week to get some work things, nothing in my classroom had changed and yet the office staff have plexiglass up and are protected from the public. IT feels like it doesn't matter if teachers are kept safe as long as everyone has a place for their kids. The video made me feel like I should feel bad for advocating for a safe environment for teachers (and students), requesting more time to plan for instruction, to receive proper training for distance learning, and the right to receive a clear understanding of what I will be expected to do as a teacher implementing face to face instruction for my preschool students with special needs. There are many questions I have about the type of work caseload I may have this upcoming school year. Will I have to teach and prepare for 3 different educational scenarios that were options provided to the parents at my school? 100% distance learning, blended learning (combination of face to face and virtual learning) in addition to the 100% face to face instruction for my special education students who will be in the classroom for the entire school day 5 days a week (1815 minutes/week). I am unsure about what my caseload will be and what my workload will be as a special educator. Even during covid distance learning I had to write IEPs students, not in my grade level that I did not interact with because the principal hired a sub special education teacher for kindergarten so even though she was getting paid I had to be the student's care coordinator and write IEPs, arrange and do all meetings and other various extra paperwork due to the covid virus.

After listening to the superintendent's message I spoke to some of my teacher friends and they reminded me: As an educator, I am a professional, I am dual certified in special education and general education and have a masters degree (in curriculum and instruction), I have paid for and taken countless professional development classes to continue to learn about education and how be a better teacher, I have taught special education and general education and have loved both. Although I am thankful for the service they provide, I will not be compared to other workers in a "blue collar industry" who have been providing services to our community. Nor will I be compared to the healthcare frontline respondents who have clear guidelines for safety and resources readily available to them to keep them safe from the virus. I am asking for more time to adequately prepare because 2 teacher work days is not enough for lesson planning, discussing and figuring out new and creative ways to provide students services safely, and arrangements of the physical space. Although we have a wonderful principal who has been clearly communicating to our families and teachers during this entire pandemic and in preparation for school to resume in the fall. I am asking for more time as a school to prepare our campus' once all staff is back to work from summer break. I am asking for a clear understanding of what will be expected of me within the guidelines of my teacher contract. I am asking for more time for proper training on how to do distance learning. I am asking for answers to the questions posed by HSTA

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?

- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

As I mentioned previously, special education teachers seem to have been given a lot more work and expectations during the covid quarantine when compared to their peers in general education therefore I feel like it is important the bonus pay continues in order to get and keep great teachers in special education. At the end of the school year 2 of our special education teachers quit due to the workload. They were both wonderful teachers and we will miss them terribly. The DOE and students are worse off by losing these teachers. It did not help that the last week of school when everyone in preschool special education were still doing IEPs (meetings and paperwork) and trying to finish our logs of the numerous times we contacted the parents or students, we saw the general education teachers posting on facebook from the beach. It also didn't help that prek special education teachers had to become care-coordinators for students in other grade levels and do all paperwork, meetings, and records for students they were not teaching or seeing as prek teachers are with their students all day, including eating lunch with them. The reason we had to be care coordinators for students not in our class is because there are not enough special education teachers and certified special education teachers always have to pick up the slack. I think without the bonuses it will be hard to hold on to and attract new certified special education teachers.

I am grateful that I have and am part of a strong teacher's union that will be there to advocate for safe working conditions, appropriate pay and then provide our right to vote to determine what the majority of educators agree to be a fair and just option.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Aloha,
Heather Young
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Ken Hashi <hashik001@gmail.com> on behalf of Ken Hashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Guidelines and Policies

Aloha

I am testifying on the H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Ken Hashi and I am speaking as a teacher and senior citizen. I am currently a math teacher at Aiea High School and have been teaching for the past ten years. Although I am 70 years old and consider myself to be very good health, the prevalence and uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus is a very real concern for me.

In addition, my wife is a registered nurse at the Family Health Clinic at Tripler Army Medical Center. If I contract COVID-19, it also will expose my wife (who has chronic respiratory problems) to the virus and prevent her from working at the Family Health Clinic which currently only has about 60 percent of their staffing positions filled. Consequently, active duty personnel and their dependents will have further delays in receiving timely medical care.

I strongly support the need for the HDOE to better prepare for the 2020-2021 school year by providing clear written policies and guidelines to reduce the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus an outbreak.

For example, will the desks and chairs in the classrooms be cleaned after each period? If so, who will be performing the cleaning?

Also, what will be done to support teachers will receive to provide online teaching due to school closure resulting from an outbreak of the COVID-19 virus?

Sincerely,

Ken Hashi
Math Teacher
Aiea High School

Testimony BOE

From: Amie Stroud <amieestroud@gmail.com> on behalf of Amie Stroud
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher testimony for differentials

Esteemed Board,

I am writing to you today to give an example of how shortage differentials are effective in the state of Hawaii.

I am a third year special education teacher in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island. My first year teaching, I was an uncertified but enrolled full-time in a special education teacher program. When I came in there were twenty other new teachers at our school (some certified, some uncertified). Our school has a reputation of high turnover that is taxing on students and staff. That first year was extremely challenging, with an intense caseload. Additionally, the pay as an uncertified teacher was so low, I was unable to afford housing in Kona as a single person. Fortunately, friends allowed me to live with them free of rent while I continued my schooling. Once certified, I still had trouble finding affordable housing and ended up renting and sharing a one bedroom apartment with another teacher. To continue to live and work here, we both had to get second jobs and live lives with very little margin. That kind of lifestyle is not sustainable long term. I began to research other states with special education incentives and a lower cost of living.

With the shortage differentials and special education differential for historically hard to fill positions, both my roommate and I were able to breathe and cut back our hours in second jobs. As a special education teacher, I even turned down a transition to a non-classroom teacher this summer- even though it was a dream position- because I knew I could not survive in Hawaii without the differential.

In short, the differential is serving the purpose of retaining qualified teachers in historically hard to fill positions here in Hawaii. I implore the board to fully support the hard to staff the differentials. If differentials are removed, I as well as many Hawaii teachers, will begin to look to other states with lower costs of living for an alternative.

Thank you for consideration,

Amie Stroud
HSTA Kona Chapter Secretary
4th Grade Special Education Inclusion, Kealakehe Elementary School
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Udarbe <christine.udarbe@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christine Udarbe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:30 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: _BOE Testimony.docx (4).pdf

Aloha!

Please see my testimony attached.

Mahalo!

Christine Udarbe
Proud Principal
Nānāikapono Elementary School
Ka Home O Ka `Io Iki

"Dare to dream big. Never fear to fail. Take actions with love." ~ Debasish Mridha

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State of Hawaii Board of Education Testimony Submission

Christine Udarbe
Proud Principal
Nānāikapono Elementary School

Meeting: Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting, July 23, 2020

Agenda Item: Department of Education's financial plan supporting comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year

Position: Comment and advocacy in support of ensuring schools have the necessary fiscal support for SY 2020-2021

Aloha Chairperson Payne and Board Members Cox, Fallin, Nanau'u, Takeno, Uemura, and Voss,

All of the principals recognize that these are difficult times fiscally and that the State of Hawaii needs to make tough decisions to balance the budget.

We all share enormous responsibility to make the best decisions in order to provide the highest quality education while ensuring the health and safety of all school stakeholders.

We have all thoughtfully collaborated with our school and community members to obtain necessary input and data to determine a school model that will best serve all students and families. With these models and promises to our community, we have maximized the use of all of our personnel, facility, and fiscal resources. We are also developing contingency plans, should we encounter staffing shortages due to COVID-19 related illnesses.

We have already adjusted our budgets in accordance with the upcoming unilateral 2.5% budget reduction for all schools. Annually, the enrollment count date determines actual school budget allocations. For schools whose actual student enrollment falls below the projected enrollment number, actual allocations are reduced accordingly based upon the identified per pupil fiscal weights.

Schools are currently encountering the following challenges: 1) the need to utilize all current personnel and fiscal resources to implement the planned school models, 2) a large number of families have delayed registering their child(ren) because they have been awaiting information regarding school specific models, and 3) parents are requesting to homeschool their child(ren) via 4140 because they are apprehensive about sending their child(ren) to school. These factors have significantly impacted enrollment for all schools.

In order to effectively implement the models that we have thoughtfully determined and planned, to support the needs of all students and families, and to prepare for additional students returning to the campus and/or enrolling in school as the COVID-19 situation either improves or family situations change, the school budgets need to remain unchanged. All school budgets are tight and no school can afford to lose fiscal allocations and personnel due to a decrease in actual enrollment on August 17, 2020.

Therefore, we are requesting that our budgets not be negatively adjusted due to the enrollment on August 17, 2020. Please consider providing each school with the weighted student formula allocations based upon their initial projected student enrollment to enable schools to function effectively as currently planned.

Mahalo for your consideration and support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cld', written in a cursive style.

Christine Udarbe
Proud Principal
Nānāikapono Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Anyely Dickerson <anyely.dickerson@gmail.com> on behalf of Anyely Dickerson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony RE: Item H Board Action on MOU

I am testifying today on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am TERRIFIED with the current state of school reopening.

I am a 20+ year teacher veteran and I have always gone above and beyond for my students and their education - I have bought kids supplies, I have played the role of counselor, hall and lunch monitor, and yes, even the role of parent (to those who lacked them). I never asked or expected more pay - I never got any recognition or thank you from any political officials for my sacrifices. Today, those same politicians, from the safety of their virtual meetings are asking me to GIVE MY LIFE to educate my students.

My first question: how is it that 31 cases statewide back in March were enough to send us into full lockdown (even as we risk an economic crisis) - but now 42 cases in July is cause for a full on return to school like nothing?

There are too many unanswered questions from principals up to the superintendent and governor. They all "say" it is safe - not there is NO ACTION or deliverables or specific documents with commitments and procedures about how to keep staff and students safe from possible DEATH in our schools (especially for so many immunocompromised staff and kids or their families).

When I saw that in the face of the alarming 42 new cases (and a July average of 28 cases a day since our highest numbers) - the DOE, HSTA, Governor and our local school principals were going to go full steam ahead with very unsafe reopenings (despite what their brochures all say) - and especially after we had full locked down as a result of 31 cases back in March - I knew I had to start thinking about reopening on a much more personal level.

We do not have enough PPE and CDC-recommended disinfecting supplies (we do not no matter what anyone tells us) - how do we provide students with the face-to-face instruction so many want us to give them 5 days a week AND RISK OUR LIVES because we'll be coming into contact with hundreds of people daily without the proper safeguards in place, we're operating out of confined room with little to NO ventilation for a prolonged period of time with groups over 5-10 people? HOW? This is the scenario the CDC and other medical experts have specifically argued against doing - our classroom scenario (as I just described) is the perfect formula for spreading the virus and loading up ourselves with an obscene amount of the viral load for hours and hours throughout the day?

AND MY FINAL QUESTION: WHY?

If virtual learning (though not ideal - and a global pandemic is not idea) - why couldn't our policy makers decide to keep us all 100% safe by providing our communities with distance learning (when there are decades of evidence - that this model, as with the Florida Virtual Schools system) does work - and make it a temporary solution to SAFEGUARD OUR LIVES? Why not? What is the argument against distance learning? That students will have learning and emotional gaps during this time? DUH - teachers have always dealt with students (who in a regular year and under normal circumstances) have emotional and educational gaps that teachers and schools work to improve, why not now when our lives depend on it? Is it because politicians don't

know how to handle a community of parents that are complaining that they can't handle their kids any longer? Is it because they haven't planned and budgeted (for the 5 months since this all started) to fund our families to help with daycare options so those essential workers can return to work??? So, since the policy makers DID NOT DO THEIR JOB (the tasks they were elected to perform) - now the teachers and students (and their families) have to pay with our lives??? Make no mistake, we may not lose everyone, we may not even lose 50% of those returning to school campuses - but PEOPLE WILL DIE - and in my opinion, in ONE DEATH is too many, when this is a PREVENTABLE SITUATION if the right choices are made - and they are not being made with the current reopening plan for Hawaii schools. Period.

Call me an alarmist, but I never thought DYING would be a risk factor for teaching our children - especially in our modern tech-infused world where online learning has so many great advantages.

A very scared and sad,
Anyely Dickerson

ELA Teacher & Department Head
Kailua Intermediate School
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Testimony BOE

From: Christy Yee <kreeesty@gmail.com> on behalf of Christy Yee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Safe return to sschool

To whom it may concern at the Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am writing to ask you to strongly consider NOT returning students to in-person learning in school buildings until **proper safety protocols** have been communicated to families and teachers, and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

I am a kindergarten teacher at Kaewai Elementary School, and I live with an elderly family member who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19. He is a cancer survivor who still receives adjuvant chemotherapy to manage his health.

My primary question up front in this testimony: Who shoulders the responsibility if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided.

A few days ago health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him “just today” to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It’s unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student’s home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students’ access to 100-percent distance learning options. I’ve heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option.

I would like to further augment with my own questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?

- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student get infected? Or a co-worker of a student's parent?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- **How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?**

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day.

While Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, it's also true that the DOE has NOT yet made it clear how to handle closing classrooms or entire schools if those ohana bubbles become infected. Further, ohana bubbles do not really work when considering overlapping bubbles of school buses, extracurricular activities set to start again on Aug 19, etc.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received **NO offer of training** for the school reopenings from the DOE. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training.

Others will point out that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. **However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE?** Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students **ALREADY RETURN** to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety **BEFORE** they come back to our buildings.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teacher and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students.

We want schools to open, but do it **SAFELY**. We want a specific **PLAN** to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Yee
808-675-8105

Testimony BOE

From: Miriam Clarke <miriam.clarke@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Miriam Clarke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Urgent!

July 22, 2020

Thank you to the Board for reading my testimony.

While teachers and students have been anticipating a safe reopening of schools, the district has been making plans to steal our students.

I received word from my principal yesterday, July 21 that our school would be piloting an online program to accommodate the virtual learning for at least 34 percent of our students. There was a link embedded in the email and a password to gain access. I pressed play and instantly my body reacted with an increased heart rate and a gut wrenching sensation.

As I listened in one window I googled ASU Digital Prep from another. I quickly learned that Arizona State University has a charter school to teach students in grades K-12 virtually. Here is a direct quote from the section, "See how we partner with schools." "We leverage the latest ASU learning technologies along with industry leading tools to connect our highly qualified teachers with your students at home or at school."

I have scheduled a meeting with my principal this morning at 10 am to discuss this matter further in search for answers that make sense. Because the deadline for testimony submissions is coming to a close I would like to bring up a matter that I find to be a great threat to public education.

Why are we subcontracting our students to receive an alternative education? Why are we funneling CARES money away from Hawaii's highly qualified teachers and into the pockets of a charter school in Arizona. This seems criminal and irresponsible.

Our principals are relying on a quick ,in the box fix for a situation that is unraveling at lightning speed. Teachers have been blindsided worrying about their mortality while the Department of Education is making deals for out of state teachers to run our classrooms.

While this is an emerging situation, arising exactly one week before teachers return, I beg the Board to consider the severity of this monumental decision. If we allow our students to be educated by ASU Digital Prep, we abandon the curriculum we already have. More importantly we threaten the livelihood of our most precious resource, the teachers who have dedicated their lives to serving Hawaii's keiki.

Why did we wait until the last minute to figure out how to integrate our home learners into our classrooms? I can tell you right now that I am capable of serving ALL of my students from my inclusive classroom.

Our schools will be splintered into two separate entities. One that teaches Hawaii's standard curriculum and one that uses the non-research based curriculum of Arizona State University Digital Prep. Why are we splintering our schools? Why are we funneling money into the pockets of this Arizona Charter School? I want the answers to these questions so our teachers have a chance to fight for the jobs they love and have been trained to do.

Thank you for considering this situation as it is just rising to the surface.

Miriam Clarke

3rd grade teacher, Pukalani Elementary School
808-269-2470

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Testimony BOE

From: Kat Muranaka <katmuranaka272@gmail.com> on behalf of Kat Muranaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Shortage Differential
Attachments: BOE Testimony_ Shortage Differential.docx

July 23, 2020

BOE Testimony re: Item G (Temporary discontinuance of extra compensation)

My name is Kathleen Muranaka.

I am a 20+ years teacher at Waianae High School.

I am writing this testimony with regards to the DOE's proposal for the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for critical teacher shortage areas.

I am opposed to discontinuing the shortage differential as pledged in December 2019.

The shortage differential represents an investment in our most vulnerable student populations to provide stability in their classrooms and schools.

In the short period of its implementation, it has already made an impact in our schools with regards to teacher retention and recruitment. I am personally aware of five teachers who will be returning to my complex due to the incentive the differential provides. The extra monetary compensation has allowed them to pay for the increased childcare hours, fuel costs, and out-of-pocket expenses that working in a hard-to-staff school demanded. They are not returning to "make more money." They are returning because the differential allows them to choose to serve the students they regretted leaving in the first place.

During these uncertain times, teachers have the responsibility to provide a sense of "normalcy" and safety for our students. A school, like a community, can achieve this through consistency, shared values, and a sense of common focus and priorities. Our students need guidance and leadership from a cohesive, experienced teacher corp. The shortage differential was a cornerstone to building that sense of culture on our campus. Please do not view it as just part of a financial solution to what I realize are serious budgetary issues. It is an investment in both present and future generations of our most vulnerable student populations. Like any worthwhile investment, it requires the financial support to yield meaningful outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony BOE

From: ugudrum <ugudrum@gmail.com> on behalf of ugudrum
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jensen Hirayama. I am a 4th grade Inclusion Classroom teacher at Wheeler Elementary School. My 6 year old son attends Mililani Waena Elementary School.

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Questions should lead us to clarity, certainty and truth. Unfortunately, unanswered questions lead us to confusion, uncertainty and doubt. When and if these unanswered questions are responded to sufficiently, the answers lead us all to better decision making.

The leadership of the Superintendent of Education: Christina Kishimoto, The State of Hawaii Department of Education, The State of Hawaii Board of Education, The State of Hawaii Department of Health and The State of Hawaii Epidemiologist: Sarah Park, have not answered many of the questions that teachers have. When they have answered questions, the answers that these leaders provide cause more confusion. I believe that the HDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Schools need more time to prepare educators for a safe working environment.

HSTA has repeatedly asked for important written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided. We are flying blind into a chaotic void.

We cannot open school campuses to students on Aug. 4. We cannot put more lives at risk. We must delay the reopening of schools.

Thank you,
Jensen Hirayama

Testimony BOE

From: aviva zion <aviva_z@hotmail.com> on behalf of aviva zion
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Schools Reopening

As a public-school teacher, I am extremely concerned about schools reopening in just a couple weeks. I am at a high school with multiple periods a day. With different groups of students and staff moving around throughout the day, how can we really ensure everyone's safety? More specifically, in one day a student will be in 5 different classrooms with 10 different people each time; each of those students is also in 5 different classrooms with multiple people. At the end of the day, everyone goes home to their family. The potential for exponential exposure is very high.

Why am I being asked to return to the classroom amid a pandemic and expose myself and my family? We are being told that children are at lower risk, but children are not the only people in this equation. Additionally, children above the age of 12 have been shown to have the same risk as adults. According to CDC guidelines, returning to traditional schooling with in-person classes involves the "highest risk" for COVID spread. Even classes with students spaced apart are categorized as leading to "more risk." The "lowest risk" for spread, according to the CDC, is virtual learning. Why are we choosing more risk than is necessary?

The state is saying we should open schools before we open tourism so we don't have two big surges at the same time, meaning a big surge is expected when schools reopen. While I fully understand why parents and administrators want to return to school, it seems like there is this let's do it and just see what happens attitude. I did not sign up to be part of an unnecessary and potentially deadly experiment.

A. Zion
Teacher
McKinley H.S.

Testimony BOE

From: Jennell Edwards <jennell_edwards@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jennell Edwards
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing this email testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Thank you for your continued efforts in supporting teachers and students during this time. COVID- 19 has brought about a change to our educational system forcing our teachers and students to be more resourceful and creative in this time of uncertainty. So far, our government has managed to prevent the widespread infection of COVID cases but I believe that there is so much more we have to do before our children can safely return to school.

As the start of the school year quickly approaches, cases in our state as well as the nation are increasing. To open schools now would be careless, especially since the number of infected people are greater than when we closed in March. I am very concerned that there has been little to no explanation or training as to how we are supposed to reopen. There is a severe lack of resources that have been provided by the DOE and without them it is very likely the students AND teachers will get sick and infect others. Without an abundance of recourses such as hand sanitizer, masks, tissues, space in the classrooms and even teachers, our classrooms will be affected negatively making these spaces unsafe.

I urge the Board of Education to postpone the start date of school. I am very eager to get back and teach but not if that means sacrificing students and teachers. A better plan must be implemented before we can reopen. We cannot send thousands of people back into a space that is unprotected and unsafe. Our keiki and teachers deserve better than this.

Jennell Edwards
MA. Ed.
Farrington High School
Math Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Su Teva <sarongshawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Su Teva
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha,

In addition to my other testimony I'd like to make a point that the office at the school has full plexiglass protection between incoming students, teachers or visitors . They also only allow one person or student in at a time .. this is certainly different protocol than the classroom.

Mahalo ,
S. Var

Testimony BOE

From: Maya Shishido <mayans@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Maya Shishido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do Not Add Insult To Injury

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am a special education teacher in Kaneohe. I love my job and my students, but my heart breaks for them when they do not have qualified or competent teachers. Every family I know who has a child with special needs has that story in the history of their child's public education schooling. In January, you implemented a differential for hard to staff positions such as special education and it worked! Many qualified educators transferred into special education positions. I felt that the Education Department finally saw us as important. Please do not let the Department of Education go back on their promise. If this bait and switch were to happen, it would be only fair to let those who have transferred into special education and hard to staff positions also go back on their promise and give them immediate rights back to their original positions.

As if only to add insult to injury, not only is the Department of Education proposing to cut my pay, but they are also sending me back to work in unclear, unsafe conditions with wishy-washy safety protocols. I have worked mainly with grades kindergarten through second and I can tell you the idea of a "bubble" will not hold true in reality. The idea of relying on parents to check their child's health is not based in reality either. Yes, many parents are capable of doing just that, but in my few years of teaching I have been the one to protect children from their parents more times than I would like to count. Clear, realistic safety guidelines in writing that protect children and teachers is what we are asking for, and frankly the very least of all that we should have when being asked to bring hundreds, in some cases thousands, of people together during a global pandemic. From what I have seen so far, it is not teachers who need more time before opening, but clearly the Department that needs more time to create a safe system for reopening.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me.

Maya Shishido
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Edward Nakata <enakata@kalaheohigh.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Edward Nakata
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Testimony for 2020-2021 Delaying of Reopening Schools

Aloha! To the BOE and DOE, My name is Ed Nakata. I am a High School Math Teacher at Kalaheo High School. I have been a teacher and an HSTA member in the Hawai'i public schools for 7 years. I love the career path that I have chosen. I live in Kailua Hawaii with my mom, dad, sister, cousin, and grandmother. My grandmother is 86 years old and her Birthday will be in September. My sister also happens to work at Kalaheo High School. She works with medically fragile students and students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, the number of COVID 19 cases in the state is not lowering at a significant rate. Now, there are reopenings of some restaurants, malls, barbershops, beaches, gyms, and etc. There have also been spikes of COVID 19 cases on the Mainland. If the state were to reopen schools on August 4th, I am absolutely worried that my sister and myself will contract COVID 19 and possibly spread it to my family, especially my 86 year old grandmother. Furthermore, on that note, my sister and I could be A-symptomatic and spread it to my family members. I have had very difficult discussions on what my family will do if my sister and I were to contract COVID 19. The first plan was for my sister and me to be quarantined somewhere else besides our home. Unfortunately, every family member we know is old and in the high-risk group. My grandmother is also too old to move to another family member's house. The only plan my family all agreed with was for my sister and me to be confined into our rooms for the duration of the quarantine. This is not the ideal situation for me and my family and there are other teachers that are probably in the same situation as myself. I do not want to be the reason that my grandmother who is 68 contracts COVID 19 and possibly gets ill and dies. I will not live with myself if that were to happen. By opening schools in this medical climate will surely enhance the chances of that from happening.

My second concern is that if a student, staff, or adult on a school campus does contract COVID 19, then they must be quarantined along with everyone else who has come in contacted with them for up to 14 days. What if a COVID 19 case comes up at my school again after the first case? Will we have to repeat this process and disturb the education and learning of our students? Furthermore, the decision to have half the students come to school and alternate the days in which students come to school is counterproductive. While the students are alternating days to come to school, I have to come to school every day. I will still see every student in my class. My high school is also on the backorder of cleaning supplies and PPEs. How is the school supposed to provide a safe and clean learning environment if the school does not have the proper amount of cleaning supplies and PPEs.

My third concern is that I truly believe this is the time for our schools to embrace distance learning and online learning. I told my family members through these pass weeks that a school is not defined by a building. students don't need to be in a classroom to learn. Learning does not take place only in school and in a classroom. Learning can take place everywhere and anywhere. Why cant the BOE and DOE discuss with the University of Hawaii's College of Education to develop platforms for teachers to teach online? I love my career path and I have always wanted to be a teacher since I was in Intermediate School. I wake up every morning excited to go to school and to change and impact the lives of my students and the community. However, I want to be safe when I come to school. I want my students to be safe when in school in all ways. Physically, mentally, and spiritually. I jokingly tell my students that they come first because I have no life. I love my family and want to spend time with them especially my 86 year old grandmother. With that being said, I DO NOT and I repeat, DO NOT want to make a decision to choose between my family and my students. It is not fair at all and no teacher should be put in that predicament. I tell my students that a great teacher listens to their students and puts the student's needs above their own. So I am telling you as the BOE, DOE, and as leaders of education, If you do value the health and safety of the students, faculty, and staff, then why is Hawaii reopening schools in

the middle of a global pandemic and risking lives as well. I employ you to please reconsider your decision on reopening schools on August 4th. Thank you for your time and have a great day!

-Mahalo. Sincerely, Ed Nakata

Testimony BOE

From: Sheala Nagamine <sheala.nagamine@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sheala Nagamine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As a teacher, I am asking you to delay the return of students to campuses in order to ensure that teachers and administrators have an appropriate amount of time to prepare for distance and/or hybrid learning, which takes much longer to train, prepare and plan for than a usual return to traditional school.

We are hurtling toward the August 4 start date without the necessary time it will take to have solid, realistic and distance/hybrid/classroom-ready plans in place. My principal has not even communicated clearly what are school's schedule will be. All I know is that it's an AB rotation. But what are the details? How will it be rotated? Are there certain days for A or certain days for B? I have no clue and I'm going back to school uninformed.

In addition to the time needed to be well-prepared for instruction is the huge matter of health and safety protocols. I have not heard anything from my school's Principal. There has been no clear communication about returning to school. What are our school's safety protocols for staff meetings? Therefore, I do not feel safe returning to school.

We have to make sure it's safe to open schools and some of our teachers would be vulnerable without a comprehensive health plan. We should also get Covid sick days for those who will need it.

Please, for the health and safety of our keiki and teachers and our families, delay the return of students to schools. We only have one chance to do this safely and correctly. Not one teacher or student death is acceptable, when the simple decision to give more time for schools to prepare could prevent illness and death.

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Testimony BOE

From: E Kagawa <ekagawahsta@gmail.com> on behalf of E Kagawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY H

Board of Education:

Let me start by saying that I would love to have all my students in school with me every day. That is one of the main reasons I love being a teacher. That being said, that is not a reality we can honestly have right now.

First of all cases are at a much higher rate in Hawaii, as well as in our country, then in March when we shut down the school buildings and went to 100% distance “learning” with no graduations, proms, athletics, etc. Secondly, clusters are forming all over the state and young children are now testing positive. Thirdly, as last year was ending, we were planning for flattening of the “curve” which has definitely not happened and is getting worse.

From what I have seen and heard from my colleagues, the DOE is NOT READY for students to come to campus. Contrary to what the Superintendent says, there is NO PLAN! The schools have different ways of checking on students, faculty/staff and visitors. The inconsistencies are very scary! Also, there are no contingency plans available. We are getting that as each case happens, then we will get guidance! What happens when a student tests positive? An adult? Family members? We need more testing! There are so many cases where the start of the cluster is asymptomatic. There are inconsistencies with getting enough supplies... PPEs? Sanitizing Supplies? Teachers don't trust the DOE to supply them – they are also saying make do after they promise, promise and promise! I personally have purchased clear curtains and racks. I have also ordered plastic desk dividers! Teachers are spending \$100's of dollars of their own money to make sure to minimize the risks in the classroom. Money that they are getting threatened with budget cuts! I have heard of teachers setting up GoFundMe requests for Tents to set up as their classroom! This proves that the DOE is NOT READY! Teachers need more time to prepare. To prepare new pacing guides and lessons that are adapted to the new way of teaching students. To prepare their classrooms and to prepare themselves to work within their new physical environments. To prepare documentation and communication systems with students and families. To prepare for WHEN someone comes to school with COVID-19!

The Superintendent and the Governor say we have to take the risk, have courage and sacrifice for the greater good. Are they going to be on TV saying sorry to the families of students and faculty who have been infected? Who have died? You are all doing these meetings virtual for your safety! I challenge you to come to the schools and hang out in the classrooms the whole day! Are you willing to take that chance?

Teachers are retiring! Teachers are taking Leave Without Pay! Teachers are filling out ADA forms! They are scared! Not only for themselves but their families! Their Students! Their Students Families!

Protect our keiki! Protect our communities! Don't just open the schools.. OPEN the Schools the RIGHT WAY - PREPARED for the PANDEMIC! WE NEED TIME! WE NEED A PLAN!

Respectfully yours...

Edwin Kagawa, Teacher
Kea'au Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Diane Tunnell <diane@dianetunnellart.com> on behalf of Diane Tunnell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Start of School

To Whom it May Concern

I am requesting the delay of the opening of school so teachers can have more time to prepare for precautions for Covid and to prepare for online learning.

I know parents who want their children to participate in online learning this year. I plan to be involved in helping my friends' children be educated at home for safety reasons. I would like good curriculum resources to use with online learning from the teachers. This should be equitable across the state. I reside in Holualoa on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Diane Tunnell

Testimony BOE

From: Paula Inouye <paula.inouye@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Paula Inouye
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: SKM_C360i20072211160.pdf

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Waihe'e School Administration**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. As educators, we understand the importance of opening school and providing quality education to all students. However, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we continue to have in regard to reopening our schools. The depth of these concerns keeps us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities in our hands.

As Waihe'e School Administrators, we would like to collectively submit our testimonies pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Upon recently receiving the Health & Safety Handbook, there is no clear guidance for cleaning and disinfecting protocols and appropriate training for staff (e.g. Custodians, SHAs, Cafe, Office).
- Still no guidance documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides)
- To prepare for the worst when there is a positive COVID-19 case, more clarity is needed for protocols when using backwards tracing process forms. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult "bubbles", including on the bus, in case DOH asks us for the information.
- We have no control of students' bubble before or after school (afterschool programs), how is this being address? Furthermore, many afterschool programs are still in limbo with opening up child care operations for our students.

Lack of PPE or supplies; lack of online devices:

- Schools not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- PPE orders have been placed but not received in the schools
- Schools not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc.
- Schools still lack devices, which are on backorder. Devices we were promised for summer learning and arrived on campus two days before summer learning ended.

- In regards to equity, how do we ensure internet access for all students? What about areas with no reception?

Training promised has not been provided

- Expected training for the first nine days for teachers
- How to properly train substitutes (certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them? How are they compensated?
- Training on virtual learning platform, which has not yet been decided.

Need guidance in....

- Personnel issues (Certificated & Classified)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone who has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principal Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- When do teachers get training on distance learning program so they can communicate safety with parents? Who is responsible for training parents?
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, etc

Food Service

- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the kids socially distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them
- Is grab-n-go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafes need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day. Also, families with children who go to multiple schools will have the burden to go to respective schools to pick up meals on off-campus schedule days.
- No direction on keeping records of students picking up grab and go

Student Transportation

- Busing registration will not accept payment.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible backtracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks if a student doesn't have one?
- Will bus drivers be allowed to identify possible students who display symptoms?

Substitutes

- Do we have training so we can recruit more people to be substitutes?
- Who will train them about new protocols?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave?
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teachers and sub teachers report to school?

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4 is being forced onto us with minimal support and more questions than answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

Waihe'e Administrators



Paula Inouye, Principal



Kalani Au, Vice Principal

Testimony BOE

From: Miriam Clarke <miriam.clarke@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Miriam Clarke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Urgent

The Department of Education has failed educators, families, and the Board of Education. Because of reckless commitments to out of state educational institutions, our CARES ACT money is being funneled away from Hawaii's education system and will now support online charter schools from out of state. By his actions and response, the governor is forcing teachers to retire early, and take leave with or without pay. Families are left wondering what the future holds for their keiki.

I'll tell you what I see. I see out of state online educational companies coming in to the rescue. This world wide pandemic is a threat to the lives of teachers as well as to their families. While teachers are planning their exit, out of state charter schools are planning their entry.

Principals had lack of support to train our own teachers how to integrate distance learning safely into our routine and sat on the fence for months waiting for a rescue. If the start date of school was pushed back, teachers could engage with technology coaches to put the research based curriculum we DO have into an integrated learning platform like Google Classroom.

Instead the district created an unsafe, uncertain, unstable environment for teachers to teach from and students to return to. As a result parents and teachers are divided. Parents do not want to send their children into the inferno and teachers do not want to risk their lives teaching face to face.

While the district could have presented this new learning platform as an exciting opportunity to learn from home from a highly qualified Hawaii teacher, decisions were made to stray away from this idea. Because teachers could not be expected to plan and organize this undertaking during the summer, the DOE looked outside of our community to meet the educational needs of our keiki. If parents choose to keep their children home they are abandoning Hawaii's educational system and participating in being taught by a mainland software company.

Families deserve more! Teachers deserve more!

Schools need to provide at home learning for families that is run by Hawaii educators. Curriculum, as we have it, can be integrated into our Google Classrooms, Seesaw, etc.

Why are we contracting out of state educators to do our jobs?

The governor is washing his hands of the results by forcing teachers into early retirement, or leave situations because they are afraid. Safe options were not a choice till the last minutes before the beginning of the new school year! As a result, thinning the masses of teachers willing and waiting to take on the new school year. And pushing out families who desire a safe secure learning environment.

This decision will surely cost the state jobs, but teachers are making it easy. They have been blindsided by the reckless decisions of the DOE. They are leaving because they feel unsafe, unheard and unprepared. Schools like University of Arizona Digital Prep are in the wings waiting to cash grab the CARES money. They have the software, the online text books, and teachers waiting to troubleshoot the frustrations of families at home trying to log in.

Educational revolution is happening before our eyes. We are handing over our jobs, our students and our dignity.

Do not let our jobs be taken over by outside schools willing to take on virtual learning. Education will never be the same, and it will not be better.

Miriam Clarke
Pukalani Elementary School, 3rd grade
808-269-2470

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Testimony BOE

From: Kat Muranaka <katmuranaka272@gmail.com> on behalf of Kat Muranaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: August 4th School Reopening
Attachments: BOE Testimony_ Aug 4th Reopening.docx

July 23, 2020

BOE Testimony re: Item H- MOU between BOE and HSTA, COVID-19 conditions of work

My name is Kathleen Muranaka.

I am a 20+ years teacher at Waianae High School.

I am writing this testimony with regards to the DOE's Reopening Schools Plan for SY 20-21.

I am opposed to the current plan to reopen schools to students on August 4th.

The key to effective learning and teaching begins with a classroom environment that has established routines and rituals to give students a sense of belonging, responsibility and safety. It is difficult to build a sense of belonging and responsibility if we cannot first, establish a safe environment in which to do so. I do not believe that the current expected timeline to reopen school to students on August 4th provides administrators and teachers sufficient time to create this "safe environment."

I love working face-to-face with my students. It's why I became a teacher. It was very difficult for me to end last school year through distance learning. I couldn't walk around my room, recognizing positive behavior and helping those students who were quietly struggling. I couldn't work on service projects with my club members and enjoy the part of student life that only comes outside of class time. I couldn't hug them goodbye when the school year ended. I am eagerly waiting to meet with my students in my classroom when school begins. But I do not believe that beginning on August 4th provides enough time to have all the necessary safety precautions in place for a sustained, safe return to campus.

I have read the CDC recommendations with regards to guiding principles for schools. My sense of safety comes, not from the guidelines, but from implementation of these procedures. Answers to questions such as: How will supplies required for cleaning, disinfecting, hand sanitizing and face covering be provided? What are the roles of our school stakeholders to keep our campus safe? In the event of an outbreak, how will faculty/staff and students be contained? Notified? Tested? Quarantined? If a class has multiple outbreaks during the course of a few weeks, how will the previous issues be addressed?

The reopening of many Hawaii businesses and the subsequent rise in coronavirus infections in the past few weeks has demonstrated the importance of personal accountability, as well as consistent, clearly communicated, essential safe practices. When we return to school, I believe that all stakeholders should have ownership of these principles and practices. August 4th does not provide us with the time to plan, discuss, and inform our school communities of what the "new normal" will require. I want our school reopening to be a sustained experience, not an experiment to "see what works best."

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Kuroiwa <cheryl.kuroiwa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cheryl Kuroiwa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: UH Mānoa COVID-19 plan for fall

Members of the BOE,

My son who attends UH Manoa just got this from the school. Why can't the BOE/DOE implement this in our public schools for the health and safety of all?

Sincerely,

Cheryl Kuroiwa
Teacher
Nimitz Elementary School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joshua Kuroiwa** <kj71@hawaii.edu>
Date: Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 10:07 AM
Subject: Fwd: UH Mānoa COVID-19 plan for fall
To: <cheryl.kuroiwa@k12.hi.us>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Office of the Provost** <manoaweb@hawaii.edu>
Date: Wed, Jul 22, 2020, 8:06 AM
Subject: UH Mānoa COVID-19 plan for fall
To: <manoaweb@hawaii.edu>

You're receiving this news as a valued member of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
'Ohana.

Having trouble reading this email? [View it in your browser.](#)

Aloha UH Mānoa 'ohana,

I hope this message finds you well. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we prepare for an unprecedented fall semester. Our top priorities continue to be the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, and our commitment to provide the best possible learning, teaching, and research experience for our campus community.

Eight campus working groups have developed plans for the fall 2020 semester that, along with the UH System COVID-19 guidance, cover every aspect of campus operations. These plans are based on existing county, state and federal COVID-19 guidance, current science and data, and best practices from around the world.

You can find the reports on the [UH Mānoa Moving Forward website](#).

Our plans call for significant changes in operations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It will take a collective effort, and we all have a role to play as we protect and support each other.

Protocols for positive cases and suspected exposure

UH Mānoa students and employees are instructed to self-report to University Health Services Mānoa (808) 956-8965 when they are symptomatic or have tested positive for COVID-19. The Hawai'i Department of Health will also report positive and suspected cases connected to UH Mānoa to University Health Services Mānoa (UHSM).

[Protocols have been adopted](#) outlining measures that the university will take promptly upon notification that include quarantine or isolation, contact tracing, communication and facility disinfection.

A UHSM COVID-19 Resource Team will assist students and employees in the protocols and will be responsible for clearing an individual's return to campus. The team will also coordinate communication with health officials and the campus community.

Daily Check-Ins

All students, employees and visitors will be required to check in daily on a UH app or web form that monitors COVID-19 symptoms and report any positive or suspected cases to the University Health Services. This is critical for our test-trace-isolate strategy—test suspected cases, isolate those who test positive, contact everyone who had exposure to the infected person, and continue to test and isolate.

Facial Coverings Required

All employees, students and visitors are expected to wear facial coverings when indoors (e.g., classrooms, laboratories, shops, and common spaces such as hallways and elevators) and where physical distancing is not possible. We must wash our hands, regularly and thoroughly, or use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. There will be hand sanitizer stations at the entrance of every building and every classroom and teaching laboratory.

Physical Distancing

We must all practice safe physical distancing, maintaining a distance of at least six feet from each other. It will be easier this fall semester as there will be fewer people on campus. There will be far more online courses than usual, and our work to reconfigure classrooms and labs for physical distancing has reduced capacity by more than 50 percent. The same physical distancing concerns have also reduced

student housing capacity by more than 30 percent. Many employees will continue to telework while some offices may adopt work rotations.

More Online and Hybrid Courses

The mode of instruction for more than 70 percent of the courses offered in the fall semester were adjusted to help adhere to the physical distancing requirements. The affected courses were either moved entirely online or to a hybrid combination of online and in-person instruction. We remain committed to providing the high quality education that UH Mānoa is known for and have provided resources to our faculty to help with this transition to online learning. I commend our world-class faculty and students for persevering through this difficult time.

Utilizing 167 general use classrooms, 3,344 courses were scheduled into the following formats for the fall 2020 semester:

- 54 percent online (asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of asynchronous and synchronous)
- 23 percent in-person (physically present in a classroom or other education space)
- 23 percent hybrid (combination of in-person and online instruction)

Campus Services

Dining and food services will be modified as seating will be limited and self-serve drink stations will no longer be available. Study areas such as the Hamilton Library and the Sinclair Student Success Center will be open, but all of the COVID-19 requirements must be followed including wearing face masks and safe physical distancing.

Warrior Recreation Center

The Warrior Recreation Center is scheduled to reopen in the Fall semester for mandatory fee paying students and current opt-in members with modified programs and services. COVID-19 requirements will be implemented including social distancing, facial coverings, and a reduction in maximum capacity for the facility at any given time. For more information as the semester approaches, please check the WRC's Instagram page, <https://www.instagram.com/warriorreccenter/>. You do not need an Instagram account to view the page.

Student Residents

Residents living in our housing communities have unique concerns that we are committed to addressing. Bed spaces have been reduced by approximately 30 percent to adhere to safe physical distancing. Arrangements are being made for a suitable off-campus location for residents to self isolate if they test positive for COVID-19. The university will pay for any costs for the off-campus location that will include meals, regular check ins, and staff support.

Daily Cleaning and Disinfecting

Our custodial staff will provide daily cleaning and disinfection of public spaces including classrooms, restrooms, lobbies and elevators. They will clean high-touch

surfaces in public areas three times a day including door handles, elevator buttons, faucets and paper towel dispensers.

Research

We have developed a comprehensive guide for the safe conduct of our critical research. Many of the guidelines, in particular those developed for laboratory operations, should be consulted by anyone working in a teaching or research environment.

Moving Forward

These are just some of the adjustments being made for the health and safety of all, as guided by the plans developed by the campus working groups. Thank you to all group members who provided their insights and time to conduct research on best practices and more.

We will soon be launching an updated website with FAQs for students, faculty and staff, and campus visitors. Please keep an eye out for that announcement.

We will continue to monitor the status of the pandemic and as more information becomes available, we will adjust our plans accordingly. County, state and federal guidance may also require us to change our operations. I promise that we will continue to engage our community and continue to provide the most up-to-date information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your patience and your resilience. We still have a ways to go, but together we will get through this and we will be a stronger community and a finer university as a result.

Me ke aloha,

Michael Bruno
UH Mānoa Provost



University of Hawai'i at Mānoa • 2500 Campus Road • Honolulu, HI 96822

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Testimony BOE

From: Julie Yamamoto <julieaya@gmail.com> on behalf of Julie Yamamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: PLEASE Delay opening of schools

Dear BOE,

I am sending this email to request that you delay the opening of schools until the teachers and staff can all get adequately trained to know how to adjust and respond to this pandemic. We can't rush the start of schools without being prepared. We can't risk the health of our children and our community.

Thank you,
A concerned parent

Testimony BOE

From: Rocco, Susan S. <susan.rocco@doh.hawaii.gov> on behalf of Rocco, Susan S.
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:33 AM
To: Board of Education; Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Martha Guinan; Heidi.Armstrong@k12.hi.us; Annie Kalama; Steven Vannatta; Susan Wood; Ivalee Sinclair; cara.tanimura@k12.hi.us
Subject: SEAC Testimony for the General Business Meeting
Attachments: 7.23.20GenBusMtg.pdf

Dear Board Staff,

Please see the attached testimony from Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Chair Martha Guinan and Legislative Committee Chair Ivalee Sinclair. It addresses Agenda Items VI. G. on the General Business Committee Meeting Agenda for tomorrow afternoon.

Mahalo for your assistance.

Susan Rocco
Staff to SEAC



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov
July 23, 2020

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Dale Matsuura, *Vice Chair*
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Disher
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Bernadette Lane
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Kaili Murbach
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto
Ms. Kau'i Rezendes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. David Royer
Mr. James Street
Mr. Francis Taele
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams
Ms. Susan Wood

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Hawaii State Board of Education
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Department's proposal to temporarily discontinue pay differentials for classroom special education teachers. As you know, SEAC testified in strong support of special education pay differentials last December as a means of addressing the chronic shortage of qualified teachers for this vulnerable student population. At the time, both the Board and the Department committed to maintaining the pay increases for special education teachers, as well as Hawaiian immersion teachers and teachers in geographically hard to staff positions, by finding monies within the existing budget should the Legislature fail to provide the requested support.

No one anticipated the financial crisis brought on by Hawaii's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to maintain the health and safety of our population, nor the Legislature's refusal to add monies for the pay differentials. It is more than understandable that the Department is looking for strategies to mitigate its expected budget shortfalls. However, **SEAC asserts that reneging on these pay differentials, if only temporarily, will be more costly in the long run than maintaining them.**

Teacher recruitment. While the data on the effect of the pay increases is preliminary, it points to positive gains in recruiting State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) teachers into special education classroom positions. Without this incentive, it is likely that fewer teachers will choose special education positions over general education positions, given the increased stresses and demands associated with



teaching in the current pandemic.

Teacher retention. The Department's data from SY 19-20 show an impressive gain in teacher retention. Compared to SY 18-19 there were many fewer teachers leaving the special education classroom for a non-teaching position or a general education position. There were also fewer teachers retiring from public education.

HSTA has sounded the alarm that many teachers are contemplating sitting out the upcoming school year at home or retiring early. A \$10,000 salary loss to special education teachers might be the deciding factor not to return to the classroom. The cost of replacing these teachers can be quite significant when you add up separation pay, recruitment costs, new teacher mentoring and induction, and salaries for subs in order to free up a new teacher for additional training. Vacant positions or positions filled with unqualified personnel also place a bigger burden on those qualified special education teachers still in the field who must double up their IEP coordination and paperwork to fill in the gap.

Student achievement. If recruitment and retention of qualified special education classroom teachers are negatively impacted by discontinuance of the pay differential, by far the greatest costs will be borne by the special education students themselves. High-quality teachers have the potential to provide substantially higher quality classroom education. A lack or shortage of qualified teachers will compound the already substantial achievement gap. Our special education students are returning to school with arguably greater academic losses caused by sporadic or insufficient access to specially designed instruction over the period from March to August. They need teachers who have the skills to help them back on the path to positive academic and functional outcomes.

SEAC stands ready to work collaboratively with the Department and the Board to find creative solutions to the delivery of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Martha Gunan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair

Testimony BOE

From: E Kagawa <ekagawahsta@gmail.com> on behalf of E Kagawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY G

Board of Education:

I am a SPED Teacher in a HARD-TO-FILL Complex. These differentials affect me and not in the way you think. Yes, I do benefit from the supplement to my pay but the differentials help me and our schools in so many other ways.

First of all the Hard to fill complexes are the ones with our most vulnerable and at-risk student populations! There are so many challenges that these students have to face and teaching them requires time and commitment! They need stability! They need teachers who are experienced! They need teachers who will be there for the long haul!

Also, as a dual-certified teacher, I have been placed in a SPED position because there are no teachers that are willing to do all the extra legal and specialized assignments (i.e. writing IEPs, extra meetings, etc) without compensation. These students then don't have qualified teachers to provide the support and services and the remaining SPED teachers are tasked to compensate for the lack of certified SPED teachers (i.e. addition caseload, meetings, plans, documentation, etc.).

These differentials help! Teachers are moving to the more challenging areas. Teachers are going back or getting certified in SPED. There are valid reasons why there are a lot of vacancies! The more the vacancies, the students suffer! Invest in the students – keep the differentials!

Respectfully yours...

Edwin Kagawa, Teacher
Kea'au Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Cathy Ann Inciong <cathyleeinciong@gmail.com> on behalf of Cathy Ann Inciong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

As a DOE, lower elementary school teacher, I would like to share a few concerns. My first concern is safety. I want to be back in the classroom with my students, but young children are not able to socially distance and not all parents are willing to have their children wear a mask. Many businesses have plexi-glass dividers between their employees and clients. We have nothing remotely close to help protect our students. We don't even have thermometers. Our school is air conditioned, but we are not able to open our windows and we don't have any type of air filtration or sanitization in place to prevent the spread of COVID19. Scientists are saying that COVID19 thrives in cold temperatures. Schools are supposed to be safe places. I do not feel safe and do not feel the safety of my students is guaranteed.

My second concern is training. My school's administration and support team are doing everything they can to support us, but I have not received any training except for what our school has implemented on its own. Our support people took it upon themselves to teach us how to teach and reach our students remotely when our schools suddenly shut down. In person and remote teaching are very different, requiring very different planning and very different skill sets. Essentially, in person and remote teaching are 2 different jobs. Since the schools closed in March, my grade level and I have tried our best to implement and plan for remote teaching all while trying to figure it out on our own. Our "summer" has been spent trying to develop an online curriculum and explore remote teaching platforms.

Please give us the needed time and tools to safely and effectively teach our students.

Thank you,
Cathy Inciong
Grade 2 Teacher
Holomua Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Natasha Dafang-maduli <ndafangm@gmail.com> on behalf of Natasha Dafang-maduli
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Personal Testimony

I am a new mother with a newborn as of June 21, 2020. With the pandemic going on I don't feel like it's safe to return back to school. My newborn does not have an immune system and putting myself out there in the public at risk is putting my baby at risk also. I don't feel like the schools are ready to open. I feel like the state is rushing to open up the schools. I stand for the state to delay opening up public schools to our keiki's so that the state and the teachers can better prepare for the safety return for our students. It is not fair for us as teachers to just open up the schools without being fully prepared. We are not guinea pigs. Our safety matters also! Let's take the time to make sure we do it right and not rush it!

Aloha,
Natasha Maduli
2nd grade teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kayla Lim Tam <2021limtamk@kalanihs.org> on behalf of Kayla Lim Tam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony 7/23
Attachments: Student Testimony 7_22.pdf

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Thank you,
Kayla

For your reading convenience, I have condensed my testimony into a bulleted format.

Schools are not ready to reopen. Here's why (from the perspective of a high school student):

Inconsistency between schools

- Kaimuki Middle said they were not offering distance learning options
- Leilehua is offering a no-teacher canned program
- Kalani has not come out with a plan
- These are just 3 examples and they're all so far from each other— there's no consistency and an overall lack of consensus across the board. The absence of a central plan shows a lack of leadership and responsibility coming from the state and will only lead to further confusion for schools, parents, and students.

Unnecessarily risking family members

- A 2009 report released by the DOH Executive Office on Aging said that 49,247 grandparents live in the same household as their grandchildren (<https://health.hawaii.gov/eoa/files/2013/07/GRG09.pdf>)
- The previous point does not even account for family members who are immunocompromised or have respiratory issues
- While young students may bounce back from contracting COVID-19, bringing it home could leave their family members seriously ill, with lasting health repercussions, or dead.
- What student wants that on their conscience?

Possible Solutions

- Obviously, not all students have access to adequate technology for distance learning. Schools could:
 - Provide laptops to students who demonstrate need
 - Have in-person learning for certain students
 - If everyone who is able to do distance learning stays home, that decreases the number of bodies in a classroom, making it safer for those who have to be there
- Communicate with parents AND students
 - Through online discussion, it has become abundantly clear that only a portion of parents were surveyed regarding which type of learning they prefer
 - Since March, I have received *zero* communication directly from my school
 - Reaching out to ask parents and students who can stay home and do distance learning will help create a more open environment in which everyone is on the same page

I thank you for your time and respect the BOE for their work during these uncertain times. However, I believe that more can and needs to be done to ensure the safety of our schools and communities.

Testimony BOE

From: Taryn D <808dobies@gmail.com> on behalf of Taryn D
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action Item H

Hello,

My name is Taryn Decker, I am a teacher at Pu'u Kukui Elementary School on Maui. I am writing on delaying the opening of schools.

Let me begin by saying that I am horribly terrified about the reopening of schools. I would love to find a different career, which won't happen - not during the downturn in the economy. So that means that I have to (maybe literally) bite the bullet, and return to a not well thought through "plan" by the BOE and State, because you all feel that schools/teachers need to reopen to help the economy. Maybe the employers should be thinking how they can help their employees, by providing childcare?

During these past months of being in self-isolation, what plans were you creating to safely ensure that schools may reopen? From my perspective, it doesn't look like much. I've read that certain parties are not keeping to their end of the agreement with HSTA. That is a shame. What happened to "in good faith"? Just goes to show how people in higher places feel about teachers and the keiki. We are just pawns, who get the short end of the stick. I know that my administrators are working diligently on plans, and re-working plans when things change. I can honestly say that we all feel things are being rushed. STOP! Truly think about what you are asking. Is it worth a life? Do you have children/grandchildren who attend public school? Can you truthfully tell me that you feel 100% unbothered with sending your child/grandchild to school? What will happen when the tourists return? I am pretty sure that the numbers will spike. A lot of families work in the hotel industry and will come into contact with someone who may be sick or asymptomatic. I teach Kindergarten, how will physical distancing work? I'll have to figure out how to console a child from 6 feet away or when they decide to run, because they have never been in a classroom setting or been away from their parents, should I just let them go? There are still so many questions and either not enough or no answers.

I have a toddler to care for and a mortgage, I need to work, but not at the cost of what you are asking. I am deathly scared that I, my husband (who is also a teacher), or my son may bring home COVID-19. How will you handle that? What is the plan when a staff member, student, or a family member contracts COVID? Close the school(s)? Isolate the person? What is the PLAN? Or is it, we'll just wait till there's a death and then we'll act? I do not want to live with knowing that something could have been prevented with better planning. Do you?

I viewed Superintendent Kishimoto's video and here are some of my take-aways. She likens schools reopening to other industries (ex. grocery stores), we are NOT other industries! Consumers go into a grocery store and may spend 30-60 minutes in the area, (they are most likely wearing a mask and physical distancing). We are spending 6+ hours in a room (that may not be well ventilated) with children (who may play with their mask, who don't quite understand what physical distancing is). She is asking teachers to do our part, and at the moment that feels like babysitting, so that their parents may return to work. Also, there was a comment of great sacrifice, and would that sacrifice be a life, who's? Please, don't let it get to that point!

I IMPORE you, think, and then re-think about reopening the schools at a later date. Give the teachers, staff and administrators time to receive training, preparing for students face-to-face, and fully grasp what it is that you are asking. Again, there are too many unknowns. Help us to better understand these uncertain times and more importantly - help to keep EVERYONE SAFE!

Mahalo,
Taryn Decker
Kindergarten Teacher
Pu'u Kukui Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rockne Marino <rock.pohaku@gmail.com> on behalf of Rockne Marino
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay

Aloha,

As a parent and teacher I believe that we need to delay reopening schools indefinitely. We see many examples of schools and other venues around the country and even here in Hawaii reopening while this Pandemic is still in full force, with no vaccine, and how major outbreaks have occurred. Covid-19 is just as contagious and deadly as it was in March. The only difference between then and now is we have more cases than ever before and the rate of infected is higher than ever before. Yes everyone is struggling financially and our economy is suffering badly but it is not worth the death and suffering that is imminent when schools reopen. Really ask yourself these simple questions.

1. Is it possible to follow CDC social distancing guidelines in the classroom? Cafeteria? School Bus? Football field?
2. If a student or staff member contracts Covid-19 who will need to quarantine? That students classmates? Instructors? In middle school/high school students have 6 periods, will everyone that students has classes with quarantine?
3. If a teacher contracts Covid-19 will they be paid for the entirety of their illness? What if someone in a teacher or students family gets sick, will they all have to stay home?

The questions are endless and currently the answers are insufficient or nonexistent. Do not send students and teachers back to school just for cases to spike and for you to shutdown the schools 2 to 4 weeks later.

Mahalo,
Rockne Marino

Testimony BOE

From: Heidi Strike <heidistrike@gmail.com> on behalf of Heidi Strike
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for teacher differentials

Aloha,

My name is Heidi Strike and I am a Special Education teacher at Kalihi Elementary School. I am writing to urge you to oppose the motion to temporarily discontinue the funding for teacher shortage differentials. This is in regards to the BOE General Board Meeting ACtion Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuation of extra compensation for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators in hard-to-staff schools for the 2020-2021 school year. These pay differentials are not only about supporting our educators, but also supporting our keiki and the community. Data has shown that the differentials were effective in filling vacancies and retaining teachers in these shortage areas. This means that we are directly supporting our most vulnerable keiki as well by making sure they have qualified teachers in the areas of need. With school closures due to COVID-19 pandemic, we know that these are the students that are disadvantaged the most, and their educators are working more tirelessly than ever to make sure that they are reaching all of their students and keeping them safe. With schools set to reopen in less than two weeks, I know I am not alone in preparing to buy more supplies than usual for my incoming students to keep our classroom clean and safe. Now is not the time to take this support away from our educators and our keiki.

Additionally, one of the reasons for discontinuing the differentials was stated that "these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus... [which] has severely curtailed economic activity in the state." However, by continuing to provide this compensation to educators, it will actually benefit the economy, as it will likely go directly back into our communities. Extra sets of materials such as white boards and markers, sensory bins, and tactile learning objects are needed in my special education classroom this year, as students will not be able to share the classroom supplies that I currently have. All of these items can be bought at stores in my community and can help our economy recover. Cutting more paychecks right now will only harm our economy, rather than support it.

I encourage you to consider these factors when voting at the meeting, and I hope you will see the great benefits that come from compensating special educators like myself appropriately. For our keiki, our educators, and our community, please reject the proposal to temporarily discontinue the differentials.

Mahalo,
Heidi Strike

Testimony BOE

From: Michelle n Mark Takahashi <5mztakaz.mt@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle n Mark Takahashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Returning back to school concerns....

Aloha I am a health Aide and many of us are very concerned! We have not gone thru any training as of today. A virtual one is coming up a week from opening of school. I am hoping that the school has the necessary supplies already and not relying on us health aides to do all the ordering upon return to school. Many of the staff do not understand what we go through and many assume we just sit and wait for students to arrive. Now with covid I am hoping that we SHA's will not be bombarded with extra duties and then our rooms many of us our rooms are small. Where are we to separate the sick from the injured, and so on. I heard they will need to find somewhere, but where? When your office is so big and all rooms are occupied, how am I to separate myself into 2 areas and care for these children. I know admin is to help but at times admin is so busy, counselors are busy and many of us deal with a full room of kids with various need/concerns. Admin has discussed doing temp checks on all students arriving to school, and many people are going to be designated to check. Sounds great but it is a large campus and kids come from many directions. Then you have teachers that any cough or sneeze or if looks odd etc etc kids get sent to me for any little thing. When I confirm no fever and talk with parent they say it is allergies and I send student back I get a complaint from teacher and says will seek admin to protocols. How will we get protected on situations as that? Plus I am not looking forward to dealing with parents that will be overly protective and those who complain about many things and those demanding kids cannot wear mask, medical excuses etc etc etc. I have so many scenerios that flood my brain and it is leaving me very anxious and stressed. I know I am not alone, don't get me wrong I am grateful school is starting wish it was back to normal. Just the unexpected and all that will be dumped on us health aides when many of us do not have great support or understanding as it is. Thank you for your time my husband has insisted I get my words out for been suffering with headaches and anxiety lately. He feels would make some difference and I know I am not alone. I appreciate everyone and pray for everyone too, this has been a very stressed filled time for all.

Thank you and wishing you a safe, healthy and better days ahead.☺

Testimony BOE

From: Barbara Oura Tavares <barbara.oura_tavares@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Barbara Oura Tavares
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of Schools
Attachments: Lihikai Concerns for BOE (1).pdf

Dear BOE members,

As Lihikai Elementary School Administrators, we respectfully submit our written testimony for your consideration during your board meeting on Thursday, July 23, 2020. Our document is attached.

Thank you,

Barbara Oura Tavares
Principal
Lihikai Elementary School
335 S. Papa Avenue; Kahului, HI 96732
Phone: 808.727.4500

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Lihikai Elementary School Administration
Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui Complex Area**

July 21, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

We submit this testimony to the BOE for consideration as administrators who have made every good faith effort to reopen our school. We collectively agree that it would be a critical error to move forward without voicing our concerns regarding reopening our schools. The health and safety of our students, staff and community is at risk and failure to address these concerns may result in grave consequences.

As Lihikai Elementary School Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHAs, Cafeteria and Office staff have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. There is still no guidance and documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides)
- We are not fully equipped with PPEs for all students, faculty and staff.
- We are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc., due to a shortage of inventory and/or a delay in shipping because of the volume of requests from a variety of entities, organizations. Priority is being given to medical institutions.
- We are not able to limit the points of entry to campus leading to an inability to monitor or screen for student illness upon entry to campus. Also, this does not enable us to keep the campus as a “school bubble” and keep outsiders from coming onto the campus unannounced.
- DOE continues to provide all training and meetings virtually yet claims that it is “safe” for students to be present in large groups on school campuses.
 - Educational Leadership Institute was held completely virtually on 7/21/20.

Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns:

- Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online. We are expected to train them over the 9 days of half day instruction, which is not an effective way of preparing them, nor will we have their full attention given their need to prepare for the next day of instruction. The State DOE has provided three online PD trainings, two sessions each for the entire state. This is absolutely inadequate and is another reason for their inadequate readiness.
- Teachers have not been provided adequate time to plan and prepare for online delivery of instruction.
- Inadequate time has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.

- No training or funding has been offered for classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.
- Substitute teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online.
- Inadequate number of devices available to ensure all students have both internet access and a device to access online instruction.
- Inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding online delivery of instruction.

Personnel Concerns:

- Lack of qualified teachers - health and safety concerns have resulted in “at risk” teachers choosing to take leave.
 - When teachers, administrators and other staff members become ill we will not have the workforce to function
- Lack of substitute teachers - we have a lack of substitute teachers without a pandemic; now we have a lack of substitutes who are also untrained and may not have the ability to deliver distance instruction. Furthermore, we do not have enough devices or funding to provide each substitute teacher with a computer to use.
- Lack of substitute paraprofessionals.
- Lack of substitute custodians/room cleaners.
- We are required to submit a Request to Fill a Vacant Position (non-teacher). There is no timeline for a request to be processed and some of these vacancies are essential to our ability to provide a safe environment (i.e. custodians, school health aide, cafeteria managers and workers).

Food Service Concerns:

- Inadequate space to allow students to eat in the cafeteria’s dining room with appropriate distancing.
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- Inability to provide “offer vs. serve” to students.
- Students who receive free and reduced lunch who are receiving instruction online will likely not be able to eat.

Student Transportation Concerns:

- Online system has just opened and many students have not been able to apply.
- There isn’t a process for tracing which students ride the bus on a given day and route.
- The transportation guidelines allowing two (2) students per seat defeats the purpose of all efforts to maintain social distancing.
- Bus drivers can offer a mask to students but they are not required to wear the mask.

Guidance is Requested Regarding:

- Liability concerns
 - Student safety and wellbeing in the home while receiving online instruction.
 - Online activity while “in class”.
 - Offline activity while “in class”.
 - Student injury while completing learning activities “unsupervised”.
- Chapter 19 reporting/enforcement
 - How to verify if students are “in class” when violations occur.
 - No training has been provided to adhere to Chapter 19 guidelines via distance learning.
- Special Education Services
 - What is considered direct instruction online for service minutes?

- If parents choose distance learning is it considered a declination of FAPE?
- How are students “included” if they are attending class live while the general education population is receiving instruction online?
- How is compensatory education need determined?
- How is compensatory education delivered?
- How is compensatory education documented?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that we are being forced to reopen schools on August 4, 2020 with minimal support and without answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. Like everyone else, we want schools to reopen; education is an essential catalyst in developing our children. Educators must be able to work and students must be able to learn in a safe environment if we expect to provide them not just conditions to learn, but to inspire them to have hope, dream and thrive. Their future, our future and our State’s future relies on this. Therefore, we respectfully request that the reopening of schools be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and better readiness. It is also our hope that guidance can be provided for the numerous questions that have not been answered or clarify ambiguous responses so that all 256+ schools in Hawaii can be unified in our efforts to provide a safe learning environment. This would be a critical launching point for us to truly Give Hope, Act with Kindness and Work Toward Togetherness across Hawaii.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lihikai Elementary School Administrators

Barbara Oura Tavares, Principal
Reid Fukushima, Vice Principal
Karen Wright, Vice Principal

Testimony BOE

From: gee sak <geesak76@gmail.com> on behalf of gee sak
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern, our teachers are the ones that need to work with our children and we need to do what is the most safest and effective way for both. As a parent I am not comfortable with sending my kids back. Yes they need there education and I do fear what time has been missed in learning for my kids. If we can do online the whole time our teachers will not be exposed and our kids will still get to learn. Covid cases have been higher then what it was when the schools closed so why risk exposure now? I feel if the teachers aren't comfortable our kids won't get the best education. They also won't feel the aloha from our teachers. These are new times and we need to evolve.
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Crystal Peralta <crystalperalta808@gmail.com> on behalf of Crystal Peralta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good Morning!

My name is Crystal Peralta, Special Education Teacher at August Ahrens Elementary School in Waipahu, Hawaii.

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I strongly urge the Board of Education to not discontinue the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs as teachers we will see a huge decline in our public school system. We cannot allow this to happen during this difficult time as our keiki in these areas will suffer. We will have less qualified teachers to teach our students and if you don't continue the extra compensation, there may be teachers that will be forced to retire or even find another profession.

As a special education teacher, I spend a lot of time prepping for Re-Evaluation Mtgs., Eligibility Mtgs, IEP Mtgs., and planning for specially designed instruction to meet the different needs of my students. I may also have to be planning for distance learning if my parents/families of students with special needs want distance learning vs face-to-face learning in which may be a challenge.

It takes a lot of passion, hard work, dedication, patience, and understanding to teach students with special needs and to work with families with children with special needs.

In closing, I urge you to not discontinue the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs. Our keiki deserve to be taught by qualified teachers that deserve this extra compensation.

Thank you for your time and understanding,
Crystal Peralta

Testimony BOE

From: Emily Urbach <emilygale08@gmail.com> on behalf of Emily Urbach
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony for July 23

Dear Hawaii BOE,

Please reconsider any plans to cut teacher's pay via the shortage differentials. We are planning to go back to school in one week under hazard conditions with a teacher shortage already in place. A reduction in teachers' salaries would devastate Hawaii's public schools. We're hearing from our veteran educators that they would retire, and from our new and experienced teachers who would be forced to leave the profession. Hawaii currently suffers one of the worst teacher shortages in the country with more than 1,000 classrooms lacking a qualified teacher. If your salary cuts are implemented, Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis will only get worse.

As leaders, we urge you to consider the following options:

- Wait for the federal government's next stimulus funding supported by President Trump and Democratic congressional leaders, which will support lost revenue for state and local governments;
- Use the \$1.1 billion in cash surplus and rainy day fund for the interim period;
- Use the \$53 million allocated to Hawaii schools and colleges under the CARES Act;
- Take advantage of the significant savings from school buildings being closed in the spring semester.

We cannot stress enough—the decisions you make in the next few days will have long-term and potentially permanent impacts for Hawaii's teachers, our keiki, and our economy. HSTA asks, on behalf of Hawaii's teachers and the keiki that we serve, that you take the right actions, and not rush immediately to the wrong ones, during this crisis.

Sincerely,

Emily Lethlean
Keonepoko Elementary
Pahoa, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Star Mullins <sidreal@hotmail.com> on behalf of Star Mullins
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE members,

I respectfully request that you delay the opening of schools to students until we have effective plans in place for ensuring the safety of students, teachers and other school staff. I am a teacher on the Big Island. I am 64 years old and have an autoimmune disease. I want to return to my classroom but I am afraid. Many of Hawaii's teachers are of retirement age and may choose to retire if they, like me, feel afraid. If this happens Hawaii schools will experience a teacher shortage far worse than the one we already have. We must have solid plans in place and make sure that schools have adequate supplies of PPE to alleviate these valid concerns. Principals should not be left on their own to figure this out.

Please recognize the gravity of this situation and make sure we are not headed into a predictable disaster. This is not a time to leave matters to chance. When schools reopen it should be after due diligence has been exercised and precautionary measures are put in place.

Respectfully,
Star Carlin

Testimony BOE

From: Raejean Gamiao <gkalea@msn.com> on behalf of Raejean Gamiao
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Raejean Gamiao. I am a 4th grade teacher at Moanalua Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees](#). I am not against the reopening of schools, nor am I against face-to-face instruction and having contact with my incoming students. What I am urging you to do is to reconsider the start date for students. If teachers are to be adequately prepared to [welcome](#) students, we need adequate time to prepare our classroom and revise our plan for curriculum and instruction. With the blended learning model, I will have face-to-face instructional time with each group (A & B) of students 2 days a week, while the remaining 3 days will be through Distance Learning. I need time with my grade level to determine the pacing of our curriculum. Giving assessments and doing hands-on activities for Science and Social Studies need to be reconsidered in how they are approached and delivered. I will need to prepare the materials that students so that students will have them readily available when they login for instruction from home. I've already gone in twice on my own time to set up my classroom to ensure physical distancing. Please keep in mind that this is voluntary, and many may not have the luxury of spending time before the Teacher Start Date of July 29 to go in due to childcare and working second jobs. I also don't feel that I have had access to adequate training as to how to engage and properly assess my students. While there have been a few trainings that have been offered, I've had a conflict in my schedule due to mentor training and other already scheduled activities. Also, unless one checks their email regular throughout their summer vacation, chances are, the email that is sent out to offer said trainings may be missed. I do recognize that the first 9 days for students will be half days of instruction so that the second half can be used for training and preparation. It is better to have training frontloaded so that we can make the necessary adjustments and modifications rather than haphazardly making them as the year is already in progress. Personally, my learning style is to learn, make plans, prepare, and execute. The first 4 days for teachers do not provide sufficient time to accomplish all that I need to do to prepare for the new learning model as well as what I do to prepare for "normal" school years. We also need time as a school to review the safety protocols and procedures in place for different scenarios. Self-care is of utmost importance before we can care for others. If we have to start the school year stressed because of the limited time we are being given to prepare for this school year, how can we remain healthy to provide quality instruction for our students. I look forward to developing our learning community and build relationships with my new group of students, but please consider pushing back the start day so that teachers and schools have more time to prepare.

Sincerely,
Raejean Gamiao

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Matthew Momohara <matthew.momohara@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Matthew Momohara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Board Action on MOU

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawai'i Board of Education and Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. My name is Matthew Momohara and I am speaking as a teacher. I teach at 'Aiea High School and have been teaching in Hawai'i since 2004.

I would consider myself a very passionate teacher like many of my colleagues. I taught band for over ten years which included marching band. That means attending all of the football games and all of the marching events that come with a school with a marching band program. After that many years of marching band, my health took a very hard hit that led to two major surgeries. In addition to that I am also asthmatic and have been since an early age. Given all this I am medically a high-risk individual.

As a teacher, I miss my students and miss having the interactions with them that makes teaching so special. However, where we are as a nation and as a people of Earth, we have never been in this situation. It is highly ignorant to think that if we move forward with the reopening of schools nothing will happen. Is our country waiting for the first student or teacher related death due to classroom exposure? Do we as a state need to wait for that to happen? Three feet distancing will not help, six feet may help, but only if class sizes are within a certain range. We know that we have a teacher shortage here in Hawai'i and we know that because of this, class sizes across the state are in the high twenty to mid thirty sizes. We know that Hawai'i classrooms are smaller than our mainland counterpart classes. We also know that the majority of classrooms in Hawaii do not have air conditioning in their classrooms. So with the possible reopening of school in August (during summer), teachers in classrooms who probably have fans to help with the summer heat, due to COVID-19 being airborne, will not be able to use their fans in class potentially making breathing more difficult for students/teachers with respiratory problems.

The DOE has not given any guidelines as to how we as teachers can protect not only ourselves but also our students. Are we as teachers allowed/able to check the temperatures of our students? Are teachers being given adequate time to clean their classrooms between classes? I teach ukulele and have one set of instruments for all of my students. Is the DOE providing the necessary materials for me to sanitize each instrument after each class?

There are clearly more questions unanswered than reasonable guidelines being put out that make sense and take into account the health risks on both the student and teacher.

Local news keeps pointing out that as a state we have the lowest recorded cases. Despite Hawai'i having the lowest recorded cases, new cases have been rising as of recent and I fear that those numbers will continue to rise as more and more locations/businesses reopen. The biggest question I ask myself everyday...why did the state go into quarantine back in March and now we are looking at reopening not only more businesses but also all of our public schools when as a state we are recording our highest reported cases since we went into quarantine? What happened to the DOE not reopening schools until we have four weeks of no new cases? I thought that was a great step to take. As a state, because we have all of these unique situations to our students and teachers, should we not be proactive in looking at a plan that will fit and benefit everyone?

Sincerely,

Matthew Momohara

--

Matthew Momohara
Aiea High School Fine Arts
98-1276 Ulune St.
Aiea, HI 96701
808-305-6494

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Testimony BOE

From: Rayce Tamanaha <rtamanaha@wahiawamiddle.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rayce Tamanaha
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: clip_image001.png; Untitled attachment 03262.html; clip_image002.png; Untitled attachment 03265.html; Testimonial .docx; Untitled attachment 03268.html

Name: Rayce Tamanaha
Meeting: 7/23/2020
Agenda item: School Reopening Dates
Position: Extend School Reopening Date

Aloha Dr. Kishimoto and the Board of Education,

My name is Rayce Tamanaha, and I'm currently employed under the Department of Education as a 6th grade special education teacher at Wahiawa Middle School. **I'm writing to testify on behalf of our schools current reopening dates and offer suggestions on ways to ease a safer transition.**

Currently, our school has opted for asynchronous learning, through a 2-track schedule. Our administrators are working to ensure 6 feet distancing, as well as, a mask mandate in the classroom. I was pleased to read about these current updates to the reopening plan, and I fully support the allocation of school nurses and PPE to public schools. Mahalo for your work in these areas.

However, I'm concerned about the **sustainability and scope** of these services. Our staff has been offered masks, face shields and sanitizer; but we don't have an adequate back-up supply for students. Mutual mask wearing is key to containing a virus, and schools need replenishable PPE for teachers and students in order to safely reopen. Iolani and Punahou has provided each student with face shields and masks, in order to allow for hybrid learning. I understand that these are private schools with benefactors, but these are the safety standards that must be upheld in order to offer a similar education. Healthcare professionals also play a large role in educating schools about safe practices. Nurses are valuable assets to the team, if they can work closely with the community. The Mililani-Leilehua-Waialua Complex is home to 20 schools; easily comprising of over 15,000 students and staff. One nurse, despite their skills, cannot confidently ensure the safety of every member of this complex. Hospitals themselves consider a 1:1 or 1:2 patient to nurse ratio as best practices. These measures are a step in the right direction, they matter, but they are not enough to ensure the safe reopening of schools.

It's time to deliberate, and consider other avenues for providing education.

On July 20, 2020, Harvard public health experts issued guidance for their thoughts on the reopening of schools. Their advice emphasizes the importance of a continued education alongside priorities and steps to “Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning.”

The pictures below indicates the risk levels for each county in relation to reopening schools. **Oahu is in the “yellow risk” category.** The chart corresponds to the priorities that should be addressed, in accordance to the colored risk level.

Rayce Tamanaha
95-180 Hokuula Pl
Mililani, HI 96789

Aloha Dr. Kishimoto and the Board of Education,

My name is Rayce Tamanaha, and I'm currently employed under the Department of Education as a 6th grade special education teacher at Wahiawa Middle School. **I'm writing to testify on behalf of our schools current reopening dates and offer suggestions on ways to ease a safer transition.**

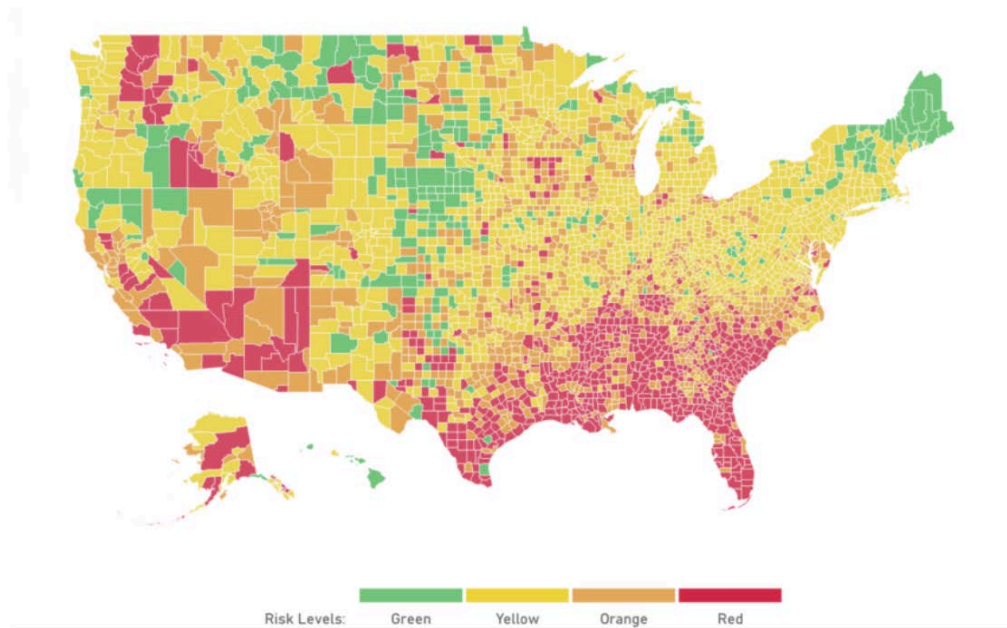
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The pictures below indicates the risk levels for each county in relation to reopening schools. **Oahu is in the "yellow risk" category.** The chart corresponds to the priorities that should be addressed, in accordance to the colored risk level.



Risk Levels	Strategy for Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning
Red	Stay-at-home orders in place; all learning remote for all learners; districts, states, and federal government invests in remote learning.
Orange	<p>1st priority for re-opening: Grades preK-5 and in-person special education services at grade levels preK-8 open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms; in the absence of conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces, schools continue with remote learning.</p> <p>2nd priority for re-opening: Grades 6-8 and in-person special education services at grade levels 9-12 open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms; in the absence of conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces, schools continue with remote learning.</p> <p>Not a priority for re-opening: Grades 9-12 maintain remote learning for all learners; districts, states, and federal government invest in remote learning.</p>
Yellow	<p>1st priority for re-opening: Grades preK-5 and in-person special education services at grade levels preK-8 open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms; in the absence of conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces, schools continue with remote learning.</p> <p>2nd priority for re-opening: Grades 6-8 and in-person special education services at grade levels 9-12 open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms; in the absence of conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces, schools continue with remote learning. In-person opportunities for special needs students at grade-levels preK-8 are also included.</p> <p>3rd priority for re-opening: If sufficient pandemic resilient learning space is available AFTER allocation to K-8, grades 9-12 open on a hybrid schedule, with only a subset of students on campus at any particular point of time to facilitate de-densification; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms AND in remote learning.</p>
Green	All schools open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms

According to these figures, Oahu should prioritize the safe reopening of **elementary schools and SPED services first**. Meanwhile, our state and district can be planning the safe reopening of larger classrooms and spaces. Dr. Ashish Jha, the director of Harvard Global Health institute, stated that “we can reopen schools in yellow counties, but getting them to green level first, will make reopening much safer.” In a later statement, he mentioned that “these efforts alone will not be enough. School districts have neither the resources nor the know-how to get their buildings ready to open safely.”

This statement holds true for Wahiawa Middle School and many alike. The task of reopening at a large scale with the time given, has left many gaps in school-wide planning. Wahiawa Middle School recruits 30% of it’s teacher from Teach for America, but besides them, the majority of our staff are veteran educators in the high-risk category. As providers, we understand that it’s our job to “educate the youth,” but many have felt so much unease, that they plan to leave the profession all together. Last night, at 10:07 PM, our registrar sent out an email stating the following:

“I understand that there are stakeholders in the COVID master schedule that really angers people.”

“There are people helping to build the master schedule for this new era when registrars across the state are figuring out how to finish schedules when they’re had to re-do it so many times for a **very short period** of time.”

“There are people who have tried to build a master schedule according to distancing since the re-negotiation between the state and HSTA who **greatly reduced the time I needed** over the summer to do withdrawals, promotions from summer school, enrollments, fixing credits and transcripts, etc.”

“NOBODY likes anything & at this time, I nor anyone else can appease everyone in this time constraint that I have. No secondary registrar is resting on their you know what.”

After closely reading this email, anyone can see that our schools are asking for more time. Our administrators have prioritized deadlines for schedules and tracks, but haven’t had adequate planning space to deliberate details and test current resources. These details are vital to ensuring a safe return to schools. As you stated, “we need to work together,” and schools are trying our best to do so. However, we need to let our teachers know that we see them, we care about them, and we will work to protect them. In the classroom, when the most “at risk child” starts throwing a tantrum, we comfort them and help them meet their needs; it’d be negligent to let them continue on. The same should be applied to all humans. **Our teachers and school administrators are asking for more time, specified safety protocols, and options for distance learning.** Let’s do our best to hear them out.

So how do we can we ensure safe environments, while allowing schools more time to plan?

Referring back to Harvard’s plan for “Pandemic Resilient Learning,” our first priority should be the following:

“Grades preK-5 and in-person special education services at grade levels preK-8 open if conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces can be achieved at scale; districts, states, and federal government invest in healthy buildings and healthy classrooms; in the absence of conditions for pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces, schools continue with remote learning.”

Rather than focusing on the mass reopening of all schools, it'd be beneficial to focus on the **most vulnerable students first (i.e. younger children who may not be able to properly engage in distance learning; SPED students who require accommodations)**. States, districts and schools should have enough resources to ensure a pandemic resilient environments for small-scale reopening, including: “healthy buildings with enhanced outdoor air ventilation and upgraded filtration... sanitation resources, hygiene practices, pandemic resilient bathrooms, physical and group distancing, and legibility of spaces (through signage and other spatial markers) so that behavior protocols in particular spaces align with the appropriate risk mitigation actions (e.g. always needing to wear a mask in hallways despite being able sometimes to have masking breaks in classrooms during reading time).”

With less students learning in-person, high-risk teachers can participate in distancing learning, while voluntary, low-risk teachers occupy the front lines. In this situation, **it'd be beneficial to offer hazard-pay or SPED differentials to those teachers educating in classrooms**. Meanwhile, school administrators would have extra time to facilitate professional development and finalize safety plans. According to Harvard's reopening guidelines, “districts will need to map out the increased square footage per learner that they would need to keep each school open if at a yellow or orange risk level...In other words, decisions about grouping and teaming practices affect calculations of what the necessary increased square footage per learner needs to be. This mapping also requires an incremental analysis of the stock to **identify within each school building what level of risk different spatial components introduce** (hallways, classrooms, and convening spaces will bring different levels of risk), **what degree of adaptation would be needed to make the space safely usable, and what the maximum learner and educator/staff capacity in the learning space would be**. Achieving maximum physical distancing and healthy ventilation and filtration are a top priority.” These are time consuming procedures that require accuracy and efficiency. Wahiawa Middle School has not had the time to carry out these procedures thoroughly, but the following plan could allow for such changes.

All of the above details are necessary for a safe reopening, and time is our most valuable resource in meeting those standards.

While we are planning for a safe reopening, the remainder of students are still able to access a quality education online. Currently, a few students at Wahiawa Middle School have opted for the fully-online pathway provided by the state. If we already have a curriculum, we'd be able to offer this avenue for all students. High-risk teachers could facilitate and engage students in this curriculum through online modalities, as well. Additionally, Shardha Jogee, a professor and mother, submitted an insightful editorial to the New York Times about the prospect of **“Safe Centers for Online Learning.”** Using this model, schools would be able to offer large spaces,

such as auditoriums, fields, and cafeterias to students without favorable learning environments at home. **Teachers would then be able to offer help in-person, but would assume the role of a facilitator rather than educator.** During summer school, Wahiawa used a similar model for the 50 students in our credit recovery program. For students who struggle with resiliency, this model was very beneficial. Furthermore, summer schoolteachers felt protected and at ease to facilitate learning.

I understand that these are not concrete solutions, and there are many gaps to my reasoning as well. However, I hope that you consider some of these options, and understand that our current plan is not allowing for the maximum pandemic resiliency that our students and teachers deserve. **If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out at (808)-344-3878 or 20305083@k12.hi.us.**

Mahalo for your work, for your commitment to education, and for your consideration of our voices.

Best,
Rayce Tamanaha

Resources

https://globalepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/pandemic_resilient_schools_briefing_72020.pdf

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/opinion/coronavirus-reopen-schools-economy.html>

Testimony BOE

From: Kelcy Koga <kelcy.koga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelcy Koga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: HW Concerns.pdf

Written Testimony attached on behalf of Hilo/Waiakea Complex Educational Officers regarding the opening of public schools on August 4, 2020

General Business Board Meeting - July 23, 2020

Agenda Item: Opening of Public Schools

Position: Oppose



Mr. Kelcy Koga
Principal, Waiakea High School
155 W. Kawili St., Hilo, HI. 96720
(808)974-4888

#WaiakeaWarriorStrong

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STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Hawaii State Board of Education Testimony by
Hilo - Waiakea Complex Area Educational Officers**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although we are expected to be “good soldiers” who follow directives, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we continue to have in regards to the reopening of our schools. The depth of these concerns keep us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities in our hands.

The perception of many is that schools have had the entire summer to prepare for the opening of a new school year. Unfortunately, that is not accurate. During normal times, the months of June and July are enough to prepare for the opening of a new year. However, we are not operating in “normal times”. School administrators have worked tirelessly to close the 2019-20 school year with selected essential workers and we were not allowed on campus until June 1, 2020. We also planned, opened, monitored/tracked Summer Learning Hubs for students, and worked alone to open a new year under the umbrella of COVID with confusing and contradicting guidance. This has been no easy task for any of the Principals in the field.

Opening a new school year requires many school level stakeholders, such as classroom teachers, educational assistants, school health assistants, custodians, office staff, cafeteria workers and so much more. As of today, custodians and office staff are the only two role groups on campus. Adjustments have not been made to start dates for teachers, educational assistants, school health assistants, and the cafeteria managers who do not report until a few days before students. Time to plan with and train these critical role groups prior to the return of students is crucial for a safe reopening. That time has not been afforded to school administrators, in spite of our repeated requests.

Please understand that there is no disputing the need to open schools. We wholeheartedly agree with the return of students and staff to a school environment; however, it is our duty to ensure that the environment and all individuals in it are prepared. Our request is for time.

As Hilo/Waiakea Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern. These concerns align with the four (4) priority areas you designated as a Board.

Health and Safety of our Students and Staff

- Funding was provided to purchase cleaning and PPE supplies, however due to supply and demand issues, schools are left wanting.
- Schools are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc. Although supplies were ordered back in March, many schools have not received their supplies. For schools who do not have supplies to start the school year, there are no assurances that they will be able to order and receive supplies in a timely manner.
- Schools are not fully equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all students, faculty and staff. Additionally, the Department's estimates and guidance on quantity does not align with Principals' assessment of what is needed on campus. To date adjustments and answers to questions along these lines have not been provided by State Leadership.
- Custodians, School Health Aides, Cafeteria, Clerical Staff, Educational Assistants, and School Security Attendants have not received appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures and many employees in these areas do not return to work until July 30th. Principals are pulling information from the CDC website. When is the Department's Safety Division scheduling safety, cleaning, and disinfecting training?
- Written guidance on procedures and documentation has not been provided by the Department of Health, Public Health Nurses, etc for our School Health Aides (SHAs) specific to new Health Room protocols in the areas of safety, cleaning, and disinfecting.
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing processes and forms that we will be submitting, questionnaires and surveys, and protocols we could be required to implement. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult "bubbles", including bus transportation, should the DOH ask for specific information.
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of school operations with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, custodians, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom do not report until students do. In a typical school year, opening and training everyone with compliance training and setting the tone for the school year takes up the entire allotted time. This year we must complete this in a virtual format, with a compressed leadup, utilizing inconsistent information, with no additional time allotted to train our faculty and staff who are scared and returning from a complete school system shutdown.
- How to properly train substitutes(certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them? How are they compensated?
- Schools need guidance on cleaning/disinfecting between classes at the secondary level when students move from one class to the next.
- The Principal's Handbook V.2 section on "Contingency Planning - Cases of COVID-19"

on page 25 states: "When a student or employee either tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact or household member to someone who has tested positive, please refer to the Health and Safety Handbook for further guidance on next steps and cleaning protocols." When clicking on the link, Administrators must enter their intranet passwords and then are asked a question in big letters saying "Let us know why you need access to this information". It is clear in BOE resolutions regarding the reopening of schools that these policies and procedures must be clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

- OTM - The Office of Talent Management has not clarified and trained SASAs on personnel issues (Certificated & Classified) that will result from COVID-19 related leave requests and possible school closures. (e.g. SASA Academy update or CABM training)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone that has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.) is needed.
- Expected training for the first nine days for teachers was never clarified or shared. Is each school going to decide what training will be covered in the first nine days?

Access to Devices and Connectivity

- Schools lack mifi devices/hotspots to ensure equitable internet access for all students (NOTE: many communities lack cellular coverage to ensure mifi devices/hotspots work).
- Schools lack devices to ensure equitable access to distance learning platforms. For example, summer learning hub chromebooks were delivered to the school during the last week of the summer learning by the Office of Information Technology Services(OITS). Schools were tasked with inventorying these chromebooks and disseminating to students and families.
- Schools lack the time to train students and families on how to access hotspots and chromebooks which will provide them access to distance learning content for all schools with a Blended or Hybrid model. Additionally, training is needed to access distance learning platforms and communication tools to maximize distance learning engagement for students.
- Schools lack the personnel to ensure that devices are cataloged and inventoried properly to ensure accountability.
- Schools require time and resources to properly train substitute teachers on each schools' distance learning offerings?
- Virtual learning platform training was voluntary and open to a limited number of participants thereby reducing its effectiveness for all of the teachers as a collective group. This was a teacher initiated process and not provided by the Department as professional development for all to access.
- Superintendent continues to reference distance learning training provided to teachers, all of whom are on summer vacation until July 29, 2020. Training for teachers did not occur.
- "Opt-In" form for distance learning option not officially available yet from the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID)

Priority for Vulnerable Students

- Guidance on Special Education services, transportation, IEP minutes, etc is still being

developed and requires further clarification.

- OSFSS - School Food Service has made no adjustment for “Point of Sale - POS” to accommodate for Grab n Go food pickup for students to access their Federally subsidized meals when they are not on campus for face to face learning. During Grab n Go food service (Q4 last SY) student verification is completed by an Administrator and lists are completed by a meal ticket clerk to expedite food delivery and promote safe traffic flow. Normal POS procedures require individual student verification and account charges to occur as they would during normal cafeteria scanning, this is not possible on a public street or thoroughfare with curbside pickup.
- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the students socially distanced, how are we supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them as outlined by current school food service guidelines.
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both Face to Face and Distance Learning populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is Grab n Go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from school food service as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- OSFSS - School Food Service does not have the supplies to provide for Grab n Go packaging allocated in their current budget, this is currently being provided by WSF for schools who will be providing curbside pickup for meals. Additionally, many schools have received a reduction in Meal Ticket Clerk (MTC) hourly allocations when there exists a greater need to service students and scan in both a face to face and distance format during the school day.
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has provided little or no guidance on Health & Safety policies and procedures for those under their care during transportation to and from DOE facilities.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible back tracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route? Current procedures don't require bus riders in the morning to have a bus pass.
- Are bus drivers responsible for having a seating chart for each route to back trace any students with positive test results?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks to provide to a student who doesn't have one and is boarding?
- Busing registration will not accept payment.
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has informed us via memo that due to social distancing and lack of availability there will be no service provided in some areas, there have been no specific details provided. As there are not enough buses to accommodate ridership with social distancing guidelines will buses be reallocated to provide equitable access to those with greater distances between home and school (e.g. Increasing the miles from school calculation based on expected ridership)?

In-Person Instruction

- How do we fill instructional positions if there are no teachers and substitute teachers available when schools open and leave requests exceed the work force limits? What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teaching staff reports to school?
- Training and clarification regarding the specifics of substitute funding now residing at the

Complex Area is needed. Where is funding for substitutes coming from?

- How will we meet the need for substitute staff when our own faculty will have to take time off to watch their own children during the week, as no one has addressed this concern?
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of in-person instruction with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom work currently in inclusive co-teaching classroom settings.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4th is being forced onto us with minimal support and without the answers to questions necessary for staff training and communication members of our school communities. The many unanswered questions and concerns regarding the reopening of school definitely does not “Give Hope” to many of the DOE employees as Administrations are lacking guidance in many areas and are doing their due diligence in preparing their respective campuses. The many unanswered questions and concerns regarding the reopening of school certainly does not “Act with Kindness” to many of the DOE employees where many of them are now trying to find their own child care support. The many unanswered questions and concerns regarding the reopening of school absolutely does not demonstrate “Working Toward Togetherness” as you can see from today’s testimonies of the various school community stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. Providing schools with the answers to our questions, time to plan, and time to train our employees will support our ability to provide the products and services that our students deserve. We would like to extend an invitation to all board members to visit our campuses, examine current conditions, and help us to ensure that our schools are safe, prepared, and ready to receive children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hilo - Waiakea Complex Area Educational Officers

Hilo Complex Principals:

DeSilva Elementary - Dennis O'Brien
Ha'aheo Elementary - Jennifer Sueoka
Hilo Union - Bryan Arbles
Kapiolani Elementary - Gregg Yonemori
Kaumana Elementary - Ray Mizuba
Keaukaha Elementary - Stacey Bello
Hilo Intermediate - Heather Dansdill
Hilo High - Jasmine Urasaki

Waiakea Complex Principals:

Waiakea Elementary- Ken Watanabe
Waiakeawaena Elementary - Kasie Kaleohano
Waiakea Intermediate - Lisa Souza
Waiakea High - Kelcy Koga

Hilo/Waiakea Complex Educational Officers:

Bert Bibilone - District Educational Specialist

Tierney Barcarse - District Educational Specialist

Robin Valencia - Complex Academic Officer

Darrell Nekoba - School Renewal Specialist

Patricia Champagne - Complex Area Personnel Specialist

Keoni Inciong - District Educational Specialist

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Young <prekg2@gmail.com> on behalf of Heather Young
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for B

I am a preschool special education teacher and I am writing to you to convey my concerns with returning back to school on August 4th. I feel teachers should be given more time (paid time) to prepare their classroom and receive the proper training to keep themselves and children safe.

I agree with the following statements from HSTA. There are many unanswered points of concern. I am especially concerned with my safety and health and well being so that I do not contract COVID. I would like more guidance on how to keep preschoolers safe from getting COVID. I feel I am at high risk because naturally young children do not know or understand about social distancing and are unable to take precautions on their own.

I am concerned about military families who may/may not self quarantine and unknowingly contract and/or are asymptomatic carries of the virus. Children do not take the same precautions as adults and can easily pick up the virus. I was alarmed at the insensitiveness of Dr. Bruce Anderson regarding the health and well being of the teachers and staff as he mentioned that children are low risk to getting sick with COVID but what about the teachers?

I need time to set up my classroom properly so that it will be safe for both me and my students. This requires packing up many materials to create space for social distancing. Changing out furniture to provide distance. Clear guidelines and proof of what 6 feet physical distance between all persons (both teachers and students) look like and how it can be accommodated. My administrator says 12 students can fit in my class and I'm not sure if this will be within 6 feet distance.

Will I be expected to teach face to face AND Distance Learning for my students. What kind of case load will special educator's have with IEPs, teaching face to face and planning for distance or blended learning with out adequate prep time and training.

Can we ask parents to phone/video conference with teachers
ONLY and keep them off campus and out of our classroom?

Can the educational assistants meet the children on the curb and watch them for pick up after school?

What type of workload will I have with blended, distance and face to face teaching? Already I am expected to do IEPs on my own time. Virtual IEP meetings keep me safe but take longer to prepare for.

I agree with the following points from HSTA

When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?

What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?

What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six

feet of each other.

What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?

What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?

How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?

When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Special education teachers seem to have been given a lot more work and expectations during the covid quarantine when compared to their peers in general education therefore I feel like it is important the bonus pay continues in order to get and keep great teachers in special education. At the end of the school year 2 of our special education teachers quit due to the workload. They were both wonderful teachers and we will miss them terribly. The DOE and students are worse off by losing these teachers. It did not help that the last week of school when everyone in preschool special education was still doing IEPs (meetings and paperwork) and trying to finish our logs of the numerous times we contacted the parents or students, we saw the general education teachers posting on facebook from the beach. It also didn't help that prek special education teachers had to become care-coordinators for students in other grade levels and do all paperwork, meetings, and records for students they were not teaching or seeing as prek teachers are with their students all day, including eating lunch with them. The reason we had to be care coordinators for students not in our class is because there are not enough special education teachers and certified special education teachers always have to pick up the slack. I think without the bonuses it will be hard to hold on to and attract new certified special education teachers.

I am grateful that I have and am part of a strong teacher's union that will be there to advocate for safe working conditions, appropriate pay and then provide our right to vote to determine what the majority of educators agree to be a fair and just option.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Aloha,

Mary Jean Corpuz

Preschool Special Education Teacher

Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Hung <rachel.hung@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rachel Hung
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Starting Date

My name is Rachel Hung and I'm a teacher in the FKK complex and also a mother of a student who attends school in that same complex. I'm writing in hopes that the board will consider adjusting the in-person start date from August 4, 2020 to a later date.

As a teacher this is the first year that I'm scared to go back to school and it honestly feels more difficult and overwhelming than my first year as a teacher. The Superintendent has said that teachers are trained to handle both distance education and identifying students who may have COVID symptoms. When was this training held? I don't know what symptoms I should look for and I'm scrambling to try to figure out how to teach in two different ways (both in person per the start date and distance). My school is a middle school and we're having the students switch classes, not the teachers. So how does the "bubble" for students work? Even if you have them separated during lunch and in the classroom they have only 3 minutes to get to their next period so do you really expect students to maintain 6 feet of distance? As a teacher I now have to "look" for symptoms, but if a student sneezes does that signal to me that they might have COVID? The CDC lists allergy type symptoms as possible COVID symptoms so how will I know the difference without a temperature reading? The DOE has stated that we won't be taking temperatures because they feel the students will feel stressed. Hospitals take temperatures for all visitors, even people who are there for routine doctor visits to keep their patients and staff safe. Why can't we? My school has a student body of about 1,000 students so why don't we care about them, their families, and the teachers? Can you imagine the stress that everyone will have once someone does test positive, it's a nightmare.

As a parent, I feel this is a lose lose situation. Yes, I have to worry about childcare as I go to work to possibly get infected with COVID. But does asking family members to help watch my daughter outweigh the value of her life? She was born at 28 weeks with her lungs not fully developed, COVID doesn't care and it can kill a perfectly healthy person. Can you guarantee me that she'll only have the mild symptoms that everyone talks about? Probably not, so tell me how I should feel good about sending her to school. At home we have been following social distancing and have been careful, but we all know that not everyone does that. The number of infected people reflect something different and it really says something about how we live on Oahu since our numbers are about 10 times that of the neighbor islands.

I would feel better about going back to school if we were ACTUALLY TRAINED in how to handle COVID and precautions that we should take as teachers and members of families. Doctors and nurses go through extensive training and have the proper supplies, what do I have to work with? A bottle of Clorox wipes, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and whatever I PAY for to keep myself and my family safe. I would also like to know why the state feels safe having all the students go back at once? Why don't we start with distance learning first and progress to in-person classes? Where is the evidence that suggests opening classrooms right now without a vaccine is a good idea? Why can't we learn from New York and Italy where doctors had to see the damage that COVID can do and had to "decide" who to give a ventilator to? By opening schools to in-person interactions without the proper foundation the state is asking teachers, parents, and students to be alright infecting themselves and their families. A better question to be asked is would they be alright losing a loved one? Instead of making us participate in The Hawaii Hunger Games, please consider having teachers go through training approved by medical professionals who had to deal with COVID breakouts on a large scale and having students go back to distance learning. Why rush and make a mistake that is preventable now? No one can be brought back from the dead.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Orallo <20234246@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cheryl Orallo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Cheryl Orallo
Subject: TESTIMONY: Re-Opening of Schools to Students in August 4, 2020

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawai'i Board of Education and Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual modifications and conditions of work-related COVID-19 response for bargaining Unit 5 employees.

We CANNOT open school campuses to students on August 4th. I am writing as both an educator and a parent. I teach at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School and I have a child who is a student at Waipahu High School.

As a parent and an educator I feel it is best to start the school year with solely distance learning for students at first. Meanwhile teachers and staff can still physically report to work as we prepare our classrooms and work spaces for proper health protocols and prepare logistics and implementation of how we will execute teaching and learning during this pandemic. This does not mean that students won't start, it just means to have them start of with all distance learning first then transition to a hybrid model.

At this time we have teacher work days prior to August 4th. That preparation time is usually for NORMAL school years. We are not in normal times and need time to safely and adequately prepare to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and community.

I am unclear as to whether a distance learning option only is available. The options presented to teachers at first did not have a distance learning option only model yet parents and students can elect to not have their children come to school? I was surprised when my child's high school offered a purely distance learning option. What exactly does that look like? Being an educator does not answer the questions I have as a parent. Why not have all students do distance learning for at least a month before we reopen the school building to students. We need time to plan this all out and receive adequate training. What if the schools shut down again?

To open our schools for students present without the proper safety preparations is a recipe for disaster. Do we have plexiglass like grocery stores, banks, eateries, etc.? Will there be someone assigned to continually disinfect and wipe down surfaces through the day? Grocery stores have people assigned to just continually disinfect carts or wipe down the stores. Do we have enough PPE and sanitizing supplies for schools? Where do student go during recess and lunch? Is there enough designated areas for them to socially distance when not in class? What happens if a student or teacher gets COVID? What are the procedures? Who quarantines?

The questions can go on and on. We must remember that the LIVES and HEALTH and SAFETY of our students, teachers, and community comes first. The economy can recover. Money is

replaceable. Work is replaceable. If we lose a life and someone dies from COVID, that life cannot be replaced. We are not numbers, we are people.

Please delay the opening of school to students and have teachers only first while we distance teach and learn. It's a matter of life and death.

Thank you for your time.

Cheryl Orallo
Educator and Parent

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Testimony BOE

From: UH <ruszkows@hawaii.edu> on behalf of UH
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Hawaii Board of Education:

My name is Dr. Joseph Ruskowski and I am a teacher at Jarrett Middle and Palolo Elementary School. I am writing concerning Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I urge the Board to reconsider opening to students on August 4. In my 25 years of teaching I have always put the safety and security of my students first. I truly believe that given the current situation it is unethical to open our schools at this time.

Given the current climate, I cannot assure the complete safety of either my students, myself, or my colleagues. Until we have more scientific information on how to open our schools with the the highest levels of protection, we must remain closed to on-campus learning. As a parent of a school-age child I understand the problems inherent to this process, but I believe that we all need to make sacrifices to ensure that we open safely, without treating our students and staff as a pilot research project. We cannot and must not treat this situation as “let’s just throw them in there and see what happens”.

Spread Aloha, not the virus, and treat all of our community members with love and respect.

Yours,
Joseph Ruskowski, PhD

Testimony BOE

From: joni <kjshig@twc.com> on behalf of joni
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Gregory Jones <gregory.jones@mauihigh.org> on behalf of Gregory Jones
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: testimony from a teacher

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

I hope that all who read this are in good health.

I am a high school science teacher on Maui. I love my job and treasure the experience of witnessing students develop; I love seeing long-legged children grow into well rounded young adults as they move towards the end of their high school years... Unfortunately, one thing that consistently discourages that development is teacher turnover - sadly, people being forced to leave the state for financial reasons creates gaps in programs where students would benefit from consistency. Another thing keeps coming up that's worse; personal tragedies, losses of friends and family members, unexpected traumas make everything come to a halt. It's terrible to watch; I've seen kids forced into massive shifts away from their goals.

I'm happy with my school's plan to have the primary mode of instruction be distance learning. We will be making exemptions for students with special needs and those at risk of harm by not attending in person. However, I don't see us as ready to implement the plan, we just got confirmation that we would be doing it and now the reality sets in that we don't have a clear sense of the details, what our protocols are for hygiene, and what our reasonable interactions on campus will be and further we have just begun to engage the new curricular model based on distance learning. Worse, we don't have clear metrics on what the thresholds are at which points we will close or quarantine. We don't know what our role in monitoring student health will be. We don't know a lot about education in a pandemic except this we want to keep our families and communities safe. We want to keep our own health.

The HDOE has not made us feel confident in our ability to safely welcome children and young adults (who transmit the disease as well as adults according to recent studies) back on campuses. I am calling on you, esteemed members of the BOE to check HDOE's inappropriate and arbitrarily set student return date and postpone it until safety can reasonably be assured. That likely means a engaging a phased plan for the state to get it's epidemiological and public health house in order, provide further specific health related guidance, offer at least rudimentary teacher training and adjustment to distance teaching, student's working from home and in smaller learning communities and childcare settings in their communities and finally, when safety can be assured, a return to in person education.

To rush in will almost certainly yield a highly inconsistent and unsafe feeling experience. This will have us frustrated and at risk from the start. Teachers will retire, take leave and quit in high numbers and sadly, so will students. To have us rush in will put lives at risk unnecessarily and that, I can't even fathom. Our task is not to achieve these goals by a certain date, rather it is to see them achieved. The State of Hawai'i has work to do in order to protect public health. Rushing in person education at this time will likely cost lives and cannot be allowed. Do not force a plan that will guarantee a chaotic start and quite likely be punctuated by a tragic end.

Mahalo,

Greg Jones

On Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 11:50 AM Gregory Jones <gregory.jones@mauihigh.org> wrote:

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

Through a combination of factors, Hawai'i has been able to keep Covid 19 cases low. For one thing our state went into lockdown before community spreading took off. Now after a loosening of policies and widespread return to high contact social behaviors, there is evidence of community spread and mainland flights have begun again with plans to return to full service airtravel in August - simultaneous with school reopening. All that we've worked for in terms of keeping our community safe is in jeopardy as a result.

We now know that airborne transmission is indeed possible. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/health/239-experts-with-one-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne.html> That being said, the Memorandum of Understanding between HIDOE and HSTA must be taken into consideration and we must ask, "Does this go far enough to protect students, teachers and school staff, and parents?". Given confirmation of airborne transmission a resounding no should be expected. However, at a bare minimum, the legally binding MOU, requiring 6 ft of distancing between students must be upheld.

Now is not the time for simple thinking. The Hawai'i Board of Education has the opportunity to respond to and amplify creative, out-of-the-box solutions to the problems we face... Neither is this a time for wishful thinking; "3 feet apart facing forward, mask optional", will come back on you at the BOE in a bad way. While transmission rates may* be lower among children and from children to adults, there is no proof that suggests it is negligible, and there is evidence quite the contrary. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/10/20-2403_article?fbclid=IwAR1ugq-sXeudUL39bfrgcdcg71mjX3R1XW6D6HffluUZkYBLQ0qKacQFn5M

It is true that beyond basic education, some students need services from our school system; some of them need those services face-to-face, some do not. Vulnerable populations should be considered in terms of the needs they present. Some needs can be met by outreach. Some needs must be met on campuses. Cohorts of certain students may need special in person care; other cohorts may not. While contradicting studies treat transmission rates of SARS-CoV-2 by children, it is by no means established that they do not spread it, nor is it established what the long term effects of the virus are.

School meals must continue to be served; we know that. At risk students must continue to be served, and yes, education must continue too, but that does not mean you have any right to require teachers to work in overcrowded and therefore dangerous situations. Every point of contact must be considered a risk at this time and therefore, your job is clear: minimize that risk to students, teachers, staff, administrators and ALL of their families.

For the sake of our keiki, kupuna and kumu of all ages, focus on safety. Hawai'i can be proud of the lowest Covid-19 case numbers in the US and this is our chance to keep it that way.

Sincerely,

Greg Jones

--

Greg Jones
A-107, Science
Maui High School
660 South Lono Ave
Kahului, HI 96732
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Greg Jones
A-107, Science
Maui High School
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Testimony BOE

From: Nadine Villarmia <nadine.villarmia@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nadine Villarmia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials

Hi,

I am writing this letter to oppose continued funding for teacher shortage differentials. For one, the State at this time is not in good financial standing greatly due to the current pandemic. Secondly, I'm not sure how it was decided but I do feel that the shortage differential should be paid out differently for special education classroom teachers. Teachers with less than 5 years of teaching definitely don't deserve the same pay as someone who has been teaching special education for 15-20 plus years. I found it astounding that many brand new teachers who haven't proven anything or even paid their dues, were given the same payment. We are even rewarding low performing teachers for free! That was a waste of money! Let them work a few years to see if they would remain in special education classrooms and reward according to years of service. I was also disappointed that a few special education teachers who were NOT teaching in the classroom also received the differential payment. I thought it was for teachers actually teaching in the classroom?

I instead support the salary adjustment (when feasible for our State) for veteran teachers, we have been the ones who have persevered through educating Hawaii's keiki and have earned our pay increases. Please review how and when these differential will be paid out. Now is definitely not the time.

Thank you,
Nadine Villarmia

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Testimony BOE

From: Chelsea Mystic <chelsea.mistic@gmail.com> on behalf of Chelsea Mystic
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: POSTPONE SCHOOL OPENING

Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

Dear BOE,

As a parent and educator here on Oahu, I urge you to delay the opening of in-person school for at least a week. Shortened days for the first two weeks do not reduce exposure risk. Our principal has worked hard all summer to ensure the safety of our keiki but there are still questions and concerns left unanswered by the DOE and BOE. I understand that face to face learning is vital for students and teachers alike to form bonds and learn routines, but at what cost? Our high risk teachers, and those with high risk family members at home deserve to be heard and treated with dignity. PLEASE give them a fighting chance! We need to have a detailed plan in place should Covid-19 enter our schools. I haven't even been able to find disinfecting wipes to fulfill my own children's school supply list.

Teachers and administration are used to overcoming challenges and "moving mountains" but today those challenges could mean LIFE OR DEATH.

Please give us the time needed to keep our beloved students and families safe.

Respectfully,

Chelsea Mystic
Parent & Elementary School Teacher
Windward District

Testimony BOE

From: Nina Janson <10134836@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nina Janson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom this may concern,

I am a teacher who works at a hard-to-staff school in Waianae. I have started off at this school as a student-teacher from University of Hawaii at Manoa and currently am a tenured Kindergarten teacher with her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Education. After being at the school for 10 years, I've learned a lot and had great experiences and memories. Although I am so grateful for all my learning experiences and growth, I also feel heartbroken to have had to use my own personal money to create a fun/safe learning environment for my students. I have spent so much of my own money to buy supplies, incentives, materials for projects/activities and so forth. Getting ready for this upcoming school year and having to prep for an even more safe environment for my class due to COVID-19, I have spent even more money on my classroom. Over these years, I have been so burnt out and started to feel so exhausted about my career. However, once I heard that educators at hard-to-staff schools would be getting a better bonus, I felt so happy and appreciated. But now, this is going to be taken away from us again? I love working in the Waianae community and absolutely adore and care for the children there. But at the same time, I shouldn't have to spend so much of my personal money while I'm trying to make a living of my own. Please, don't take this bonus away from the educators at the hard-to-staff schools. We need it.

Thank you for your time.

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Testimony BOE

From: Penny Beisch <pennybeisch@icloud.com> on behalf of Penny Beisch
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Start of the School Year

Please consider that we are navigating uncharted waters for the beginning of the school year. The beginning of any year is pressed for time with many teachers working well outside their contract hours to meet the needs of their students. Now, we have to think through all of that process AND include procedures for safety and reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading. Teachers need time to absorb, ask questions, and feel confident about the additional procedures and how it affects their classrooms, as well as the campus and greater school community.

Please allow additional time for the start up of the school year during the pandemic by delaying the start of the year for students. Thank you.

Penny Beisch
EOEL Prekindergarten Teacher
Kekaha Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rani Thomas <raniibebet@gmail.com> on behalf of Rani Thomas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Good morning, my name is Rani Thomas. I am and EA (educator's assistant) at FERN elementary school and a strongly concerned mother to two beautiful girls. My youngest and upcoming second grader whom goes to waimalu elementary school and my oldest upcoming 7th grader whom will be attending Aiea intermediate school(AIS). Waimalu is requiring pre-k-gr. 2 to attend school Monday through Friday and AIS has adopted the hybrid learning of 2-3 days face to face and distance learning.

I'm writing to you today as a concerned parent first and foremost because I find myself struggling with a very uncomfortable and uneasy Feeling of the state wanting to carry through with the school's start up date of August 4, 2020. I strongly believe that delaying the start up date would be beneficial to many children with higher health risk, along with non-health risk children as well. With the covid-19 uncertainties, I am very worried because both my girls have severe asthma and with the exemptions of not wearing a mask it will not protect my child and it definitely will not protect any other children and adults as well, being in a confined classroom setting. Putting these children in jeopardy does not sound ethical to me. I strongly feel that we as a state, need to re-evaluate the decision of reopening the schools suddenly and delay the start up date until we have certainties and are stagnant with the rising numbers and dangers of covid 19.

Secondly I'd like to voice my concerns as an Educator's assistant. An EA's job description is very broad and has very little limits. As an EA I have worked with an entire classroom as many as 30 students and I have worked in many cases as a 1:1. With the social distance requirement of 6ft apart and up to 3ft apart not facing face to face in a classroom setting. With my 1:1 experiences these sensitive case students will not be able to follow/meet the distancing requirements even by the bare minimal. This concerns me most with the up close and personal teachings for these students there will be no escaping this virus for myself, my family, my students and their families if any one of us were to be exposed or were to somehow contract it from one another. These students require extra care and the proper at close range help as much as possible to give them the full Educational benefits they deserve. As a staff of the Department of Education, I strongly believe in the delay of the school's start up date until we are in the clear and are able to do our job efficiently and effectively.

Thank you,
Rani Thomas

Testimony BOE

From: findme inhawaii <iftttthawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of findme inhawaii
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to the BOE

Ken Chong
Mililani

I don't know what is the correct solution.
Let's just do/try our best.

When I was a young kid growing up, on Sundays usually our families would visit our Grandmother's house in Ewa (Honouliuli). The cousins and all would play all day and just do what kids do. I recall one day as it was near lunchtime, my Popo as we called her yelled out "What do you want for lunch?" she said aloud. And a voice replied, CHICKEN! And with a swoop later, a Rooster ran by in the back yard without a head! (no cluck-cluck here or there). Just a poof of feathers in the air. The simple point here is, let's not be a chicken without a head.

Students, school employees and our communities should not be put at risk with a rushed reopening plan. We have all seen the risk and consequences.

As we know, the COVID-19 Pandemic is an enemy like no other our world has ever encountered. It is a new experience for everyone. It puts us all in situations never imagined. We view it from different perspectives. Our level of knowledge about it varies.

1. HOW do we best approach this?
2. Are we ready?
3. How do we navigate through this?

We need a solid plan, a sheet of music we can all follow together. It needs to be constructive, positive, collaborating together and not against each other. Listening closely, Eyes opened, Communication is key. No anger, no fighting, no finger pointing etc... Simple teamwork. Yes, let's get back to some normalcy but let's be safe and well also. It's just the right thing to do. Our health is first and family. Let's be certain when the time is right.

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Bautista <jess_bautista_808@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jessica Bautista
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I have been a 5th grade teacher at Kohala Elementary School for the past 10 years. Kohala is where I was born and raised, where I went to school, and where I decided to teach, raise my family and give back to my community. It is also considered a hard to staff school.

Being from the Kohala, I feel that I am able to make connections and form strong relationships with the community, parents, and students. The pay differential has been extremely helpful in allowing my family of four to continue living and giving back to Kohala community with less of a worry of high living expenses. I would love to continue to give back to the community that gave so much to me. The pay differential would allow myself and other dedicated teachers to do the same.

Much Mahalo,

Jessica Bautista
Kohala Elementary School

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Renee Bautista <reneecbautista@gmail.com> on behalf of Renee Bautista
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Continue funding shortage differentials

Aloha,

My name is Renee Bautista. I am a Special Education Teacher at Kohala Middle School in North Kohala on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am submitting testimony in support of continue funding shortage differentials for hard to staff schools and Classroom Special Education Teachers.

I was born and raised in Kohala and I intend on raising my family here where I grew up, where I went to school, and where I graduated from. I am now an employee of of Kohala Middle School and I am proud of that. It is also considered a hard to staff school. I have two keiki's and work was working two to three jobs just to make ends meet. The pay differential has been able to help me remain in my community and provide me more time to work as a teacher not having to work extra jobs. The pay differential has been extremely helpful with my family of four to continue living and giving back to the Kohala community, with less of a worry of high living expenses. The differential is also helping me so I can permanently stay in the community where I was raised, the community I call home, and the community I love.

Mahalo,

Renee Bautista
Kohala Middle School
North Kohala, Big Island Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: James Au <auj88@yahoo.com> on behalf of James Au
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

It is clear that all of you think that all safeguards to reopen are in place. I beg to differ. There are many aspects that you have not addressed, which makes many teachers feel anxious, and this is why I'm strongly urging you to delay the reopening of schools:

1. When students are at recess and lunch, how are schools going to help them socially distance? Students are so used to sharing drinks, sharing food, look at each others' cell phones, etc. It's not an easy thing to do when students love walking the halls together, even though administration tries to corral them in certain parts of campus.
2. Who will monitor bathrooms? I cannot imagine how many people will be using bathrooms, but if someone contracts is through mere touch, how will bathrooms be cleaned often enough?
3. Has anyone considered what will happen if we do shut down again due to huge spikes in the virus? What guidance are you giving us teachers to learn about 100% virtual learning?
4. Teachers have already gone above and beyond the call of duty, yet, the salary increases by steps that we were promised were pulled back when the state quarantine took effect. How humiliating it feels that we've worked for years with no increase, then we're told we're going to be given the steps we should have earned, then pulled back, and now we're on the verge of a possible 20% pay cut.
5. What provisions are being made for high risk teachers? I am high risk not only because of my health, but also because I care for my elderly parents who are also high risk. Yet, what is being covered does not take into consideration the categories I fall under.
6. The social-emotional well-being of my students are now at risk. They will not be able to learn since they will sit in the same seats all day without having an outlet. Recess and lunch are not enough. They need to have their elective classes in which my school is abandoning to concentrate on core classes. Where's the guidance to help them get frustrations out by playing sports in PE? Where's the performance outlet through expressing themselves musically, dramatically, and dance? Where's the creative outlet through other fine arts classes that are now eliminated?
7. If you are concerned about the virus' spread, why make teachers move classrooms? Why not have one teacher on a team teach while other classes watch virtually for the whole team? Why make the teachers the fault of any cases of spreading the virus?
8. Stop talking through both sides of your mouth! On one hand the directive during this last fourth quarter stated that the work is NOT OPTIONAL. Yet, the directive to teachers was NON-GRADED. When the community of learners heard this, they automatically connected to NO-NEED-DO mode. What was the consequences of not doing the work? None. So what majority of students would do work that has no reward (grade) or consequence? Also, for half the quarter, at our school we were told to only do review work. You cannot say that virally learning didn't work when it wasn't mandatory work to get grades.

All in all, PLEASE consider planning well, allowing teachers to plan well and get training before opening up the schools. I strongly urge you to delay the reopening of schools.

Thank you for your time,

James Au
Social Studies Teacher
Wahiawa Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Owens <joshwa73@hotmail.com> on behalf of Joshua Owens
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Comments on Reopening Schools - re. Memorandum of Understanding

Aloha!

I am a special education and autism consultant resource teacher on Kauai. I have grave concerns regarding opening up schools. I taught summer extended school year and experienced the daily lack of procedural and material safeguards regarding keeping a classroom clean and able to thwart Covid-19 exposure and spread. During the regular school year I work in most of the schools on the island with students that have been offered daily in person access to an education. While this is critical, offering schooling at great personal and community risk to my health and the health of others casts doubt on conducting my job safely. Please reconsider reopening schools until the state and board of education can help schools better prepare for both Covid-19 safety and better develop and train online learning systems for our teachers, administrators and staff.

Many Thanks,
Joshua Owens
808-754-5929

Testimony BOE

From: Theresa Schubert <theresa.schubert@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Theresa Schubert
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

As an educator for the Hawai'i Department of Education for over 20 years, I am speaking through the lens of both a dual certified Secondary Special Education teacher and Student Activities Coordinator. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Our campus is not ready to open in a mere nine school days. That is not speculation, that is a fact. As a 12-month employee, I am on campus daily. I see our own staff members not properly practicing social distancing for their individual reasons (very comfortable with one another, 'I trust you', 'I can't hear you with your mask on', 'It's too hot with this mask on', 'I want to give you a hug because it's been so long since I've seen you!' and the list goes on). How do we expect our students to adhere to these simple protocols when we cannot properly adhere to them ourselves? In addition to this, it is difficult for me to trust that our campus will now have an adequate supply of basic necessities: toilet paper, hand towels, hand soap AND sanitizers and the such. Over the past 18 years of being the SAC and listening to Student Voice, via ASB and council and club meetings, why has this topic (inadequate supplies in restrooms) been on the agenda--all year--every single year since 2011? Why are we to believe that this 10 year issue will be different? I can say that the summer virtual meetings held with over 30+ student leaders were filled with these questions; they did not believe me when I read them parts of the MOU regarding health and safety. As our clients, their response was indicative of the general feeling for those who are well-versed with our campus.

Speaking of health and safety, the MOU states that we are not required to clean our classrooms, as the custodians will do so. My classroom custodian never sweeps my floors. I do it. My floor has not been waxed in years. I am really hoping that there will be a real change in the processes I have seen for the past 11 years; this is why my reality is that we are not ready. Not to say our custodians do not do their jobs--I have a great relationship with our custodial teams, as they are supporters of our Student Activities Program on campus; when we throw monthly events on campus, I train our student leaders to collaborate with our custodial staff to properly strike their event as to return the venue better than they found it. However, our custodial staff is primarily in the older demographic and a small team for a large campus. I truly hope they can adequately shoulder the burden of deep cleaning our entire 26-acre campus, twice a week. In the end, you must know that teachers WILL clean their own classrooms and WILL spend their own money on taking extra precautions for the health and safety of their own families and the children in their classrooms. This is not a 'maybe'--this is reality. My colleagues and I have been texting about deals on sanitizing wipes, sprays, sanitizers, essential oils, masks, etc. It's like we are preparing for a crisis situation. We asked questions such as: "Will we train the students how to cough/sneeze?" (no answer) "Why are we being tasked with eyeballing a student and assessing their health? We were not trained for that. Will we be held liable if we were incorrect in assessing and that one child gets the whole classroom sick?" (no solid answers that made us feel any safer) I don't know of a profession, unlike ours, that is preparing in the way that we are. I know that teaching will now become secondary, as the focus on health and well-being will be primary for many of my colleagues and me.

I am a single mother--I am the sole provider of my household. I do not live with my parents; I do not have support in the event I contract COVID-19. I have already revisited my Life Insurance policy and my Living Will. It baffles me that THIS is what thousands of teachers are dealing with--our anxiety levels are high and justifiably so. If the leadership was clear, transparent, trustworthy, on the same page, and truly focused on transitioning teachers back to school properly, I know there would be a different narrative. However, this is our reality. We are being sent into the classrooms--not you. I implore you to rethink the reality you are sending us into; creating a lengthy document outlining safety protocols is NOT enough; not when we are dealing with our lives.

I am not asking to keep schools closed; I am asking that campuses are closed until we are ready. We are ready and eager to teach--even if that looks different. We are a flexible group of professionals. I would like to end with a question, as this reminds me of a question an administrator--one whom I look up to as a mentor--used to ask our faculty every single opening of the school year--I will tweak it a bit to fit my narrative: (Given the current state of said campus) "Would you send your child to this school?"

With utmost respect and sincerity,
Theresa M. Schubert

Wallace Rider Farrington High School
Student Activities Coordinator & Leadership Trainer

"Leadership Thru' Service"

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Testimony BOE

From: Maryann A <aguimoto2011@gmail.com> on behalf of Maryann A
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying in regards to Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.**

I am license to teach special education K-12 as well as math 5th-9th grade. As a special education teacher, I am appalled at the idea to temporary discontinue compensation for special education teachers. This compensation showed special education teachers that we are valued for the addition work we must do during the school year.

I've been a special education teacher for 22 years. Over the course of my 22 years, I've seen how the responsibilities of a special education teacher have evolved in the middle school. Being the IEP care coordinator for 9-10 students requires more than what the classroom teacher is expected to do. Besides developing lesson plans, teaching, assessing, grading student work, etc., we also need to ensure:

- our students' teachers are familiar with their IEPs,
- help provide accommodations and/or modifications,
- collect and review data on students' progress,
- input for quarterly IEP progress reports (and report card grades due all at the same time),
- provided GRADE assessment prior to an annual IEP meeting,
- coordinate and conduct an observation and re-evaluation meetings,
- coordinate and conduct meetings with various IEP team members which may also include the various service providers (BHS counseling, SLP, OT, PT, etc) and at times, surrogate parent, social worker, probation officer, etc),
- the countless times making contact with home with any concerns coming from school or home
- continuous follow up with teachers, service provides and home.

A general education teacher is not required to do most of this and would also have the help of their grade level counselor to schedule meetings and help follow up with students, parents and other. As an IEP care coordinator, it is my responsibility.

When is this responsibility conducted? It must be done during the limited time that is afforded to us. Last school year, SPED teachers at my school was only given advisory which was 70 minutes a week and about 10 minutes every day since we had no homeroom. Unfortunately, I'm housed with my co-teacher that 10 minutes didn't really allow for me to make any phone calls. Most times my phone calls were well after 2:45pm. This school year homeroom is only 5 minutes every day with advisory 70 minutes twice a week with the blended schedule.

Collaboration with co-teacher for inclusion is another area our limited valuable time is used. With the district/state push for inclusion, this also requires our prep time to collaborate with our general ed teacher. My prep time is mainly used for this unless I have an IEP meeting.

During the school closure due to covid19, SPED teachers were asked to do even more than our general teachers. We were still held accountable for our sped duties but were also ask to make countless contacts for support with our families, provided modified work that could be given via email and documents them all. All these documentation (Access to Extended Opportunities, Communication Log, Letters to Parents, etc) needed to be completed and uploaded. We had to go well beyond what we would have done if schools weren't closed.

In the coming school year, in addition to what we ready will need to do should schools open, we are being TOLD that we WILL need to conduct compensatory meetings for each of the student on our case load.

If you want to keep SPED teacher positions filled, I highly recommend you not approve the temporary discontinuance extra compensation for sped teachers. If you do, I am sure you will see a large number of SPED teachers leaving, transferring to a different teaching line or retiring at the end of the school year if not during this school year.

Thank you for your time.
Maryann Aguinaldo

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Honokaa / Kohala / Kealahou / Kona Complex Area**

July 21, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although we are expected to be “good soldiers” who follow directives, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing concerns we continue to have in regards to reopening our schools. The depth of these concerns keep us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities in our hands. It is not for a lack of trying as many Principals have been working 7 days a week since March 14.

As Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern and provide reasons why more time is needed with staff prior to students starting.

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHAs, Cafeteria workers and Office Personnel have not gotten appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. (Principals are pulling information from the CDC website). Where is the department's safety division? (Where training was provided for Custodians - webinar, questions that impact shift work scheduling like anticipated time to disinfect were not addressed.)
- Still no guidance documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides)
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of students and adults “bubble”, including on the bus, in case DOH asks us for the information. Who is in charge of this?
- Ohana Bubble: How could DOH say that only one class would be shut down with a positive case? If the student came on a bus, then other classes are impacted. If the student got breakfast in the cafe, the cafe is impacted. If the bus (due to staggered schedules) did a High School route after, the High School is impacted. And I’m sure the student went to the bathroom sometime at school.....this could go on and on.

- Conflicting information about A+ and speaking of a 1 to 20 ratio of adults to students (no change than pre-covid).

Lack of PPE or supplies; lack of online devices:

- Schools not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff as we await order fulfillment.
- Schools not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, disinfecting wipes, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, sneeze guards, etc.
- PPEs sent out using outdated employee counts not reflecting current numbers / need.
- Some schools still lack enough devices and Mifis to ensure internet access for all students

Training promised has not been provided

- Expected training for the first nine days for teachers
- How to properly train substitutes (certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? Who trains them? When do they get trained? How are they compensated? Not to mention how do they play into Ohana Bubbles?
- Training on virtual learning platform
- Required teacher training / PD cannot be completed while teachers are on Summer Break, as they pointed out, they are 10 month employees.
- Request for specialized sped training for teachers and staff in which hand over hand and close contact is required - ie: Special Needs Preschool Classes has not been answered
- Distance Learning for SPED needs students...how do we support the IEP? Who does that?
- Liability concerns for Principals - Will we be held harmless? Will there be a covid waiver of sorts in opening materials?

Need guidance in....

- Personnel issues (Certificated & Classified)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone that has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- What is the contingency plan when teachers call sick or take leave to watch their own children and we have no subs? In addition, what will happen when principals and vice principals need to do the same?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- "Opt In" form for distance learning option not officially available yet
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, etc
- Waiting on SPED direction/support for families wanting to opt in to full distance option
- When and how will training be provided for those staff that are serving our most severe Special Needs students who have challenges with toileting, following safety protocols, and who may be non-communicative or medically fragile?
- Many staff members with school age children are having to find child care when their children are not in school. Some staff have shared they are exploring taking leave in order to care for their own children. State has made it clear that principals cannot use

state resources (money, facilities, staffing, etc.) to support these employees under our supervision. The only suggestion has been that we work with community groups to help coordinate for employee childcare. We need more tangible and realistic guidance from the state to keep our staff working.

- BOE requested that the DOE provide details on attendance procedures. Principals have seen a draft of another handbook regarding attendance but to this date, no final copy has been provided. How are we supposed to prepare documents to share with our school community when we don't even have final documents and teachers are scheduled to return in one week.

Food Service

- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the kids socially distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is grab n go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafes need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- How would you serve a family on a "non attendance day" meals if they have children in an elementary, middle and high school? Do they need to go to three different schools?

Student Transportation

- Busing registration will not accept payment.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible back tracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks if a student doesn't have one?
- We have been told by state officials that our bell schedules needed to fit what the bus company could provide. With the limited space and adults to supervise socially distanced children, we are no longer able to have students dropped off 30-45 minutes before school begins. There has been no confirmation from the bus companies about conforming to individual school's bell schedules. If they cannot conform to the school's schedules, this will create a safety and health issue for supervision and social distancing.

Substitutes

- Where are the subs coming from?
- Who will train them?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave?
- What will the support for the students and school be when not enough teachers and sub teachers report to school?
- Many substitute teachers are older and no longer wanting to work as a substitute teacher. The Substitute Teacher course will not be completed in time for the start of school potentially leaving classrooms without teachers.
- Substitute custodians are also a concern. Many schools are short handed. Having a custodian absent will impact cleaning and disinfecting the campus.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4 is being forced onto us with minimal support and answers.

Decisions in regards to models and schedules should be left up to schools. However, some decisions and plans should be standardized across the state. For example, schools should be supplied with PPEs for adults and students, disinfectants, sanitizers and hand soap. Offices, cafeterias and classrooms should be outfitted and supplied with barriers. Safety training should also be standardized and scripted for each group of adults on campuses (custodians, cafeteria staff, SHAs, support staff, teachers, substitutes, etc.). Everyone needs to receive standardized pertinent information for their specific roles. Schools should not have to scramble for supplies, equipment as well as create training modules. Principals should not have to compete against other state agencies, county government, private businesses, and most of all each other to procure sanitizers, disinfectants, masks, application devices, and face shields that were negotiated in an MOU with HSTA.

In these times, our families and communities should be confident in the reopening of schools. Obviously if approximately 20-30% of families are choosing total distance learning, they are not. If the percentage of total online students keeps increasing, additional teachers will be needed to facilitate and manage this demographic. It is not efficient or effective to assign elementary students to online programs and hope they will be independent self directed learners. If all schools do not seem united and confident themselves, how can our families feel safe sending their children to school?

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,
West Hawaii Complex Area Administrators

Scott Tamura, Principal, Waimea Elementary
Nancy Matsukawa, Principal, Kealakehe Elementary
Tammy Yoshimura-Furrer, Principal, Ho'okena Elementary
Rachelle Matsumura, Principal, Honokaa High and Intermediate
Glenn Gray, Principal, Kealakehe High
Hannah Loyola, Principal, Kohala Elementary
Jeffrey Takiue, Principal, Holualoa Elementary
Diane Spencer, Principal, Konawaena Elementary

Amy Stafford, Kohala High School
Noreen Kunitomo, Honaunau Elementary
Rory Souza, Honoka'a Elementary
Michelle Barber, Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School
Jim Denight, Kahakai Elementary School
Teddy Burgess, Konawaena Middle School
Alan Brown, Kohala Middle School
Kris Kosa-Correia, Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School
Makala Paukala, 'Ehunuikaimalino School

Testimony BOE

From: Lorene Livingston <livingston@whea.net> on behalf of Lorene Livingston
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Lorene Livingston
Teacher
WHEA PCS

Dear BOE:

I absolutely understand what a difficult time we are all in. These past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted the state's overall revenue and budget. There is hope though that the Heroes Act will pass making emergency supplemental appropriations available to Hawaii: We would receive \$303 million in education funding if the Senate passed the HEROES Act. The K-12 portion of these funds would provide Hawaii \$197 million.

New figures prove that for those schools that got differentials--it worked! Please do not get rid of a program that actually has a positive effect on our education and our most precious commodity, our children. The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in very important shortage areas. The number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent.

Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

Again, I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students.

Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators' pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system.

Thank you for your time and previous support but please have it in your heart to continue the differentials.

-Lorene Livingston

Testimony BOE

From: ruby razos <rubyrazos@hotmail.com> on behalf of ruby razos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School opening

To Whom It May Concern,

As a parent with a 5 year old who is starting kindergarten this year, I am totally against sending my son to school if there's no proper plan to protect my child and other children at school. Kindergarteners has to be in school daily. I want to be sure teacher's and staff are equipped to keep students on campus safe. Please postpone school start date until safety measure at school is finalized. What scares us even more is flu season is coming & who knows how everything going to be on top of Covid. Please consider on postponing school start date to keep our keiki's and staff safe.

Ruby Razos

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Haley Pendergast <haleypendergast@gmail.com> on behalf of Haley Pendergast
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education:

Aloha,

I am testifying regarding [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My name is Haley Pendergast Radcliffe, and I am a teacher at Kalihi Kai Elementary School. I did not enjoy distance learning. I missed my students. I worried about those students who I know receive necessary support and services at school. But I knew that schools were closed in order to save lives. Looking at our COVID cases and deaths, Hawai'i benefited from closing schools. I cannot imagine the devastation if large groups of people were in close proximity on a regular basis.

We are not out of the woods with this pandemic yet. But while other companies and organizations have safeguards in place for both customers **and** employees, the confusion regarding what is coming down from the Department of Education is frightening. First we were told six feet social distancing was irrelevant, so three feet would be okay. Only after extreme negotiation with the DOE were we told six feet. We have also been told all adults must wear a mask on campus, but children only outdoors but not indoors---where they will be in a confined room, in close proximity to others, for several hours a day. School reopens in less than two weeks and I am not aware of any teachers I know, at my school or elsewhere, being issued PPE. Teachers sacrifice much of our meager salary on supplies for our class every year. We work overtime in a way that would be compensated in many other industries. Now we are expected to provide the necessary materials to save not only our lives but others--all because the mandated working conditions are unsafe.

Several other states have decided to do virtual-only learning--and some have made that decision within the past few weeks. Teachers are not babysitters. I love my students with the passion inherent to *in locos parentis*--a solemn obligation that is part of my profession. But that does not mean that I should have to put my life, the lives of my family, or the lives of my students and their families at risk simply because the guidance from the CDC, DOH, and DOE is muddled.

We need clear protocols so both educators and parents can rest at well at night. Without those clear protocols, I worry there will one day come a time when many who could have protected our keiki will be unable to have a clear conscience.

If everything we need to know we learn in kindergarten, then now is the time to follow a simple rule:

Better safe than sorry.

Mahalo,

Haley Pendergast Radcliffe

Testimony BOE

From: Laureen Hatakeyama <mauireene@gmail.com> on behalf of Laureen Hatakeyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing this testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association.

I am a DOE teacher and parent to two elementary aged children on Maui. I have zero confidence that the DOE will be able to provide a safe working and learning environment on August 4. There has been a lack of transparency and communication from the DOE to answer basic questions and quell concerns. I ask that the starting date for children to return to campus be delayed until safeguards are in place and established protocols are clearly communicated to teachers and staff, families, and the community. I also ask for assurance that a 100%, teacher- facilitated, online learning option will be made available to all K-12 students.

Please consider the concerns of my children:

Jonah, 9 years old:

I am concerned about my health and going back to school. What if my teacher catches covid and they can't teach us because they're in a hospital room? My substitutes are always old and they have a chance of catching covid. My friends and I won't feel safe. I breathe through my mouth because of my allergies and I am scared to wear my mask all day. It gets so hot in my classroom and I am scared it will be hard to breathe. But I want to keep my mask on so I don't get germs. What about the kids who bite their pencils? What if I collect papers for my teacher and one kid has covid germs? Am I going to be safe?

Leila, 7 years old:

I am scared. If someone sneezes or coughs on me I might get coronavirus. I miss my friends but I got to see them on the computer. I felt safe. I don't want to go to school because of the virus. Thank you.

Thank you for your consideration,
Laureen Hatakeyama, MEd, NBCT

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Allen <mary.allen@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mary Allen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Mary Allen, I am a Special Education ELA and Social Studies teacher at Wheeler Middle School. I am writing in regards to the [July 23](#) BOE General Board Meeting agenda item G Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I write to you to oppose the motion to temporarily discontinue these pay differentials in the interest of our keiki, teachers, and the community at large.

The first and most important reason is that our hard to fill schools and special education deserve the best teachers and these differentials have been proven to be successful in retaining and attracting qualified teachers. I myself began last year without special education credentials or even a teaching license but was expected to develop and implement individualized education plans for 16 students without any prior knowledge of how to do so. While I did my best to support these students I was drastically underprepared for the challenge. This is an injustice to our most vulnerable keiki and one that will continue if these differentials are not continued.

The second is that I believe the obeys way to create equity in education is to provide quality teachers in the classroom. So many of our best and brightest would make amazing teachers and are interested in teaching and helping students. But so many of these individuals view teaching as a profession that will not sustain them or their families long term. If we want Hawaiian people to return to their communities and teach in classrooms in the areas that truly need it, we must incentivize them to do this. Teaching should not be a 'back up plan' or something a person does out of charity. It should be a decent career with opportunity for financial growth with experience and dedication.

I hope you will consider this while making your decision.

Mahalo nui,
Mary Alm

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Testimony BOE

From: Devin Belding <krazykaiks@gmail.com> on behalf of Devin Belding
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As a high school counselor I am appalled at the lack of concern that the DOE and DOH have for their employees and keiki. The number of COVID cases in Hawaii are the highest they've been since the outbreak first happened but the DOE and DOH are fine sending everyone back to school? The number of COVID cases have been around the 20's every day but now DOH is fine accepting that as the "new norm"? I still haven't heard DOH or our Governor give a straight answer on what the threshold is for new COVID cases or total cases. If cases go up to 40 per day, 60 per day, 100 per day is DOH just going to keep on accepting the new numbers as the "new norm"? There are still many answered questions regarding COVID policy and procedures at school. What happens if a teacher gets COVID? What happens to a student if he/she gets COVID? What happens to the other students in class if a student or teacher gets COVID? What happens to the student if one of their family members gets COVID? The bottom line is why are we sending back employees and students to school in the middle of a pandemic? What is the rush? Lets not forget the history of our islands and native Hawaiian people. Two thirds of native Hawaiians died from foreign diseases. Have we not learned from history? Please delay the opening of schools. Think about your employees and keiki as people and not an ends to a mean. Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Georgia Carroll <carrollg@khswwaverider.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Georgia Carroll
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns for starting school on Aug. 4th.

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a DOE high school science teacher in Kailua-Kona at Kealakehe High School, and have been teaching here for 17 years. My background in drug discovery/development provides me with the ability to assess data and a reasonable understanding on the transmission of contagious diseases. It is clear we are still learning about COVID-19 transmission and need to be extremely wary of our actions in public settings. Although Hawaii has done very well with curbing the spread of COVID-19, cases are currently on the rise and are likely due to the reopening of high-risk businesses such as restaurants, bars, and gyms. I am thankful and grateful that we have delayed the opening of our economy to tourism and are still attempting to require a 14 day quarantine. However, with the opening of inter-island travel, the transmission and spread between islands has increased. The attempts at quarantining visitors has been problematic, especially since there are numerous examples of visitors not only breaking quarantine, but some have done so via inter-island travel. The exponential behavior of this virus requires only a few infections to spread, resulting in rapid community transmission. We can not afford this in any capacity; it will result in further financial and health-welfare setbacks we will surely regret.

Since I teach a lab-based science, I would always prefer in-person teaching and learning for my students. **However, not at the cost of potentially spreading this virus to our most precious asset, our future workforce, and subsequently to vulnerable members of their families.** Teachers need to plan and feel comfortable with strong safety protocols in place, along with a **decrease in active cases, prior to greeting their students.** There are too many unanswered questions regarding safety plans and requirements at this time, as well as the issues regarding quarantine violators who are clearly unconcerned about the safety of our communities.

The spring school closures provided teachers and schools an opportunity to adapt to online teaching and are now in a much stronger position to do so for at least the first few weeks, or until our state can rationally choose to reopen schools with safer protocol in place and a decrease in active COVID-19 cases. This seems like a better way to serve our students, instead of scrambling to be ready by August 4th. I understand that creating viable solutions that address the welfare of our students, communities, and economic recovery is an incredibly complicated process, yet let us not ignore the lessons the mainland states are currently teaching us. Please do not open our schools too quickly, for the sake of our children and vulnerable community members. It is not worth the potential loss of lives we may incur by doing so.

With great concern,
Georgia Carroll, Ph.D.

Testimony BOE

From: Karen Veriato <kveriato@hotmail.com> on behalf of Karen Veriato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item G/H
Attachments: TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION - DIFFERENTIAL.docx

Hi, Members of the Board of Education:

I am submitting testimony to oppose the differential pay cut.

Mahalo,
Karen Veriato

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: DIFFERENTIAL PAY CUT (Hard-to-Staff, SPED, Hawaiian Immersion)

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020
1:30 P.M.

Chairperson Catherine Payne, Vice-Chairperson Brian De Lima, and Board Members

Aloha,

My name is Karen Veriato. I am a 3rd grade teacher at Na'alehu Elementary School in Hawaii District (Ka'u, Kea'au, Paho Complex) on Hawaii Island.

I am submitting testimony to oppose the differential pay cut for teachers.

I work at a hard-to-staff rural school with a high ELL population, increasing SPED caseload, and widespread poverty. It is difficult to keep teachers here because of the location. Many dedicated teachers commute about 70 to 120 miles round trip to work. Cutting the differential pay is reneging on a promise to continue the pay during the pandemic. Superintendent Kishimoto said she would use CARES money to continue the differential if the legislature did not fund it. Many teachers throughout the state made decisions based on the continuation of pay differentials.

Teachers are working under unprecedented conditions. We are working even harder now to prepare for in class and distance learning. There are many issues we face that still need to be dealt with, including face mask mandates and training, before students return to class. To be faced with the prospect of losing the differential pay plus the possibility of a 20% pay cut is demoralizing and may lead teachers to leave the profession sooner, including early retirement.

Please reconsider and look at other ways to fund the differential for Hard-to-Staff, SPED, and Hawaiian Immersion.

Mahalo,
Karen Veriato
Ka'u District
Island of Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Judy Waite <judyhula@icloud.com> on behalf of Judy Waite
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Judy Waite, and I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a sixth grade teacher at Kilauea Elementary School on Kauai. I have been teaching for 20 years. I am 64 years old, and will turn 65 in November. A heart condition places me at high risk of severe illness and death from Covid-19. I am scared, and not prepared. I want to beg the BOE: please don't open our schools with teachers, students, and families unprepared and unsure of our safety.

Teachers are planners. Right now I am planning for four separate possibilities: teaching in class, teaching completely online, retirement, or death. I have applied for an ADA accommodation, but I hear the application takes months to process. Meanwhile, I will be expected to report to work next week. I have written a will, consulted my financial advisor, and sorted through my personal papers. The stress has been incredible, and with the DOE unable to answer any of the questions they said they would address before they opened schools, the pressure is becoming unbearable.

The DOE provides us teachers with 4 administrative days to set up a classroom full of furniture to allow for 6-foot distancing (with no storage space for the extra furniture), to attend 2 days of administrative paperwork and mandatory videos (like every year), to learn new and exacting COVID-19 protocols, and to somehow prepare not only for teaching a blend of in-person and online classes, but also for the possibility of going completely virtual in the event of an outbreak. I have had little to no training in how to teach online, just the tips we teachers shared with each other as we struggled to teach online last spring. And yet I will be expected to teach not only in person, but also online to half my class, while also teaching completely online classes for students who choose to learn that way.

The superintendent claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. The training was voluntary, unpaid, and limited to a few teachers. Yet many teachers at my school were unable to participate, or not even aware that any training took place.

We have not seen any written guidance from the State DOH on the reopening of school buildings. Bruce Anderson mentioned the dangers to teachers as almost an afterthought in his remarks the other day, and it is obvious they have not given educators or our families much consideration. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease."

There are no clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools. As an at-risk individual, it would be better for me to go ahead and retire than to fight with 6th graders and their parents about the political vs. medical merits of masks. HSTA believes, as do I, that everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.

And what happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19? Superintendent Kishimoto seems to think that the artificial “ohana bubbles” created by dividing my class in half will protect the other students and their families, and that just sending one “bubble” or class home can solve the problem of an outbreak. But I’ve been watching my future students hanging out together all summer, and our small community here on Kauai is interconnected by many tangled social webs. The whole school should close if there is an outbreak. The DOE “ohana bubbles” are another way to close our eyes to the reality of this deadly and extremely communicable disease, and I see no clear guidance from DOH on this.

I’m hearing increasingly panicked messages from fellow teachers at my school, as August 4th approaches and we realize the DOE is setting us up for failure. Some are ready to quit, and others, like me, are weighing the dangers of going back to school against the safety of retirement. We need more time to train for the huge technological challenges we face. We need guaranteed protections, protocols in place in order to safely return to our workplace. And we need to know that the Board of Education cares enough about our students and staff to understand that safety is essential to the success of Hawaii’s schools. Thank you for hearing my testimony, and I urge you to put off opening our school campuses until teachers, students, and families can be sure that the schools will do so with safety and training as top priorities.

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Frost <susanfrost@ymail.com> on behalf of Susan Frost
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying Student Start Date

Aloha,

My name is Susan Frost, and I am a first grade teacher at Haiku Elementary School. I am also a parent to an incoming 7th grader at Kalama Intermediate and a 10th grader at King Kekaulike High School. I am submitting testimony both as a teacher and a parent in favor of delaying the start date of the 2020-2021 school year so that public schools have time to better meet the needs of our students, and train teachers in distance learning methodologies.

At first I hesitated to submit testimony because, I for one, did not feel like I knew the best way to proceed. I teach young children, and I know the value of in person learning. My own children want to go back to school very much!

However, I read a thoughtful opinion by another teacher regarding parents opting out of their local schools in favor of online curriculum from the Mainland. She brought up the concern that our Hawaii teachers will not have the opportunity to deliver Hawaii's research based curriculum to these children. This led me to my own internal paradigm shift: is there a way we can turn this unprecedented situation into an opportunity to strengthen the Hawaii Department of Education? By allowing the DOE time to train teachers in delivering standards based, research driven curriculum online, we will not only better meet the needs of our students by embracing the realities of current educational needs, and what parents are requesting, but we will also be better prepared for the future. Why not spend time investing in Hawaii's teachers so we can be competitive, if not stronger, than what is currently being offered to parents by companies on the Mainland?

Mahalo,
Susan Frost
1st Grade Teacher
Haiku Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Stephanie Olson-Moore <solsonmoore@kaumeke.net> on behalf of Stephanie Olson-Moore
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Student Start Date

To the Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am a School Counselor at a Hawaiian Immersion Charter School on the Big Island. I am asking the BOE to delay the start date for our schools. We are NOT ready. We have not received our PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and neither have other schools that we are in contact with. Charter schools do not have the same access as DOE schools do to Health and Safety trainings and we currently have had no trainings for our office staff nor for our Health Aid and have been bounced back and forth between the Public Health Nurse and the Charter School Commision. We are having to restructure our facilities as well as our schedules and all of that takes time. We are not equipt with the tools and resources that we need in order to safely welcome students back. WE ARE NOT READY! The original position of the DOE before summer was that schools would not reopen unless there are four consecutive weeks of no new COVID-19 cases in Hawai'i. Currently, the cases are rising daily. Why is the state in such a rush to re-open schools? The reason is not for the education of our children, it is for the economy. The state of Hawai'i is putting our keiki and educators in harms way in the name of reopening our economy. We can educate our keiki without being physically on campus as we have proven through online work in March, April, and May. This is not a safe situation for our students nor for our teachers and staff. The safety and wellbeing of our students is our top priority and the time given to prepare our campus spaces is not sufficient. Again, I ask the BOE to put our keiki first and delay the start date of schools until there has been sufficient time for schools to prepare and we are free from COVID-19 cases in our islands.

Mahalo for your time and careful consideration.

--

Me ka mahalo,
Stephanie Olson-Moore
School Counselor/ Student Services Coordinator
Ka 'Umeke Kā'eo PCS
(808)961-0470

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Testimony BOE

From: Sheri Ohta-Sato <sohtasato320@gmail.com> on behalf of Sheri Ohta-Sato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a teacher for the State of Hawaii's Department of Education (DOE) testifying on Action Item H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY2020-2021 COVID19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees. I am strongly opposed to reopening our schools for students on August 4! The Superintendent has had more than ample time to develop a plan of action for all schools in the State of Hawaii; instead, she waited too long to take action. Why? Now, schools are scrambling! As teachers, we feel forced to return to a campus with very little safety measures in place! Does anyone care if it is safe for us and the children to return to school? What happens if someone on campus tests positive for COVID-19? Furthermore, why are there no clear guidelines or procedures that every DOE school must follow regarding prevention or control of COVID-19? Has it occurred to anyone that this is really a life or death situation!

Sincerely,

Sheri

Likeline Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Angela Federici <mauiteacher@gmail.com> on behalf of Angela Federici
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Action Item H. Board Action on MOU between HIDOE and HSTA

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I am submitting this testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until proper safety protocols have been communicated to families and teachers, and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

I am a social studies teacher at Baldwin High School and I am at a higher risk for COVID-19 due to a respiratory disability. I have asked for the option to telework, to teach from home, based on my doctor's recommendation. To date, I have not received a reply from the DOE or my principal. I anticipate a response that they have no idea how to implement this accommodation for many teachers like me. I do have a solution.

I will start with a solution from another district on the mainland that we could choose to implement but have not yet:

My friend in Colorado had to decide by a specific registration date whether to sign her daughter up for face to face or virtual. She chose virtual for her daughter because she has a compromised immune system (she's only 10). A significant number of parents chose virtual school.

Her district is allowing high-risk teachers the option of teaching those students virtually so they are shifting human resources (teachers) who need to teach virtual classes to those students. Lower-risk teachers that can do face to face will teach smaller numbers of students in class. This works for families who can't keep their children home to do school online. It is a solution for higher-risk teachers like myself and is a solution to the problem of the DOE saying they are offering an online option but in reality, not really doing it because they have not planned for a means to deliver instruction 100% virtually. A We need to delay the reopening of school so we can truly offer a 100% virtual option for those students and teachers needing it.

Another elephant in the room the DOE is completely ignoring is the fact the no one actually expects schools to remain open for the entire school year. These summer spikes are NOT the second wave of COVID-19 anticipated in the fall with rainy & cooler weather, more tourists, and when flu season hits.

We need to delay school opening to students for at least a couple weeks while teachers and principals plan and prepare for the eventual re-closures. We also need a plan for what to do logistically when individual schools need to quarantine. There are far too many really important loose ends to be tied up.

In addition, I would like to quote the following concerns from the HSTA:

"We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided.

A few days ago health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him “just today” to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It’s unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student’s home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students’ access to 100-percent distance learning options. I’ve heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option. The model I discussed from Colorado would solve these problems as well as provide a means for at-risk teachers to remain employed while the DOE provided virtual school as a reasonable accommodation.

In addition to these very significant issues, I also have these additional questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:. Many of these questions were in my testimony submitted for the previous meeting and remain unanswered:

Who accepts responsibility and liability if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission? Will death benefits be paid by the state? The DOE?

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?

- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?

- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?

Do we even have enough tests available since so many resources are being diverted to hot spots on the mainland?

- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?

- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?

- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?

- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student gets infected? Or a co-worker of a student’s parent?

- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is the stress going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?

- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day. In high schools, we will be in

contact with larger groups of students (well above 10) for 80-90 minutes at a time, in confined spaces with poor ventilation. This is very different from the grocery store experience and we know clusters have been traced back to gyms and bars/restaurants.

It's true that Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, but it's also true that the DOE really hasn't made it clear how to handle closing classrooms or entire schools if those ohana bubbles become infected. Further, ohana bubbles do not really work when considering overlapping bubbles of school buses, extracurricular activities set to start again on Aug 19, etc. The idea of an "ohana bubble" is fiction.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received NO offer of training for the school reopenings from the DOE. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training.

Others will say that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students ALREADY RETURN to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety BEFORE they come back to our buildings. WE also need to implement a strong online option for families choosing 100% virtual so those families can receive instruction for their children from highly qualified, professional DOE teachers, rather than withdrawing their kids from public schools and putting them in home school.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teachers and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students' return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Angela Federici
Social Studies Teacher
Baldwin High School

Testimony BOE

From: Chauna G <cgrgkg@gmail.com> on behalf of Chauna G
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am asking for the schools to be given more time to plan For safety measures and procedures, and instruction to be in place. Please take our testimonies into consideration for the safety of our students and faculty members.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Chaunalee Gaoiran
Third grade teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Louise Cayetano <louise.cayetano@gmail.com> on behalf of Louise Cayetano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: mhiga@hsta.org
Subject: Special Ed Pay Differentials

Dear Chair Payne & Members of the Board,

I am a STEM Resource teacher at Fern Elementary to students in grades K-5.

I am writing testimony in support of the promised pay differentials for Special Education teachers. This is a big incentive for teachers who have taken this hard to fill position in our schools and for retaining them there.

This specialized field is very demanding on them, the hours spent writing up IEP's and in meetings with the parent(s) are time consuming. They have their other duties as part of grade level teams and report out on the progress of students they work with as well as capturing feedback from the students' regular ed teacher.

We need to retain qualified, licensed teachers and provide pay differentials for them.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Aloha,
Louise Cayetano
Fern Elementary School
1121 Middle Street
Honolulu, Hawaii. 96819

Testimony BOE

From: Oliveira Ohana <oliveiraloh@earthlink.net> on behalf of Oliveira Ohana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

Each time we are faced with surprise announcements through news conferences of Reopening Plans, it places undue and unacceptable levels of anxiety on the very employees that will be implementing protocols. This not only reinforces the declining respect for our profession, which notably why there is such a shortage in our career industry, but creates an already stressed social environment that is already prevalent in our society. I speak on behalf of those teachers who don't let the contract dictate our intentions and doing what's PONO for the very customers that we serve, e na haumana, our students. While we appreciate the difficult efforts from the members of the Hawaii Board of Education, the Department of Health, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, Hawaii State Teachers Association, the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), and Governor Ige, during these difficult economic times that we are all facing, we believe it is crucial that the protocols of health and safety, as well as delivering quality instructional programs and practices continue to be clearly communicated and written with the intention of fair and just responsibilities placed on all stakeholders. Throughout the summer, I have been a part of a reopening committee at my school. We have had constant dialogue with our faculty through this planning community to keep decisions collaborative, current, and compliant with the HIDOE. The process itself takes mental and social stamina if done right. However, with the HIDOE constantly changing their guidance, it's been extremely difficult to paddle our canoe. It feels like we are paddling in circles with no relief in sight!!!!

The HIDOE boasts that "its work is grounded in a community engagement process: Hawai'i, Equity, School Design, Empowerment and Innovation." We, the ones in the trenches (classroom teachers), "are paddling toward the same goals of providing equitable access and preparing every student to contribute to our thriving, sustainable Hawai'i" When everyone is paddling in the same direction the journey can be accomplished.....Together, we can deliver on our promises to students." In yesterday's news conference, Dr. Kristina Kishimoto claimed that an all distance learning option is provided. It caught many of my colleagues by surprise. Further, questions that arise are 1: How aligned is it to our Common Core and Hawaii State Standards, C3 Framework, and NextGeneration Science Standards? As teachers, we spend our summers (our own personal time) preparing our curriculum for the proceeding school year. Yes, this new normal requires patience and flexibility, but to have us at this late time, learn a new online platform and expect to deliver with the high-quality pedagogy as we are committed to is not only unrealistic, but unacceptable. This rash of reactions throughout this summer gives a sense of irrational decisions made, again, at the sake of ours and our na haumana health & safety and quality design and deliverance of accomplished teaching.

I implore all of you to please try to understand our perspective in wanting to be the best at what we are trained to do by allowing students to enter our campuses safely, timely, and responsibly and delay their entrance.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jeanne Oliveira, Pauoa Elementary, Grade 5

Testimony BOE

From: Jen Sarpi <jensarpi@gmail.com> on behalf of Jen Sarpi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying about item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am an SSC at Pearl Ridge Elementary School and I have children who attend: Campbell High School, Ewa Makai Middle School, Pearl City High School, and Pearl City Intermediate School.

I am concerned about the reopening of school on Aug. 4th as I don't believe that the schools are adequately prepared to bring our children back on campus. The schools are planning to have children rotate through classes, going around campus independently for passing periods and lunch. I do not believe that the schools will adequately be able to enforce either social distancing or the use of masks, and I believe that we are unnecessarily putting both our children and school staff at risk.

As an SSC, I will be asked to cover both a classroom for lunch and a group of students at recess everyday. Some of the elementary school grades are not even required to wear masks. And when staff is absent, I will need to cover for whatever class doesn't have coverage. This expectation will put me at risk and that risk extends to my family as well. I don't think this actually is an "ohana bubble" or that the concept of an "ohana bubble" has been well thought through or can actually be implemented.

I want for my family to stay safe from infection from corona virus until we can be vaccinated to be protected from it. I do not believe that my family returning to school will provide that safety for my family with the current circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jen Sarpi

Testimony BOE

From: Taylor Shiro <taylor.shiro@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Taylor Shiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Taylor S. and I teach at Ala Wai Elementary. Plain and simple, our state is not prepared to open up our schools in a safe manner. There are no clear protocols and procedures in place to ensure the safety of teachers and students. Do we have to experience a terrible incident from happening before something is done? This fight against COVID-19 is scary. Up until recently, I have always put on a brave face in the midst of this pandemic, but as the reality of schools reopening inches nearer and nearer, I am not confident in the little plans we do have to ensure our safety. All I have is complete and utter fear and worry. I matter. My life matters. My family matters. Our students matter. I want to live. Our state is saying I need to go back to work in person and risk my life to educate our students. I have always been an essential worker, but never felt like I was appreciated as such. Soon you are forcing us to the frontline of this pandemic. The only protection I will have is 6 feet social-distancing at times with a face mask and gloves. No other barriers or precautions to protect myself and my students are in place. Yes, it is my duty as a teacher to educate our students, but it should NEVER be at the expense of my health and my life. My dream has always been to have a family of my own. I'm only 28. I want to get married. I want to have children. I want to live. I am beyond scared to go back to work. I have no control over my students, their families, and my co-workers. I only have control of myself. How do you expect me to teach students in this situation? How do you expect students to learn in this situation as they and their parents have the same concerns? It is simply not safe for any of us. Schools should not reopen until there are clear protocols, procedures and guidelines in place. We are not ready. We should not be proud to be the first state to reopen. This is my stance as an educator... because I matter and so does everyone else.

Thank you,
Taylor

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Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Tam <jesshmtam@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Tam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do not open school campuses on August 4

Dear Board of Education,

Schools in Hawai'i should not open on August 4. This opening needs to be delayed until there is a policy in place that protects students and faculty members effectively. This means providing all classrooms with adequate safety materials such as tissues, hand sanitizers, anti-bacterial wipes, etc.

While having children back in school is a priority for us all, it is not worth putting the lives of students, teachers, and their loved ones at risk.

Sincerely,
Jessica

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberly A Vetterli <keyboardkim@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kimberly A Vetterli
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone school opening

JULY 22, 2020

To Whom it may concern,

I am a 67 year old resident of Maui and am concerned for the health and welfare of students, teachers, workers as well as their families. Schools need to open, but the operative word is, "SAFELY".

This is being rushed and could result in dire consequences for our community!

I urge you to postpone the opening of our schools in order to insure proper training for teachers and all staff with PPE and protocols in place in order that they open SAFELY.

Even the HSTA has "no confidence" that schools are ready. Neither do I.

Best regards,
Kim Vetterli

PS: 4 more positive covid 19 cases on Maui as of yesterday.

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Ferguson <sferguson@waialae.edu> on behalf of Sarah Ferguson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopening Testimony

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until proper safety protocols have been communicated to families and teachers and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

I am new to Hawai'i, and I will be starting my 8th year of teaching at Wai'ala Elementary Public Charter School. I took a year off from teaching and came back to teaching in the middle of this pandemic, because my heart is devoted to teaching students and working towards their success. However, I have an expectation of and the right to a safe work environment, and I am very concerned that schools are not equipped at this point to offer teachers and students that safe work environment. Furthermore, I don't feel adequately prepared or trained to teach remotely and in person simultaneously.

Many of the questions that I have regarding COVID-19 policies and protocols have yet to be answered, and we are supposed to welcome students back to campus in less than two weeks. My principal and administrative team have been wonderful, working to provide us with as much information as they can, but these answers need to come from the top.

I would like to know the following:

-What is the protocol if a teacher gets COVID-19 in the classroom? Is the entire class quarantined for 2 weeks? Who will teach them during that time, and how will they transition to distance learning? What about their siblings and any other students they come in contact with at the school during after school care, etc.?

-What liability will schools/teachers have if and when students get sick and/or die if the outbreak can be traced back to the school? Who pays for their care?

-What liability will schools have if and when teachers get sick and/or die if the outbreak can be traced back to the school? Who pays for their care?

-If a teacher has to quarantine because he or she is exposed to the virus in the classroom, is this paid time off? What if it exceeds the amount of time off that teacher is allotted? Will the teacher be required to use all sick/personal leave first? What if that teacher gets sick with something else during the course of the year and needs sick time? Will that be paid?

-It has been stated repeatedly that children do not suffer from this virus the same way adults do, but what about the teachers? Children pass viruses to one another and to teachers all the time in a school setting, so how is this virus different? How can the BOE and DOE justify putting teachers' lives at risk when we might be able to prevent countless deaths by delaying the opening of schools? Also, some children DO get bad cases of the virus. Is it acceptable to ignore those outliers, knowing they may end up hospitalized and/or die?

-My school chose a rotational system, in which only half the students are in the classroom at a time. This is an excellent solution, but how do I teach the other half of the students virtually when I am working all day in the

classroom? Am I expected to work an extended day or work on the weekend preparing lessons? Will I get paid for that time? NO OTHER profession is asked to work for free--why are teachers asked to do this?

-How will classrooms without air conditioning be ventilated? Without proper ventilation, students and teachers will be breathing the same air all day long, and any virus that is in the air will likely be inhaled by everyone at some point during the day, because there's nowhere for it to go. How will this be addressed?

-We talk about the impact of missing school being an issue for student socialization. What about the impact of losing a staff member or fellow student? What impact will the death of a child's teacher have on that child or the death of a vulnerable parent or grandparent when that child takes the virus back to a multi-generational household?

I have many more questions that have yet to be answered, but I will close here. I think these questions alone demonstrate how ill-prepared our schools are to reopen to in-person learning.

I chose to be a teacher, because I want to positively affect the lives of students. I love my students...I worry about them after they leave at the end of the day, I buy them supplies and clothes and even food if they are in need, and I form lifelong relationships with my students and their families. I want them to be lifelong learners, to love school, and to love reading.

I love teaching, but I shouldn't be put in a position where I have to choose between my safety and teaching. They shouldn't be mutually exclusive. We want schools to open to our students, but we want them to open safely. I urge you to protect our keiki, our teachers, and our administrators by delaying the return of in-person learning until we have proper safety protocol and procedures in place, and until teachers are properly trained in how to teach remotely and in person during a pandemic. Please show us that you value our lives, and don't make us choose between our safety and the careers we love.

Mahalo,
Sarah Ferguson
First Grade Teacher
Wai'alae Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: teacher calica <teachercalica@gmail.com> on behalf of teacher calica
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Please delay school openings

This will be my 11th year as a teacher. I am scared to go back to school. When I started teaching, I did not sign up to be a first responder, yet I am now essentially asked to play that role.

It is true that other essential workers have had to work in businesses during this time, but no other essential worker, besides medical professionals, have been asked to work this closely with others.

We teachers are being asked to work in a confined room with up to 60 students per day (I teach high school), when all studies show those under 20 years old are the most likely to be ASYMPTOMATIC. That means they will not have a fever or cough...They will just spread the virus. This scares me. I'll be honest, this terrifies me. Ohana bubbles are a joke; we've all seen the families at the beach, at the neighbors up the street with the BOUNCY HOUSE, and those barbecuing at the park...No social distancing or facemasks, but you want to talk about ohana bubbles? They don't exist. It's a pipe dream.

I have a 3 year old son, a 3 month old daughter, a wife with asthma, and my parents are at my house everyday to help watch the kids; my mom is 73 years old, my father 81. If you ask me to choose between going to work and potentially catch a virus that could KILL one of my loved ones, then I will tell you my answer: No.

What happens when students catch on that it takes "x" amount of people getting sick to shutdown the school? They'll start intentionally trying to catch and spread the virus to shut it down; look at all the school shooting and bomb threats we've had over the years. When they do this, the virus will run rampant, and potentially KILL educators. You may be thinking, "kids wouldn't do this"...You're right, most kids won't, but all it takes is a single student who hates school to catch the virus and spread it. Our own president has spouted the lie that the virus is harmless, and there are still many who believe so...many who are students.

So what happens in that situation? We shutdown schools, yet instead of having a jumpstart on distance learning, we have to scramble to figure out how to implement it. So instead, we completely halt person-to-person instruction, train for two weeks, then start back up again hoping it works. Any educator will tell you, those types of sudden changes will be devastating to students.

So delay the opening, form a plan, and then open schools. Maybe have a tiered rollout: areas with higher concentration of covid cases delay longer, areas with less covid cases start first. I don't know, I'm not an epidemiologist...But I feel like I have a better plan than our Sarah Park. Ohana bubbles...Get real.

Testimony BOE

From: Ella Joy Grande <ellajoygrande@gmail.com> on behalf of Ella Joy Grande
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Ella Bolosan and I am a resource/FSC Special Education teacher in Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area. I am asking the BOE to delay students returning to campus. I live in a household with a family of five, including my soon-to-be 2 year old and elderly mother- and father-in-law. I am TERRIFIED of returning to work as the cases in Hawaii have not stabilized. The numbers of positive cases are higher than when schools were shut down. Along with fellow educators, there are many unanswered questions and lack of clear communication regarding safety protocols, especially being an elementary special education teacher who work with students who require all day assistance with life skills. As teachers, we are at risk as well will be in close contact with multiple children, even with the modified school day. I will ensure to do everything in my power to follow safety protocols and guidelines to prevent getting my loved ones sick, however, I CAN NOT control who my students and their families come in contact with and what they are exposed to even when they themselves are practicing safety protocols.

Please consider delaying students' return to campus. Though there is a small percentage of children who contract the virus, there IS STILL A PERCENTAGE and there is the fear that those students may be in our classrooms.

Thank you for your time,
Ella Bolosan

Testimony BOE

From: Stephen Smith <sj.daesmith@gmail.com> on behalf of Stephen Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:41 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in support of delayed return

To whom it may concern :

I would like to submit this statement in favor of a delayed return for the 2020-2021 school year. Not only am I frightened by the threats to student and teacher safety due to a lack of sufficient safety precautions , but also I am concerned that I haven't received the training necessary to be ready to receive students face to face under the current circumstances. Overall I feel that more time is needed to take stock of this situation and really make sure we begin school in a way that puts student, teacher, and community safety first! My desire is for everyone to agree that safety is more important than restarting the economy or reacting to political tides and pressures.

To expand on the above I'd like to share a bit about a daycare center in Wisconsin where my friend is director. During the summer they have programs for children up to age 12 years old.

In response to Covid each child's temperature is taken three times daily. Also the adult who transports student has their temperature taken at drop off and pick up. If any adult or student has a temperature reading of 99.4 or above the student AND any other siblings or other household members man not attend the center until re-admittance protocol has been met. Any student or household member showing fever (99.4 or above) OR any other possible COVID symptom must complete protocol for re-admittance. This could include a doctors note with a non Covid diagnosis . Or student/adult must be symptom free (without medication) for four days. If symptoms last more than four days student/adult would need negative COVID test in order for any house hold member to be readmitted.

So how should I react when I hear my friend describe the safety protocol that her center are following in comparison to what the DOE is planning? The DOE plan feels entirely reckless to me— that's how I feel. It feels like we are gambling with lives. At Baldwin High School I know we have plenty of students who live with their grandparents or with one grandparent. What if a student brings home Covid and as a result they lose their guardian ?

Do we really feel like all parents will keep their children home when they display Covid like symptoms? If every teacher who has a Covid like symptom follows the protocol of staying home — how will we ever find enough subs ?

I feel like there are SO many questions that at this moment are not planned for . And there are so many inadequacies to the the plan in place ! And Covid cases in Hawaii are back on the rise !

In my opinion the only valid course of action is to delay school opening .

Thank you,

Stephen Smith
Spanish Teacher - Baldwin High School

Testimony BOE

From: kimberly <kimahoney@hotmail.com> on behalf of kimberly
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern;

I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am an a Special Education Teacher at Lanakila Elementary School. As we prepare to start school on August 4, 2020, there are still many unanswered questions.

1. When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in the MOU?
2. What options are available to families seeking 100% distance learning for their children? Will classroom teachers have to provide that 100% distance learning instruction in addition to the model we are currently expected to teach. For example, my Special Education students are being offered face-to-face instruction daily, how am I expected to teach those students and the students that opt for 100% distance learning. I have received no training on distance learning for special education students.
3. What are the protocols for wearing face coverings? It should be mandatory for all individuals that enter the school's campus. What other PPE methods should be followed for people who have to be within 6 feet of each other, especially the medically fragile?
4. What are the protocols to follow if a student, teacher, school employee, or family member tests positive for COVID-19. What are the protocols for when a school needs to shut down due to COVID-19?

I am eager to start the 2020-2021 school year, however, I want to feel confident that the BOE has taken every precaution before we return to campus.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Mahoney

Testimony BOE

From: cindy.searfoss <cindy.searfoss@gmail.com> on behalf of cindy.searfoss
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response.](#)

It saddens me that as a state, we are willing to risk an unprepared reopening of schools that will endanger our keiki, teachers, staff, and the families of everyone involved, including kapuna in multi-generational homes. If a small group of people, meeting for church services for an hour or two can start a cluster of infection, what are we to expect upon the opening of schools? I teach in a special education classroom with students that have medical conditions related to their disabilities where extra adults are required. This means that on any given day, there will be multiple adults in my class, not just one teacher and all the rest as students. Even if we stay in the room, 6 feet apart with masks and face shields, we are still together for several hours. What additional PPE precautions are being planned for the safety of these adults and kids?

What happens when, please note that I said when and not "if", a student or adult gets sick and tests positive? Where does the leave come from for the teacher to quarantine? What if they start to show symptoms while quarantined? Where does the additional leave come from to cover their absence? Will the DOE be paying for the testing procedures? What happens to the other people in the classroom, both adults and keiki, who might potentially be taking it home to their families?

If it seems like there were a lot of questions in a row, that is because there are, and that is the point! There are too many unanswered questions that have not been addressed by the DOE in time for a school opening. Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease." His statement doesn't take into account that kids with health conditions and kids who go home to family members with health conditions are most certainly at risk to be carriers at the least.

Please postpone the reopening until all of these questions, and more that I did not address, have been answered as they are supposed to have been answered according to the Memorandum of Understanding. We need more than just a promise that an answer will eventually be provided, we need answers before we open. This is necessary for the health and safety of all of us, as "school bubbles" will quickly reach into the community.

Sincerely,
Cindy Searfoss
Special Education Teacher

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S8 Active, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Sara Ricer <sara.ricer@gmail.com> on behalf of Sara Ricer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony for July 23, 2020

To the Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you all to reconsider current plan for students to return to school campuses for face-to-face instruction on August 4th.

As a teacher in a large elementary school, I am worried for our students, teachers, staff, all of our families, and the greater school community. The Department of Education and the Department of Health have still not provided the clear guidelines/protocol in the event of a positive case or outbreak of Covid-19 within one of our schools (per the MOU). There are so many questions still unanswered, and although we would all love to go back to school and see our students and colleagues again in real life, I do not trust that there has been enough emergency planning to safely open schools, or to react to the virus within our communities.

Most teachers have not received official training yet for our new circumstances. There has been department mandated training for neither technology use in education nor safe and effective sanitation practices with regards to our current situation.

I know many teachers who are putting their end-of-life affairs in order, because they fear the worst. The proper response to an expression of fear in employees is not to tell them to get over it and do their jobs. The proper response is to address the root of the fear, try to understand why employees are afraid or hesitant to return to their worksite, and do whatever is needed to abate the fear through the creation of clear guidelines, protocol, and expectations. From our perspective, we hear the Department leaders saying, "Trust us," without giving us any concrete evidence in which to place our confidence.

I do not worry as much for myself, but I do worry for my family, my colleagues, my students, our families, and the greater community that will likely be affected more than we might know.

Sincerely,
Sara Ricer

Testimony BOE

From: Leinaala Salausa <leinaala.salaus@hawks.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leinaala Salausa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please DELAY reopening schools and DON'T cut hard to staff Differentials

Aloha,

my name is Leinaala Salausa. I am entering my fourteenth year of teaching. I am currently teaching at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School. I am sending in testimony to ask the BOE and DOE to delay the reopening of schools until we have a real plan of action and training for everyone on campus. Also to not cut the hard to staff differentials that were approved earlier this year. I LOVE my career. I live and work in Nanakuli. I have a family, my husband and I are raising three daughters. One is in college, one plays competitive soccer and the last is starting preschool. I understand that with the pandemic and closing of the state that our economy took a grave hit. But the state's budget shouldn't be balanced on our behalf.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,
Leinaala Salausa
World History Teacher
US History Teacher
Lead for the Academy of Sustainability

Testimony BOE

From: Sherry Rose <roses@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Sherry Rose
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item G
Attachments: Testimony Action Item G 7_23_2020.docx; Untitled attachment 03375.html

I am testifying on Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year](#)

Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item G: **Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year**

Sherry Rose, Farrington High School, DOE teacher since 1970.

As a 49 year veteran teacher with the DOE, I am very well aware of the continuing teacher shortages, both in general, and specifically in the most problematic areas-- special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Beginning with the second semester of our last school year, these teachers began receiving much needed and very much deserved compensation for their herculean efforts at providing educational services to specific underserved student groups. Though I am personally not a recipient of the efforts to compensate these teachers, **I am absolutely opposed to the plan to discontinue this extra compensation.**

1. When you promise compensation, it is unethical to withdraw it (even temporarily). Teachers who were ready to leave teaching, or to retire changed their plans and continued to teach because they were finally able to receive compensation that would allow them economically to continue.
2. Qualified teachers left other positions to fill those hard-to-staff areas.
3. You are already seeing large numbers of teachers who are leaving the profession, this will exacerbate the problem.

The stimulus and other funds that the DOE is receiving must be used to compensate teachers that you have promised to support. We were assured that this compensation money would be paid and the question then becomes, if you lied about this, what else will become a lie?

Keep your word, find a way! Do not cut the extra compensation for classroom teachers who need and deserve your respect and support.

Testimony BOE

From: Norma Chang-gottschalk <norma.chang-gottschalk@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Norma Chang-gottschalk
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Opening Concerns

Aloha,

My name is Norma Jean Chang-Gottschalk and I have been with the DOE for over 20 years. This was not on my path plan then but now I can't imagine my life without my students. It started out as a favor to a friend who was needing to add a music program to their new charter school... I was hired by my now principal and left my position at my charter school after 15 years with the understanding to help build a Performing Arts program with the intention to create a full blown Performing Arts Center for not only the students, but for the community... I have now created dance programs at Leilehua High School and have grown it with over 100 students in 3 years of its creation. Leilehua High School has never in its existence offered a dance program. Our choral and ukulele program has been restructured and regardless of having any budget to do so, we have thrived. I believe with all of my heart that this is due to the deep passion for the arts and connections made with students as they go on their musical journeys and self discovery.

This program has met its challenges and lack of budget was the least of our problems. We have endured structural concerns such as heat due to lack of proper air flow as well as a very bad problems with mold, however, we have endured and pushed through because we felt that our students deserved this space of learning as a means to express themselves in an otherwise very structured and unforgiving world. At times we shared the gymnasium lobby and stage with our PE program due to lack of classroom space and often endured heat just to have our sessions because the students looked forward to the hour or so to just be allowed to express themselves through dance and music.

When the quarantine hit us, we endured yet again as Google Classroom was a part of our program from the beginning of the school year. We used this format BECAUSE of our lack of facility space to hold our ever growing, ever changing dance and chorus program. So, this was not unusual for my students.

I relay these stories as a testament to the fact that we, (myself, music colleague and students) have endured so much and I am committed to the promises made to my principal and my students. However, COVID has changed the dialogue.

I have been in self quarantine due to being in the top 5 at risk for the virus. I have Coronary Artery Disease and have a high risk of Cancer as I lost 4 family members in 2018 alone. I have concerns sharing this as I fear judgement that my disease does not allow me to teach. This is far from the truth. I am an otherwise healthy individual. Ironically, I taught Zumba and body conditioning classes to faculty and staff at Leilehua prior to my employment there.

My concerns are these...

- 1) Who monitors the students during passing?
- 2) Bathrooms. Who monitors the students without invading privacy?
- 3) If a fight happens, who breaks it up without putting themselves and everyone else at risk?
- 4) Teachers are not medical practitioners, what if the student passes all of the so called protocol and infects others. I fear a lawsuit. Who protects the teacher and aides?
- 5) Students have not seen their friends during this quarantine, do we honestly feel that they will practice Social Distancing?
- 6) I understand the emotional and mental concerns of the parents with school aged children, however, with them not being able to "socialize" by keeping 6 feet apart, their normal world of socializing will not be the same.

So, at the end of the day it is not a question of my commitment to my students or their learning. It's a commitment to myself and my family to stay healthy so that myself and my colleagues may continue to grow

the program this community so badly needs for years to come... I do not want to have to sacrifice my health to do this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nga Mihi,

Norma Jean Chang-Gottschalk

Leilehua High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Malia Fuhrmann <maliafuhrmann@gmail.com> on behalf of Malia Fuhrmann
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To The Board of Education,

My name is Malia Fuhrmann and I am a special education teacher and Hana High and Elementary I am testifying on action item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

The proposed temporary discontinuance of differential pay would be detrimental to my financial situation at the moment, but even more concerning is the fact that the DOE's consideration of this instills a feeling of insignificance as a teacher and a person. The DOE, asking teachers to put themselves in harm's way, to go back to work without direction or a sense of security, to undertake a momentous task of creating and implementing a new way of learning while suggesting a reduction to pay is insulting and infuriating.

As a teacher with two Masters Degrees and working towards a doctorate I am grossly underpaid as it is, the differential pay felt like a small step forward in the right direction, and to discontinue that pay during the current situation is like taking ten steps backwards.

Furthermore, how is it that the State is proposing to provide an extra \$100 a week to the unemployed while cutting the pay of those who are working, while cutting the pay of those who do not qualify for the benefits and resources that the unemployed get. To me, it seems as if the State is punishing those who are working to reward those who are not, it makes absolutely no sense. The DOE and the State should be looking at ways to pay teachers more right now, not cut their pay.

I am absolutely hurt and broken by this proposal, as a teacher in the State of Hawai'i, I have always felt as though I was being stepped on by the State, unappreciated and undervalued, but now I feel as though I am being stepped on and pushed deep into the mud. I have to ask myself at what point is it not worth it. Do not get me wrong, teaching is my passion and I would do anything for my students, but to propose cutting our pay in the times that we are in is unacceptable.

Sincerely,
Malia Fuhrmann
Special Education Teacher
Hana High and Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Johnathan Chouinard <johnathanchouinard@gmail.com> on behalf of Johnathan Chouinard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony sped

Hello I hope this finds you well. The recent news about discontinuing the deferential payment have put me on edge. Last year my wife (local Woman) and I were looking into moving to N.Y. (where I am from). The reason, I would have the opportunity to make more money there than I do here. In the current situation, if you take away the differential, we would have to move off island. I am starting a family and can/would not be able to without the extra financial incentive. The differential is something that has kept me here for this year. This is my 7th year teaching sped on island. I love Hawaii, this is my home but as a special education teacher, I can not get a second job. Any extra time I have is spent planning for students and connecting with them on the weekends.

My wife and I want to start a family, and purchase a home as well. With out the differential I am afraid that will not be possible. Are there and incentive or programs for teachers to buy homes?

Thank you

Johnathan Chouinard

Testimony BOE

From: Richard Torres <lilrich293@yahoo.com> on behalf of Richard Torres
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone testimony

To whole it may concern,

I am a parent of a 5 year old who is about to enter their first year of kindergarten. I start work at 7am and my wife starts work at 7:45am. There is no protocol for morning care at our elementary school. They don't have any guidelines or any information for myself and my family on how they will be keeping my child safe. I do not feel like the teachers are well prepared for this upcoming school year. The Department of Education had several months to come up with a plan for schools along with protocols on what to do when a student contracts COVID-19. It is not fair that schools and teachers have two weeks to decide on their school schedules for this adapted learning style and for parents to have barely a week to decide if they are willing to trust our kids lives with these schools. Almost all schools have no answer for protocols. If a student in my daughters class tests positive; will the whole class be tested and require quarantine? If a teacher tests positive, will they have to quarantine a long with the whole class? If a cafeteria worker tests positive, will every student who received school lunch require quarantine. If a family member of a student or teacher in my daughter's class tests positive; will everyone in my daughter's class require quarantine a long with their families? How do you intend to maintain social distancing for a kindergarten class? Will they be required to wear their masks all day? How will they make sure they do that? There are tons of questions that I believe are not answered and I am not comfortable with sending my daughter to school because I believe the school is not well prepared for the upcoming school year. I ask that you push back the starting date of the new school year.

Sincerely,
Richard Torres

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Todd Sasaki <toddsasaki@msn.com> on behalf of Todd Sasaki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

To the Honorable Members of the Board of Education,

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am a Counselor at Puuhale Elementary. My children attend Niu Valley Middle School and Kaiser High School. I want schools to reopen, but it must be in a manner that is safe for all. The current reopening plan is insufficient to ensure safety for all and the reopening of school buildings to students needs to be delayed.

Written guidance needs to be provided to parents and teachers to make informed decisions on how to proceed during this global pandemic. General guidelines have been circulated but many details are lacking.

There needs to be adequate supplies of PPE's for teachers. Teachers, especially in the lower grades, come into close contact with students. During the first days of school they are faced with crying children who want to be comforted. This will not be possible now unless they are equipped with proper PPE's.

Adequate training of Substitute Teachers needs to be conducted. In the past, many teachers would come to work when they were a little sick. This will not be possible anymore. Will there be enough substitute teachers available to take over classes? Will these substitute teachers be adequately trained to take over distance learning? Will these substitutes be trained in the proper procedures and protocols in dealing with Covid-19? These are questions that need to be addressed before schools reopen.

Ventilation needs to be improved in classrooms. Puuhale is one of the few schools where classrooms are enclosed in one air-conditioned building. This is normally a good thing. However, during a pandemic this is not ideal. Oftentimes, our air conditioning system fails to cool and ventilate certain rooms. What will we do if this happens? Even when the air conditioning is working, air circulation is not adequate. HEPA Air Purifiers should be used to improve circulation. Many details such as this need to be worked out.

The social emotional wellbeing for students needs to be addressed. Counselors will play a big part in supporting students. However, we cannot do this alone. Teachers and staff need additional training in how to meet the social emotional needs of students. We all need training on how to do this in a physically distant manner.

In the past, school wide systems were in place to support the social emotional needs of students. These included PBIS, student leadership opportunities, school stores, clubs, and extracurricular activities. Schools need time and support to modify and adjust these systems.

Parents need a voice. It was not until this week that I received a survey from my children's schools about their reopening plan. Up until now, parents did not have input. Schools will need time to take parent input into consideration in their plans.

At my own school, the plan was for the majority of students to have face to face instruction on a daily basis with some students attending school in the Library. After recently surveying parents, my administrator reported that nearly one third of our parents would opt for distance learning for their children. While many parents believe that face to face instruction on a daily basis is preferable, taking safety into consideration, many are

opting for distance learning instead. With only two weeks before reopening schools, it seems impossible to make adjustments to our school's reopening plan. There are so many questions that need to be answered. Who will teach these students? Have teachers been adequately trained in distance learning? Who is going to pay for this distance learning? How will this affect the school budget? How will this affect teaching lines and positions? Administrators are being put in a difficult position with so little time to act.

Regarding full time distance learning for my own children, I have not received any details about what that would look like. E-school is mentioned, but it is my understanding that E-school supplements and does not replace regular school. My children would not be able to get the same classes they would get at regular school. To my knowledge, there are no E-school IB Classes available.

As I was writing this testimony, I received an email from the HIDOE with a message from Superintendent Kishimoto stating that the DOE has been assured by medical experts that it is safe to reopen schools. Is she referring to Dr. Bruce Anderson, the head of the Department of Health, who recently told lawmakers, "I'd be willing to bet we're gonna get cases very quickly showing up among kids in classrooms. This is a work in progress. We're one of the first states opening schools, so we're gonna be learning as we go and we're gonna have to make adjustments on how we proceed."

He also stated, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease."

These statements do not reassure me.

Like many in Hawaii, I live in a multigenerational household with an elderly, high risk parent with many underlying health conditions. If my children or I bring home Covid-19, my children might not die, my wife or I may or may not die, but my mother most certainly would die. We all need to make decisions on how to proceed during this global pandemic. For my family and many others, the decisions you make will have real life or death consequences.

I urge the Board of Education to use an abundance of caution before reopening schools. As my son pointed out to me, we are not rats in a laboratory where theories are tested and adjustments are made later. We are real people with real lives. We need to get this right the first time. Lives depend on it.

Respectfully,

Todd Sasaki

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Mattes <jessica_mattes@hookele.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jessica Mattes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Hi and Good Morning, The differentials have allowed me to spend more time with my family, instead of increasing my hours at my second job. I don't necessarily believe it was ever extra money, but rather what should have already been part of our contract/s

Hi and Good Morning,

The differentials have allowed me to spend more time with my family, instead of increasing my hours at my second job. I don't necessarily believe it was ever extra money, but rather what should have already been part of our contract/salary to begin with. Knowing the cost of living here, the teacher salaries here and comparing it with the mainland, reminds me that our time and dedication to our keiki should reflect that and not be a game of well, you can have it for a little bit, and then let me hang it over your head. It's a life changer for almost all. It really impacts our families and the decisions we have to make or have had made.

Testimony BOE

From: D Ki <delloli@aol.com> on behalf of D Ki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:44 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Covid concerns

Good morning

I do have many concerns with the onsite reopening of schools:

Will protective gear be provided?
What kind of training shall be given.
The number of students in classes
Many sped students need extra help, how will this be handled
Will all staff be provided with face shields, masks and gloves
I work in an air conditioned building. Will ac be off and all windows open.
Where do sick students go and wait for parents to pick up. Many don't pick up
How do we enforce social distancing
Who does clean up/disinfecting in classrooms, especially in the sped classes
What happens when teachers, Educational assistants are sick.
What extra curricular help is available for sped students/teachers/EAs online and in class
Will we be able to keep the 6 foot distancing without repercussions
Do we have any choices as to having to be in class

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Toyama <toyamal005@gmail.com> on behalf of Lynn Toyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: BOE Testimony - Opening of School 7.21.20.docx

Attached please find my testimony below. Thank you!

July 21, 2020

My name is Lynn. I am a teacher at Kalei'opu'u Elementary School and I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawai'i Board of Education and Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am not one to ordinarily submit testimonials. However, I find myself having to do so twice over the past few weeks because of the extraordinary circumstances we are in – a situation that no one has ever been faced with before.

First of all, I completely understand the importance of boosting our economy. However, at what cost? The lives of our students, teachers, school community, respective families, community, and ultimately, the state? Are you really prepared to accept responsibility for all of these people potentially contracting COVID-19 and possibly getting extremely ill or dying? I ask this question because this very well may occur. By beginning the school year on August 4, 2020, you are essentially forcing students, teachers, staff, and administrators to enter school campuses that are underprepared. Be aware that this unpreparedness is NOT a result of a lack of effort or hard work on the part of the school. Our administrators, teachers, and staff have been working tirelessly to figure out how to prepare for the opening of school amid this pandemic. Ordinarily, the schools would be well prepared to open by the scheduled start date. However, these are not ordinary circumstances...this is a pandemic! There is so much uncertainty, lack of and delayed communication of information, lack of training, and lack of necessary PPE. Yet, there is insistence that the students return to campus on August 4 under unsafe conditions. This is just appalling!

One of the many things that we are uncertain of is something very basic - teacher positions. As I write this testimony, we have not solidified our grade levels due to not knowing how many students will now select 100% distance learning, an option we just learned about a few days ago. And what exactly does that entail? Will there be some kind of program or curriculum that all 100% distance learning students will participate in? Who will be responsible for teaching this? We were only notified that this will now definitely be an option for families. In fact, *I learned about this by watching the Senate meeting on 7/16/2020, not from my administrators, as apparently, they too were unaware of this decision until last week.* Depending on the number of students who select that option, the teacher positions and class lists will need to be changed. Here we are, less than two weeks away from the opening of school for students and we don't even have a definite answer as to who will be teaching what and whether our class lists will be changed. This will also affect our office staff as they will then need to make changes on their end. Another example of uncertainty is professional development and training. Dr. Kishimoto stated that teachers have been receiving professional development for distance learning. Unfortunately, the only professional development that I have received since March occurred on April 2, 2020. I have not been receiving any other professional development since. To my knowledge, our custodians have received minimal training on deep cleaning and

sanitizing the campus. The school has not received all of the necessary machines and supplies for cleaning the campus. There are no dividers separating the restroom sinks and urinals, which is a high-traffic area for students. Shouldn't these basic things be taken care of prior to opening the schools up to students? As far as PPEs, shouldn't the schools and students be provided with the necessary supplies to ensure health and safety? As a school, we are expecting students to come to school with a mask. What about face shields? How are we to expect students to keep their masks on all day without needing to take a break? Why is the state not providing face shields for each student so that if they need a break from their masks, they can remove the mask, yet still have the protection of a shield? Why are the schools not provided with sneeze shields for each teacher's desk and each student's desk? Why are the teachers, who will now be on the front line, not provided with N95 masks? Even if a teacher may only need to physically teach half of the class on any given day, in total, we will still be in close contact with the entire class – essentially working in two separate “bubbles”, for almost 7 hours per day. Is this not an extended amount of time to be exposed to someone who could potentially be a carrier of COVID-19 or even be COVID-19 positive? Does this not pose a higher risk to everyone in each “bubble”, who could then take it home and expose their own family “bubble”, who will in turn take it to their workplace and expose their work “bubble”, and so on?

We are not asking that the school year be cancelled. That would be most ridiculous. In fact, quite the contrary; every teacher I know is anxious to get the school year started with our new students. Especially in light of the anticipated reopening of transpacific travel to Hawai'i, the likelihood of increased cases and the possibility of another stay-at-home order, we desperately want to prepare our classes as best as we can, while we can. However, to do so with a complete lack of preparation would be disastrous. Let me be absolutely clear, our concern is NOT with the reopening, but in doing so in a reckless, unsafe, and chaotic manner! We are simply asking that you push back the opening of school so that the schools will be prepared to SAFELY and RESPONSIBLY receive students in person. The lives of our students, teachers, school community, respective families, community, and ultimately, the state should be of utmost importance. Yes, opening schools and boosting the economy are essential, but at what cost? Human lives?

Testimony BOE

From: annie c <lcua88@gmail.com> on behalf of annie c
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of Hawaii's Board of Education,

My name is Lianne Cua and I am an elementary school teacher on the island of Kauai, as well as a parent of Hawaii Public School students. I am writing to ask for your consideration on 2 main topics - delaying the reopening of Hawaii's Public Schools and to avoid cutting the pay of teachers in hard-to-fill positions.

While Hawaii's numbers of COVID-19 cases are less than those in the continental US, our healthcare system is also able to handle less amounts of patients, especially those that may require ICU services and the use of ventilators. We have worked hard and sacrificed much to flatten the curve, only to see all of that hard work be diminished in a month's time after the reopening of inter-island travel and public venues. We have seen firsthand what happens when people gather in confined spaces for lengthy periods of time. Clusters have appeared and numbers have risen, as did the number of cases requiring hospitalization.

What makes having a classroom of students and teachers safer, even if we have reduced the student to teacher ratio? Yes, children may not be as severely affected as older adults, but all it takes is one infected person, adult or child, to infect others. While many children may be asymptomatic, they can still test positive for COVID-19 and potentially infect others. The scary thing is that no one knows who is infected if people are asymptomatic. Entire families could be affected, as Hawaii is the leader in having multi-generational households living under one roof. What about the family members children go home to? What about the teachers, many of whom are over 50 years of age and/or have underlying health conditions? What about the family members teachers and other school staff go home to? Don't their lives matter?! I also live in a multi-generational household, and 4 out of my 7 family members are considered to be in the high risk category, 2 of them being children.

As a teacher, I feel that we are not being provided with adequate time and training to safely and effectively plan for all of the necessary and significant changes that need to be made to ensure everyone's health and safety, while also providing a quality education. I miss my students very much, and would love nothing more than to return to the classroom to interact with and teach them in person. However, I do not feel we can safely plan to do that in the 4 days we have been allotted, before our students return. Forcing schools to open prematurely will only result in detrimental effects.

Secondly, please retain the pay of teachers who are staffed in hard-to-fill positions. Every child deserves a highly qualified teacher, and by keeping the pay scale in place, we can continue to work hard to make sure every child has access to these teachers.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Working together from all sides to provide Hawaii's children with a quality education while doing so in a safe environment for everyone is our ultimate goal. Let's work together to make Hawaii a safe place for everyone.

Mahalo,
Lianne Cua

Testimony BOE

From: Dari Shim <d_kshim@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dari Shim
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony RE: Differential for Special Education and Hawaiian Emersion Teachers
Attachments: Testimony for SPED differential.docx

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I respectfully submit my testimony (attached) in support of keeping the differential for Special Education and Hawaiian Emersion teachers.

Mahalo!
Dari Matsuura

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

WED. JULY 22, 2020

My name is Dari Shim Matsuura. I am a Special Education Teacher at Aliʻiolani Elementary School in the Honolulu district - Kaimuki, McKinley, Farrington (KMR) Complex on Oahu.

I am married and have a single child with special needs. Sixteen years ago, my husband suffered a massive stroke that left him physically disabled, no longer able to speak, and no longer able to work. Being the primary provider in my family meant working two jobs. No longer able to physically care for my husband, I recently put him in foster care—paid for by his entire social security. Maintaining a healthy environment and managing the chronic needs of a child and adult with special needs in Hawaii's high cost of living has been a challenge. I've never complained and have always worked very hard to make sure my family's needs are met. Three years ago I made the decision to go back to school while working a full time and part time job. One year ago, I received my teaching license and qualified for the differential for special education teachers. Excited to be doing something I genuinely love, I was finally able to quit my second job. With additional monies allocated to special education teachers, we moved from a 1-bedroom to a 2-bedroom apartment during the recent Spring Break. Everyday I think about how fortunate I am to be finally making enough money to not have to work a second job and to be doing something I love doing. I love, love being a teacher and am humbled and fortunate to be working with children who have so much to give. Special education teachers significantly impact the well-being of students with disabilities to promote their academic

I have also been fortunate enough to put money back into Hawaii's economy by continuing to meet my bills on time, contribute to others, and spend money on more than essential needs, as well as support local eateries. Taking away the differential for special education would severely impact my ability to provide for my family and my ability to put back into Hawaii's economy. The idea of working a second job is agonizing. Working a second job would greatly impact the quality of my instruction and ultimately impact the student's I am committed to helping succeed academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally. Something would suffer and knowing me, I would put myself last—staying up all hours to make up for the time I would then spend working a second job. Please don't take the differential for special education and Hawaiian immersion teachers.

Mahalo,

Dari Matsuura, Special Education Teacher
KMR Complex in the Honolulu District of Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Fiandach <afiandach@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Fiandach
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony regarding special education differential

I am submitting my testimony on Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year](#). My name is Amy Fiandach. I have been a special educator for over 20 years, with the last 9 here in Hawaii at Voyager Public Charter School. I love living and working in Hawaii, however it is not easy. Without the differential it is doubtful that I can remain here. My husband has had a 20% pay reduction and we simply can't afford to see any more money taken from us. I'd like to use the BOE's own words to share that,

"these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted **individuals'** overall revenue and budget."

The talk of freezing raises for education credits earned, furloughs of 20 to 40% are too much. I cannot afford to live here and do the work that I've dedicated my life to. It isn't fair to me or to my family.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. We cannot allow this to happen. We cannot allow our keiki to suffer, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times. Hawaii can do better than this. The pay differential was already working. If it is taken away from us now, it sends the message that our children with special needs are not valued and that our teachers are not valued. It would be hard to believe the BOE again if it were to go back on its promises for something so critical. I'm afraid we will see our quality educators leave for the mainland or private schools. We can do better than this.

Not only was the differential a promise made to teachers, our keiki and Hawaii's future, it became an incentive to stay and weather these tough times due to Covid 19. Even more is being asked of teachers as we face an uncertain and dangerous future returning to the classroom. Now is certainly not the time to take money away from us. Please do the right thing and continue to support the pay differential for special education, Hawaiian language and hard to staff teachers.

Amy Fiandach
K-8 Special Education Teacher
Voyager Public Charter School
Honolulu, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com> on behalf of Lilia Doubleday
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Lilia Doubleday
Subject: Testimony

Subject: testimony BOE meeting July 22,2020

Aloha,

My name is Lilia Doubleday,
I am a parent of a middle school age child. He is my youngest child. He is 11 years old. He loves school.
My oldest child is 31 years old. She is a middle school teacher. She loves being a teacher. She also loves her 5 month old baby boy, my youngest grandson. She lives with her family and her elderly IN -Laws. We all live in a multi generation households. When schools open back up to, in class face to face learning, we will all be exposed to high risk. **Unnecessary high risk.**

My first question to you is - would you send your children to school tomorrow ?

During a pandemic? When Hawaii is experiencing a surge?

Would you expect your daughter to teach under these conditions, unprepared with limited resources and with so many unknowns, and exposing herself to high risk? How productive would this learning environment be?

Not to mention the very real possibility, as the DOH Bruce Anderson said ,”There WILL BE community spread from schools opening in person.”

And then the likely possibility of deaths. Life long illness .

PLEASE open schools in **August with DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY** , for the **safety of our ENTIRE COMMUNITY.**

There are no real safety bubbles outside of the home.

Yesterday, a large study from South Korea was just published in the New York Times, finding that **children 10 to 19 spread the Coronavirus disease just as much as adults.** *They bring it back home.*

Our school community is NOT prepared to open safely in two weeks. ITS NOT SAFE. FOR ANYONE .

PLEASE recommend the PHASE BACK ON CAMPUS plan, when community virus spread is NOT on the rise and schools have prepared plans, in place safety measures and most importantly proper training for our educators. In addition, resources that can support PPE and CDC guidelines.

Listen to your community. Hear our educators . Value our lives and well being. Our future is at stake.

Know there is safer way to educate during a PANDEMIC.

Prioritize health and well being.

Mahalo for reading this.

May you stay healthy and well.

An extremely concerned parent,

Lilia Doubleday

Testimony BOE

From: Sherry Rose <roses@hawaiiintel.net> on behalf of Sherry Rose
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item H
Attachments: Testimony on Item H BOE 7_23_2020.docx; Untitled attachment 03400.html

Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Sherry Rose, Farrington High School, DOE teacher since 1970.

I am a 49 year veteran with the DOE and I am very concerned about the plans to go back to school for in person teaching and learning. I am an at-risk mature person and I am frankly appalled at the cavalier manner in which policies have been created for the opening of schools.

I am gratified that after input from experts (including teachers as well as medical personnel), you have finally agreed to 6 foot distancing protocols, and I am lucky that my proactive principal has mandated mask wearing for all persons who come on to our campus.

However, you have NOT indicated specific, doable protocols for what happens when students, teachers or other staff contact (and spread) the virus as will certainly happen. I will be in contact with approximately 10 students per class—I am teaching 3 classes with students three days during the week. If just 1 student is a virus carrier, he/she will expose me and the other 9 students in the room—I will then expose the 10 students in my next two classes (that is a total of 31—including me..._ Each one of those students will expose the teacher(s) in their next 3 classes and the number will skyrocket!

What is the protocol for tracing all those teachers and students? Do we all have to quarantine for 14 days? Where will we get substitutes? Must I use my sick leave to do this???

I must say, that putting students, teachers and other staff at risk without specific “what if” (or should I say “when”) guidelines is irresponsible!

I can retire at any time, and though I love teaching, I am seriously considering this option. You can’t afford to lose me and the other teachers who are also considering leaving.

One more very important thought for you to consider: have you planned for lawsuits? I have already informed my son that if I should contract the virus at school, he is to sue the heck out of the DOE and the state. I don’t wish to die from this avoidable cause (I have become very adept at conducting classes virtually) but I can promise you, that if even 1 person contracts the virus and dies, how will you live with the guilt? One way or the other, you will be held accountable.

Testimony BOE

From: KAMALU CUMMINS <manahawaiian@yahoo.com> on behalf of KAMALU CUMMINS
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Board of Education, General Business Meeting

VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha e ka Papa Ho'ona'auao (BOE),
I am a parent of 2 students at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o 'Anuenue. I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and urge the BOE to reject the proposal. Last December, we testified in support of the Hawai'i Department of Education's proposal to the BOE to provide an annual shortage differential of \$8,000 per each qualified and licensed Hawaiian language immersion classroom teacher, which we know has bolstered this critical, teacher shortage area. Furthermore, while we recognize that there are currently eighteen (18) Department operated Hawaiian language immersion programs, we also recognize and continue to advocate for the inclusion of qualifying classroom teachers from the additional six (6) Hawaiian language immersion public charter schools. We acknowledge that throughout Hawai'i, we are all experiencing many extraordinary challenges due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which certainly includes financial and budgetary impacts. Nevertheless, we advocate in favor of the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and the BOE honoring their commitment to all qualified and licensed teachers in the shortage differential category of Hawaiian language immersion. Our kumu are being asked to continue their most honorable work in these extraordinary times and they deserve the full annual shortage differential that they have earned.

Aloha,
Kamalu Cummins

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Grayson Mento <grayson.mento@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Grayson Mento
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association. I am a teacher at Mililani Middle School. As our Covid-19 cases rise each day, I am extremely concerned and doubtful that reopening the schools safely is possible. I personally have not even been briefed as how to enforce social distancing or what protocols to take if a student refuses to wear a mask in the classroom.

Since our economy reopened, our cases have grown to 20-40 each day. It is wishful thinking to imagine that no children or teachers will catch covid-19 upon their return to school, and I don't believe putting the lives of our families and teachers at risk is worth the economic benefits. Are we to say that the lives we will lose by opening the school are worth it? That those are just sacrifices we are willing to make in order to have some semblance of in person education before it all shuts down again?

Thank you for your time,

Grayson Mento

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Testimony BOE

From: katielrobinson10@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha yet again, BOE,

I find myself having to email this Board a numerous amount of times about decisions being made that greatly affect teachers. I am emailing in regards to testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of hawaii Board of Education nd Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Katie Robinson and I am a special education teacher at Ben Parker Elementary school. I'm hoping my name looks familiar and that you are reading through each and every testimony with the understanding that your decisions greatly affect the health and safety of every teacher, student, and staff member at schools. I urge you to delay the retune of students to campus for the following reasons.

There have been many concerns brought up by the community about the return of students to campus and the response has been very disappointing. The public has been asking questions on behalf of the health and safety of their families and community members. We have been met with untruthful answers, unanswered questions, a lack of planning, and unkept promises. Truthfully, I find this to be extremely untrustworthy and dangerous. I know untruthful answers are being told because I have experienced them myself. The superintendents claims about teacher training has been very misleading and I'm very upset about the claim to provide families with 100-percent distance learning option. I can tell you first hand that this is not an option at all schools. Critical questions have not been answered on a large scale and schools are scrambling to answer the small scale questions that involve individual classrooms, teachers, and students.

PPE orders are backlogged and schools are not safe for return. Schools have done their best with ordering PPE. The truth is, it is not coming in and schools are not prepared. Teachers have been ordering PPE through PO's. This itself is not right because of the unequal presence of PPE in classrooms depending on the school and teacher. All students have the right to be safe. PPE should not be present in some classrooms and absent in other. Teachers are purchasing PPE with their own money. As you already know, teachers personal funds are already limited from the lack on adequate pay and the recent discussion to cut shortage differentials. These purchases also contribute to unequal PPE in classrooms. But what are teachers to do? I do not feel safe at my own workplace with what is being provided. I have ordered PPE (clear desk partitions) with my PO to keep all people in my classroom safe. Friends have offered to make purchases on behalf of my classroom. Why are some kids and teachers being protected more than others? The PPE we are given is not adequate to keep us protected. If we were to return on the scheduled date of August 4th, students will have unequal safety measures in their classroom because of the way PPE was purchased and when it arrives. This is not acceptable in anyway. All classrooms need to be prepared and all classroom need to have the proper safety measures in place.

Mahalo and do better.

Katie Robinson

Third grade special education teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kim Virtudazo <kimvirtudazo@gmail.com> on behalf of Kim Virtudazo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Delay of opening schools for students

My name is Kim Virtudazo and I am a ninth year teacher at James Campbell High School. I have two children who attend Ewa Elementary, Lily will be in kindergarten and Logan will be in the third grade for the 2020-2021 SY.

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent and teacher. I kindly ask that the Board of Education implement a delay of school opening for students. Our schools are not ready to open for students and that is evident in that WE DON'T HAVE A PLAN. The department of education needs to have a plan on possible school closures and contingency plans before we can safely open. During this time, teachers should work with students through distance learning until we can ensure the safety of teachers and students and then bring students back to school.

For my own children, I have opted for my kids to be fully online and not go to class physically. But for myself who doesn't have the option to stay home, I ask you to delay my students from being on campus until the DOE has a set plan in place to keep me and my family safe. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kim Virtudazo
Jame Campbell High School - Teacher
Ewa Elementary - Mother of a two

Testimony BOE

From: Malia Beaver <malia.beaver@gmail.com> on behalf of Malia Beaver
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Reopenings/Teacher Differentials

Aloha,

My name is Malia Beaver and I am a teacher at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School.

I object to schools being reopened as I have no confidence that Hawaii DOE will be able to reopen the schools safely as DOE needs more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. According to CDC guidelines (regardless whether Trump supports it), it is prescribed that reopening is subject to the State's ability to flatten the curve of cases down to 5% or below. Hawaii has an increase of cases ranging between the 30-% to 50%. You know that one case will exponentially increase cases in an area. We have students and teachers who are high risk because they have lupus, diabetes, leukemia, heart diseases, respiratory illness, etc. We have a student population that does not fit the nuclear family model. Rather, our children are being raised by grandparents, foster care, etc. and may bring home the virus to the medical vulnerable within their household.

Differentials for teachers should be upheld as teachers use these differentials to offset money used from personal funds to provide supplies and resources to students, and to maintain clean and disinfected classrooms and work environments. Funds are never enough for schools to adequately provide these to classroom teachers and non-classroom teachers. Non-classroom teachers service the entire school so are in an increased exposure when servicing students, teachers, parents/families, school staff and administration.

Please reconsider in favor of delaying the reopening of schools and upholding the differentials promised to teachers, especially the teachers of hard-to-fill communities that further has a higher than normal special education student population.

Respectfully,
Malia Beaver
NHIS Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kawailehua Engle-Kamana'o <kkamanao@gmail.com> on behalf of Kawailehua Engle-Kamana'o
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern, my name is Kawai my son goes to Aina Hana Elementary. I personally do not feel comfortable with sending my son to school with the "safety" plans DOE has released. Please consider pushing back the reopening of schools or having a better plan in place. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Mari Finn <mari.finn@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mari Finn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha kākou Board of Education,

My name is Mari Finn and I teach at Lahaina Intermediate School. Not only do I work at LIS but I attended school here. I am a proud product of the public schools in Lahaina and am in strong support of continuing differential pay.

Differential pay helps teachers here in Hawaii nei who are the least paid teachers in the country when adjusted for cost of living. This bill provides much needed salary adjustments for teachers who selflessly sacrificed during times of furlough and economic recess. Differential pay will continue to help alleviate the staffing issues in many areas including hard-to-staff areas, special education, and Hawaiian immersion.

The differential pay provides salary adjustments to help find teachers in difficult to staff areas. Special education students not only at my school but throughout the entire state are at a serious disadvantage when they do not have a certified special education teacher in the classroom.

We have to take steps to ensure our keiki receive the education they deserve. When an open teaching position is not filled, the students are served by a long term substitute. When there is no special education teacher, a substitute who may not have experience dealing with the intricate nature of special education has to fill in. Differential pay has already shown that it can help attract and retain more qualified teachers as well as special education teachers.

In regards to Hawaiian immersion the Kumu works her okole off! If a Hawaiian immersion kumu is sick, a substitute teacher fills in who most likely is not a Hawaiian speaker. 'Olelo Hawai'i is important to our students, families, communities and our history.

These important issues all have a common factor, there are not enough qualified teachers. When a substitute teacher is needed, they may not have the training needed to ensure our keiki, our future will have the knowledge that the DOE expects.

We look forward to working with you to solve this teacher shortage crisis. Differential pay is one important step to solve the issues of hard-to-staff areas, special education, and the multitude of difficulties that come with difficulties staffing and low teacher retention.

Please vote to maintain differential pay.

Sincerely,

Mari Finn
Lahaina Intermediate School
House District 11
Maui

Mahalo,
Ms. M. Finn
Lahaina Intermediate School

Challenge and support students as they strive for excellence

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: Davi Kanewa <wehiona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Davi Kanewa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha kākou,

I am asked to prepare testimony to address action items H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees & G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Has the HDOE failed to answer important questions dealing with the reopening of schools? Simply put, yes. Our highest form of government as well as our own Hawai'i state government continues to play power & control games. Politicians use the lives of teachers, school staff & faculty, students, 'ohana & our communities as pawns & experiments as they sit behind their laptops, locked safely away from what they themselves do not want to be exposed to- severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2.) Yes, our first responders remain on the front lines daily. Hopefully, they quarantine and/ or practice safe measures upon their return home to their immediate 'ohana from their shifts as health care workers, postal carriers, public transportation workers, so many more to name. What is forgotten are these very same "first responders" who are no longer able to respond any longer. These men & women who have helped their last patient, delivered their last packages and dropped off their last customers at the bus stop... are they not part of the people in our own neighborhoods? Have we lost vital connections to our own sense of humanity to think & operate as though the lives we have lost to this virus are so easily dispensable? Is this what we have come to in our 21st century? Have we arrived at a place of complete disconnect, disparity & disenchantment? Teachers, I repeat... TEACHERS are now to literally fall in line with these "first responders" and become 'just another statistic'. We are teachers. We went to school, paid student loans & continue to choose to TEACH. We did not go through protocol to put our lives on the line (to get shot at, carry guns in our own classrooms, to risk our lives to mutating viruses) in this fashion. There are no courses in my schooling nor professional development that include how to teach like a military soldier. I did not sign up for the military ladies & gentlemen. I simply signed up to be your humbled public early childhood educator of keiki with special needs & their 'ohana.

Listen to what our health director has to say about our Hawai'i teachers. Bruce Anderson says, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves, the risk is relatively low for serious disease." Alright, I will entertain this comment, however, if we think of the dynamics involved in how this scenario could be played out, riddle me this: *"Who will teach the keiki if the teachers & the faculty become too ill or too dead to teach?"*

The next question posed: How does this impact your ability to teach and students' ability to learn? I believe I have already answered this question.

'OHANA BUBBLES: To add, this " 'ohana bubble" concept is a poor example used by our own state epidemiologist, Dr. Park. Common sense- not so common someone once told me. As our Lt. Governor mentioned, "Bubbles burst. I'm concerned." Green said. "Young children can't adhere to social distancing or staying in a bubble and teens will socialize and be difficult to manage." Let's address the 800lb. gorilla in the room folks, 'ohana as it applies to our state, involves everyone; as coined, "it's a kākou thing". We live in Hawai'i & if you're going to illustrate a concept by using our 'ōlelo Hawai'i, then you must know that the sheer nature of the word 'ohana is NOT contained within a single bubble. Pre-covid, my immediate 'ohana alone had several " 'ohana bubbles": work/ school bubble, keiki's school bubble & their classmates 'ohana & their bubbles, soccer bubble (players, 'ohana/ extended 'ohana<friends, visitors from out-of-state/ outer island>, traveling off-island/ out-of-state), add (un) planned events (graduation, birthday, baby shower), camping trips, summer programs, bubbles of worship, etc. ... all these 'ohana bubbles are out there, floating around amongst various other 'ohana bubbles, unstable by nature with the random chance (actually more human behavior related) of bursting at any given point in time. My own bubble does not include congregating in crowds of more than 10 bodies. I expect our DOE to also follow these health & safety measures.

WHO WILL TEACH NOW? I know from listening to colleagues that more than half of some school campuses will not have licensed certified teachers in their classrooms this school year because of the lack of responsibility our leaders choose to show to our entire state. I also know from listening to colleagues that substitute teachers do not want to be called upon during this epidemic to be in classrooms this school year. They too are concerned for the lack of priority shown for all those who work & learn on our school campuses. So, who will confidently show up on our campuses armed with proper teaching degrees & licenses, equipped with face masks & brandishing hand-sanitizer dispensers toward

unsuspecting coughs & sneezes? We already have a teacher shortage we will certainly not be able to fulfill this school year. We're lucky if we're able to retain any of the teachers we have now, especially our special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools. As teachers, we're trained & expected to collect, analyze & report data; using it to plan & instruct our haumāna. Shouldn't we expect those who are governing our DOE to do the same? The data has been collected: New figures prove differentials worked. According to the department's data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year actually increased by 29 percent over the previous school year, while the number of teachers who left SpEd positions decreased by 57 percent. Nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for next school year compared to last, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations. Again, fixing what is NOT broken.

However, our own HIDOE is requesting a temporary discontinuance of funding for teachers in these especially 'hard to fill positions.' Again, common sense- not so common. Why does our state continue to fix what is NOT broken & irresponsibly overlook issues that need attention? The HIDOE & HIBOE modus operandi has not budged for decades toward smart, effective, helpful, common-sensical directions for our keiki, but more for our \$\$\$\$. There were glimpses of hope only to devolve in to down-trodden & sad false hopes. I have room in my heart & an open mind to accept positive changes, listen to thoughtful conversations & entertain extraordinary actions that will move our state forward while we're in this 21st century. I have hopes that our Hawai'i can & will be a model DOE for the rest of our nation. We know how to think outside the box in a mindful, creative & beneficial way where all stake holders have a place at the table, especially our kūpuna who I know are a powerful force of light, knowledge and wisdom. I know this is another hiccup in time, but if we put people before \$\$\$, we can come up with solutions that mostly lessen the disparities in our state.

SOME SOLUTIONS: It doesn't take a rocket scientist, a doctorate nor a genius to figure this out. At least make a concerted effort to wait until after the Labor Day weekend to see how these latest covid numbers on the mainland & in our state transparently transpire. After that, perhaps we may have a better understanding & more time for our educators to plan & to open up safely with all teachers, campuses & communities confident. Test our campuses prior to starting school- pool testing has been approved. Train our 'ohana to become true educators of their keiki while they're at home. Teach our 'ohana how to be home-school teachers in the event they need to step up to the plate. All standards are available to our public. Teach our 'ohana how to access them & direct & allow them access to the resources they will need in order to successfully teach their own keiki to meet developmental standards & goals. As it stands, state officials & leaders are being bullied & manipulated to move ahead with plans- what's the rush? Why not wait until after the Labor Day weekend? We are anticipated to be hit even harder come the end of October & in to November and potentially shut back down again anyway? I am willing to work in to June if we have to push the start date back for the health & safety of our entire school 'ohana. We still have questions that urgently need answers. Let's work smarter Hawai'i. Take care of our teachers as if they are your own mothers & fathers; your own sisters & brothers; your own aunties, uncles & cousins... because they all take care of your keiki when they are in school. Our teachers are with your keiki ALL DAY, EVERYDAY when you are not with them. I am all for schools opening up again, if the formula is safe. A safe formula would involve what the experts have been saying for months now (but not necessarily following) 1. Put in place all guidelines (masks<with mask breaks every [amt of time]>, distance, proper ventilation & UV accessible, 2. Test (pool)/ contact trace, 3. Steady decline in (new) cases with 2 week maintained #levels. Follow your own orders experts. Stop allowing for exceptions to your own rules every other week. Creating a moving target doesn't allow our state to get this virus under control. Have you spoke with the virus lately?

I have been teaching in our Hawaiian hosted islands since 1990. I continue to love our 'āina, our keiki & our 'ohana. I made the commitment a long time ago as a kanaka maoli to live here; raise my 'ohana here & to grow smart, strong, sensible humans who will also grow to become humble, responsible guests & stewards of this special place. I still intend to do so. Please let us teach. We want to teach. Support us now & move ahead with opening **safe** spaces for our communities to learn & for our keiki to thrive.

Mahalo for your time.

Kumu Kanewa

Hilo Union Preschool- Special Education Teacher

P.S.

Here are the questions our HSTA continue to need smart & appropriate answers to/ collaboration with:

* When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HIDOE agreed to in our MOU?

- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach? *Personally, I do not feel 100% confident in sending my keiki back to school at this time.*
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?

- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Testimony BOE

From: Susana Román <namoranasus@gmail.com> on behalf of Susana Román
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Susana Roman I am a Special Education teacher at Kailua Intermediate School. I am writing to you as I am profoundly concerned that on the heels of the State of Hawaii's reckless plan to reopen public schools on August 4th, the Board of Education is backing out of a fully functional plan to end the teacher shortage crisis. Prior to the pay differentials, the State of Hawaii consistently failed to attract and retain teachers in Special Education and hard-to-staff geographical locations as well as Hawaiian Immersion. Once those differentials are discontinued many of those recently filled positions will return to underqualified teachers or substitutes for the remainder of the school year. We already do not have sufficient substitute teachers in a typical year, but now those numbers will dwindle significantly due to COVID-19.

Respectfully,
Susana Román

Testimony BOE

From: Pauline Fleischauer <auntyp.123@gmail.com> on behalf of Pauline Fleischauer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:47 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Lanai Chapter - HSTA: No Reopening on Aug 4th and No Pay Cuts and No Differential Cuts

Dear Government:

I strongly feel it is unfair to:

1. Open schools on August 4th if PPE has not arrived and unavailable because of safety and health reasons.
2. Cut teacher's pay by 20%.
3. Withdraw differentials for Hard-to-staff locations and Special Education Teachers.

During COVID-19 SHUT DOWN OF SCHOOL, I worked long 10-14 hours day, servicing 7 out of my 8 SpEd students via telepractice/Google Meet. I created a Needs Assessment to support my students and their families during COVID-19 SHUTDOWN in order to facilitate their Enrichment Learning/Long Distance. All my students data shifted exhibiting progress. I work really hard and intentionally. We teachers need to feel just as supported during these times of uncertainty and pandemic. Please do not shake our situations even more than it's already been shaken. We all have families and children to support and even more so during this time, we need to maintain the level of income which we presently have. PLEASE DO NOT DECREASE OUR PAY OR TAKE AWAY OUR DIFFERENTIALS. Cost of living is double here on Lana'i and teachers need to maintain their living and their jobs.

Sincerely,
P.Fleischauer

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Duldulao <jenniferduldulao@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Duldulao
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jennifer Duldulao and I am a teacher at Ho'okele Elementary School. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

It is my duty and I look forward to returning to work and I truly understand the importance of teaching our children. However I am concerned about everyone's health and safety. Currently there are no protocols in place as to what happens should anyone on campus be found infected with COVID-19. Due to this, I feel that all schools need extra time to plan and inform all staff members of what to do in case this should happen. As teachers, we are also entering a new style of teaching and are concerned about how to manage both online and face to face students daily. Not enough planning time or training is being given and I fear that we will need to just figure things out on our own. When teaching lower grades, there are so many things to consider. How do we help with their handwriting? How do we assess them with integrity if they're doing 100% distance learning? There are so many unknowns at this time that pushing back the start date of school for students would be helpful. This would allow all staff members at schools to have more time to plan safety protocols as well as the delivery of quality academics and ensure that our campus is safe to return for all students. I strongly urge you to put yourself in my shoes and take these things into consideration.

With much appreciation,
Jennifer

Testimony BOE

From: Maile Johnson <punaluusproat@aol.com> on behalf of Maile Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

Aloha,

I am Maile Johnson, a kumu at Ke Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i 'O Kahuku Academy located at Kahuku High and Intermediate School. I am writing to urge the Board of Education to delay the opening of schools as there are too many questions that remain unanswered, and so many unknowns. Personally, I feel very uneasy about the state's plan to forge ahead to reopen schools with so much uncertainty hanging over us. As a teacher, I feel the students will not get the best teaching/learning under these circumstances.

I am positive that excellent testimony addressing specific issues will be submitted that will include disinfecting classrooms, what happens if students test positive for covid 19, what happens if teachers get sick, sick leave issues, and many more.

Please consider each issue carefully, with following possible consequences in making a decision about opening schools before we are truly ready.

Mahalo,

Maile S.K. Johnson

Testimony BOE

From: Rae Yamanaka <ryamanaka1@gmail.com> on behalf of Rae Yamanaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: BOE Testimony for reopening of schools

Sent from Rae's iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lynne Nakamura <lmnakam@hotmail.com>
Date: July 22, 2020 at 7:10:10 AM HST
To: Rae Yamanaka <Ryamanaka1@gmail.com>, Rae Yamanaka <Ryamanaka1@gmail.com>
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education members,
I am writing to testify on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I would like to recommend delaying the opening of school. As a retired teacher, I know what it takes for teachers to set up their classroom for students. I would be in my classroom at least 2 weeks before school opening. I believe teachers need time to insure that their classroom is wiped down and cleaned. Even if custodial help did it for me and my students, I would still want to do it myself to be extra cautious. And this is only the cleaning part of the job. Teachers also need time to set up their classroom for the type of learning their school has decided on.

I am also concerned that masks be provided to all school personnel. And will covid 19 tests be available at each school? More training needs to be provided to teachers re: symptoms in their students to be aware of, etc. Do they then send students to the health room? How will social distancing take place in the very small health room allotted to the health aide

Upon return to school, teachers will be in meetings for several days. After these meetings, they need TIME to attend to all the details of TEACHING which is now more complex to meet each student's needs.

Please consider delaying the opening of school!

Sincerely,
Lynne Holub

Testimony BOE

From: Philip Morales <philip.morales@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Philip Morales
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha to all Concerned,

My name is Philip Morales and I am currently a SPED Teacher at Nanakuli High and Intermediate. I am also a retired veteran after serving 26 years in the USAF. When I retired, I moved back home with the goal of becoming a teacher. My decision to teach was a result of my feelings that I was robbed of a proper education as well as not preparing me for the world outside of my home on the Waianae Coast.

I have never submitted testimony before but feel compelled to submit my testimony as I feel somewhat let down by our decision makers. There are two concerns that I would like bring to your attention; Safety and the planned cut to differential pay. at this time

Everyone's concern should be the safety and security of our students as well as for all teachers. My concern is the current rise of Covid cases in our state. When I say "Security," I am referring to the peace of mind knowing that my students and I are safe and free from contracting this disease. It is currently being spread within the community and our children are not vulnerable to this disease. Additionally, I along with many other teachers, are in the "High Risk" category (age and underlying medical conditions) when it comes to contracting this disease. I feel that the State is being pressured to reopen schools without addressing or answering all questions being posed. I seriously believe that the State is NOT ready to reopen schools. We teachers need all concerns addressed and all questions be answered. When you guys stop having virtual meetings and start meeting face to face, then we can start opening schools and start meeting students face to face.

With that in mind, I would like to address the talk of pay cuts. Taking money from teachers has no justification! We teachers, especially in the Socioeconomically Challenged Areas of Hawaii have struggled to provide the best education we can with the limited resources we have. We have always spent money out of our own pockets to make our lessons as meaningful as possible. Name me one job that employees constantly spend money out of their own pockets. Before they started offering free lunches at our school, many teachers brought food in so that our students had something to eat. To take differential pay as well as the promised SPED bonus would place financial hardship on all teachers. If teaching in these areas were like other places on the Island, then these areas would not be considered "Hard to Staff" schools. We are teaching in areas and schools that other teachers do not want to teach in!! If there's money to approve raises for you folks, then there should be no teacher pay cuts whatsoever.

I thank you for your time.

Aloha,
Philip J. Morales
MSgt, US Air Force, Retired
SPED Teacher, Nanakuli High and Intermediate

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: Kevin Morita <moritakt8@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevin Morita
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Regarding Aug. 4 School Re-Opening

Aloha Board of Education,

If I may, I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

I am a 12-month Elective Teacher at Kapolei Middle School teaching Choir to learners from 6-8th Grade. As a multi track teacher, it is common for my classes to range from 20 to 30 and in some cases in the past, near 40 students at a time. Although spacious, I believe that my room cannot SAFELY accommodate for such numbers even in an A/B schedule. The change from 3-ft to 6-ft distancing between students is a strong step forward, however this does not change the fact that my classroom is built with concrete blocks, two doors, and no windows. The room in which I teach has very poor air circulation especially during the summer months when our central A/C breaks down from working extra hard to keep our rooms cool. Despite being distanced by 6-ft, I am concerned for the health of my students and myself as the day progresses and the air becomes increasingly stagnant.

If a student, family, or school staff member is infected or dies of COVID as a result of school transmission, who will shoulder the blame and responsibility? I live with a family member who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19 and I have been extremely careful and cognizant over these last few months to protect not only myself, but the family members who I live with. I am deeply concerned to go from seeing very few individuals each day to seeing all of my students throughout the week.

To further illustrate my concern, a few additional questions I continue to think upon although there have been numerous press conferences regarding school re-opening:

- If a Teacher or Individual who works with students tests positive for COVID-19, who will cover our classes where there is additional risk and potential spreading occurring?

- Will all of the students/learners with possible exposure from schools be asked to quarantine? Will their siblings who may attend other schools be asked to quarantine as well? How will we efficiently convey this information and when will a procedure be communicated to parents?

- On the other side, are parents required to communicate to schools possible exposures on their end? Or, will their students be allowed on campus regardless? How can we do this in a timely manner to minimize potential spreading?

- If teachers get sick, where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will walk into a classroom full of exposed and potentially infected students, for substitute pay? Who will cover for our subs in the event they contract COVID-19?

And once again, If a student, family, or school staff member is infected or dies of COVID as a result of school transmission, who will shoulder the blame and responsibility? If myself and many other teachers are asking these questions, the questions themselves should be more than enough reason to say, "Hold on, let's think this through again." We cannot be playing a game of chance or what-if with the lives of our students, teachers, and school workers. With the current scheduled opening of schools on August 4th, teachers are

being asked to make a choice between our safety and our responsibility to our students. A decision between our own health and those around us weighed with the duty we have as educators is one that should not exist, but is the current reality. These two must coexist when considering not just the physical health, but also the mental health of teachers who are now frantically preparing for a great unknown and are expected to deliver for the coming school year.

Please, DO NOT return students to in-person learning until adequate training on safety protocols and distance learning have been taught and disseminated to all school staff. Delay the return of students while allowing teachers the time to prepare for a safe and clearly constructed plan heading into this uncharted territory. The current global situation is unprecedented and is difficult to navigate given the current circumstances. As an educator, I want schools to reopen. I want to see my students and to help them grow as I did before COVID-19, BUT we must do so SAFELY. Let us not make any hasty decisions in an attempt to return to normal. Our biggest investment as a community is into our future and the next generation. We need a plan that teachers, students, and families feel confident and safe in making a reality.

Mahalo for your time, attention, and consideration in all of this,

Kevin Morita
Kapolei Middle School
Choir Director

Testimony BOE

From: Leilani Bierman <leilani@thebiermans.org> on behalf of Leilani Bierman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: return to school testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to add my perspective as both a teacher and a parent. Based on the information that we have been given, even though the DoH says that it is acceptable to open schools based on the COVID levels in the community--the reality is that SCHOOLS ARE NOT READY TO OPEN IN PERSON.

As a teacher, I have been told that my school will have PPE and cleaning supplies (like hand sanitizer) for us--but we have no information about whether it is actually in hand or anywhere near enough to supply the population of our campus. We have been told that "there will be" a method of communicating if people have been exposed in a timely manner, but it is not in place and we have exactly one week to make it a reality--that is simply not going to happen. Instead, teachers and students will be exposed and days will pass before anyone is notified and precautions are taken. There is not plan for how to deal with the numerous teachers who are at extra risk due to health conditions, who have families that are at risk, or who have children who need care--though there are things in place that may help, we are about to be overwhelmed by a flood of people who need assistance with these issues, rather than having a plan that supports all of our community. We are told that a visual check and "asking questions" is sufficient for telling whether a person is sick--but we know that children are more likely to be asymptomatic, so this is a completely unreasonable belief. We are told that there will be deep cleaning on Wednesday--but teachers are expected to be on campus--how will deep cleaning occur? We are told that custodians will clean every day, even multiple times a day--but unless numerous new custodians have been hired at EVERY school, they are simply not enough people for that to be a reality. Plans are being made for how schools should operate without any input from teachers/HSTA/APC and sent to families before any teacher representatives see it. Our principals are trying to do their best but are on a timeline that does not allow them to do this in a manner that is safe for our students, families, and staff.

As a parent, we have been promised the option of fully remote learning--but this has not been implemented in a consistent manner that will allow our students equitable access and learning. We have still not come up with a solution that allows us to protect our disadvantaged students and are instead choosing to force them to expose themselves and their families through unsafe learning conditions. We are prioritizing early education, but without considering in a specific and highly detailed manner how to do this in a safe manner. Even if we believe that "children are less likely to become infected with COVID" that does not mean that the staff that they are with is safe, nor that children will not carry potential exposure home to their families. We have not looked at how we will safely transition from school to home and are instead leaving this to the wisdom of each principal. If I choose to send my child to school, I am doing so with the knowledge that he may be exposed and I will not know anything. From friends in the medical field, I know that they were exposed--but were not told for almost a week. We personally have people within our "bubble" who would be at very high risk for exposure and have been doing everything we can to keep them safe--but schools opening, in person, without more specific attention to the care that is needed will add much more risk for very little reward.

Before we can choose to open schools, as conscientious members of society, we need to answer the questions related to health and safety of all involved in a clear, specific, and consistent matter. We have not done so at this time, and will not be able to do so before teachers are expected to return, in person, on July 29th and students, in person, on August 4th.

These are some of the questions that need to be answered (from various sources):

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools?
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, or other school employee (or one of their household members) test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?
- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay homes and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now quarantine and get test? Who is going to pay for that?
- What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being terrified?
- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

https://www.instagram.com/p/CCW5RMeHy3/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

https://www.instagram.com/p/CCoTkk8nCHC/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

Mahalo,
Leilani Bierman

Testimony BOE

From: Cila Goda <godac002@gmail.com> on behalf of Cila Goda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Health of Teachers and Students

Aloha,

We, the parents of DOE students WANT schools to be safe for students AND staff before we open.

VIRTUAL meetings for all kinds of topics are happening right now - Why?? Why do we meet online?? To keep one another safe. To keep the islands safe, from Covid 19.

(Then) Why is it ok to Not consider the safety of students and faculty? Why is it ok to put them in danger??

Please Please consider a delay in opening the schools.

The state should see what opening up Traveling (inbound from out of state) will result-in before pushing the schools to open. Let's think of other ways to coordinate education in this pandemic.

Safety should be #1 for all.

Thank you,
Cila A. Goda
Mother of high school student, c/o 2021

Testimony BOE

From: Rebecca Arlander <rebeccaarlander@gmail.com> on behalf of Rebecca Arlander
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 23 BOE meeting: Delay in person student instruction

Aloha,

I am writing to urge the Hawaii Board of Education to delay the start of in-person instruction indefinitely. We are not ready to go back. The Superintendent's comparison that she made between teachers and others who have gone back to work is a terrible one. Teachers are going to be working in enclosed spaces with students 6 hrs a day, 5 days a week. Literally no one from the list she provided is back to work under those conditions, much less surrounded with children who are less careful and hygienic than adults, lack self awareness of their actions, and developmentally are immature and lack the ability to foresee consequences of their actions.

Teachers are not babysitters, we are educators. Teachers are not to blame for the economic chaos that this pandemic has caused and we will not be bullied or shamed into sacrificing ourselves to alleviate it. Hawaii did not extend its 14 day quarantine because of school opening, it extended the quarantine because we were not ready to open and we are not ready to open the schools either.

It is insulting that a delayed opening of in-person instruction is synonymous for some with teachers not teaching, literally no teacher is suggesting that. Teachers are ready to go back to work educating Hawaii's children on August 4, but we are not ready to be martyrs. It is in the best interest of teachers, students, and the state of Hawaii to start the school year virtually. If what the state is really looking for is childcare then they are going to have to figure out another option.

Mahalo,
Rebecca Arlander
7th Grade Social Studies Teacher
Washington Middle School, Honolulu

Testimony BOE

From: Joy Shlachter <joyshlachter@yahoo.com> on behalf of Joy Shlachter
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action item H. [Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5](#)

My name is Joy Shlachter and I am an educator at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. Our school is set to go back face to face with students and although I am excited to see my students and know that being face to face is the best way for students to learn, I am concerned about the health and safety concerns for not only the students but us faculty and staff as well. I feel that there is still so much that is unknown at the moment and we don't have a set protocol in place to confidently approach this situation at school.

Joy Shlachter

Testimony BOE

From: Suzanne Forbes <suzanne.forbes@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Suzanne Forbes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns Regarding Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Sue Forbes, Principal
Kahului Elementary School**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

I would like to express my serious concerns regarding the reopening of Kahului Elementary School.

With the addition just last Friday (July 17) of 100% distance learning as an option for elementary schools, we were left with only **10 workdays** to complete the tasks listed below before 950+ students start school on August 4. This is completely unrealistic.

- **Survey parents** to find out which option they are choosing for their child (blended learning or 100% distance learning)
- **Redo all class lists** to separate students into blended learning or 100% distance learning classes
- **Set up distance learning classrooms** with equipment (wireless headphone/microphone, camera, and monitor)
- **Reassign teachers** to the role of blended learning teacher or 100% distance learning teacher
- **Notify parents** of their child(ren)'s teacher, their rotation schedule if blended learning, and which days their child(ren) will attend school and which days they will not
- **Notify parents** of safety procedures and provide them with color-coded car ID tags matched to color-coded backpack tags so they know which color-coded gate to use to drop off their child, since they are not permitted on campus and we need to maintain six-feet distancing at all times
- **Modify breakfast and lunch service** to provide grab-and-go meals to nearly 1/2 of our students who will be distance learning either 100% of the time or three days a week, in addition to our regular in-school breakfast and lunch service

These are the details you are unlikely to hear from Superintendent Kishimoto. But this is our reality. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sue Forbes, Principal
Kahului Elementary School

--

Sue Forbes
Principal
Kahului Elementary School
(808) 727-4700

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Testimony BOE

From: Marianne B <mpdefrancia@gmail.com> on behalf of Marianne B
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a first grade elementary school teacher and parent of a 7 month old infant, kindergartener, and 6th grader. I feel that the Hawaii State Department of Education has not done enough to reopen school buildings to staff and students safely.

My first concern is there is no plan for procedures should a student show symptoms of Covid, besides calling a parent or guardian to pick him/her up from school. In the school where I serve the community, there have been different situations in which students are sent to school when sick or not picked up by parents/guardians when sick because phone numbers are inoperable or family members are not available to pick up/care for the child. Neither our health aide nor our office staff should not be put into a situation in which they must supervise sick children.

Another concern is that teachers are not qualified and have not been trained to screen children for Covid symptoms. There is a multitude of indicators of Covid which continue to evolve. Teachers and families need to know how students and staff will be tested for Covid should a case arise in a school is necessary, because to say CDC guidelines will be followed is not enough. There should also be more than enough capacity for contact tracing when over 180,000 students and over 13,000 educators return to school buildings.

I am also concerned for the health and safety of my colleagues whose school level leadership has been unable to develop a school wide plan that can ensure social distancing, sanitizing, and personal protective equipment for all staff. I am fortunate to have administrators who have worked tirelessly through the summer to plan for the reopening of school buildings. Not all of my colleagues have been so fortunate. Many are worried about large numbers of students in small enclosed areas with limited staff for hours at a time. I am also especially worried for the medically fragile students, aides, and teachers who work closely with them who would be unable to socially distance while also performing the duties of their job safely. The planning and training for reopening of schools is insufficient to reopen school buildings safely.

I implore you to push back the reopening of in person learning until teachers and staff have had the opportunity to be properly trained for various situations that could arise and the Department of Education has a statewide written plan for testing, contact tracing, social distancing, personal protective equipment, and sanitizing procedures available to school staff and families.

Mahalo for your consideration and for prioritizing the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,
Marianne Belmore

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jodi Beaty <jbeaty@weis.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jodi Beaty
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I would like to testify on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

As our chapter's president, I wanted to share with you the responses to the question that I put out to the teachers in my chapter. The question that I asked is: I am trying to get a temperature check (yes, pun intended) on how our chapter teachers feel about reopening school? Do they want to go back? Do they like the model that their school has accepted? Or are they really scared and would prefer that we start off virtually?

Below are their responses. As you can see and read, that few schools have been working on a plan, although majority have not, and teachers and staff are scared that there is no plan in place.

Many teachers, through the training, along with emails/calls/texts, are verbalizing that they are fearful of returning, fearful for their life and those at home, worried about what could happen, etc. It's all over the map.

On the other hand, there are many teachers that feel ready to return despite the increase in cases nationwide and worldwide.

I'm not sure what will happen over the next few weeks but then again, everything has been in flux ever since the pandemic started.

Hope that provides enough insight and feedback for you.

Our staff is excited to see the students again and of course, wishes that we could be all face to face, but know that is not the safest option as of now.

A lot of our teachers felt being pushed to return to school and being rushed to decide on the current school model. Not all teachers participate in the reopening of school plans but there were a lot of concerns about the health guidelines. At first it wasn't even an option to return to school virtually so many teachers assumed that it wasn't an option. Many of my school's teachers did mention that they would prefer if students can pick distance learning so they have less students in school to reduce the risk of catching covid. Many teachers also thought it's not safe now to return to school due to the amount of cases currently active in Oahu.

This is what I am hearing from the teachers:

- Concerned about a rise in cases.
- Worried about what will happen if someone catches COVID. What is the process?
- Will school really start on August 4th? What is the possibility of getting it pushed back?
- Frustrated with the inconsistencies of wearing face masks. Why was it left up to individual teachers?

- Why was only 3 Models given? Why couldn't schools adapt it to something that would work for them?
- Many not happy with the Model we chose. When decision was made we didn't really know what it would look like.
- How will upper grade teachers teach face to face and virtually at the same time. (They have Group A & B days)
- What will distance learning look like?
- Feel that K-2 teachers are at a much higher risk since they see every child everyday. Feel this is unfair.
- Why is masks required in ALL public areas but optional in the schools. Very upsetting.
- Why are some schools changing their dismissal time? We asked about this but our Principal said "not an option."
- When will there be time to sanitize if our start and end times are the same.
- The school is giving each child a face shield. Who will clean these?

My school has mixed reviews on returning face to face back to school. We choose blended model for grades 4-6 while Pre K-3 face to face Monday-Thursday. I think some teachers would prefer only virtual right now but that is not an option.

there's been clear administrative and department level support, leadership, and direction and a sense from the GenEd teachers that they are comfortable with the AB Rotation Instruction Model selected by GenEd teacher collaboration and approved by admin this week. GenEd appears to have a working clarity and readiness to begin the new school year.

Fear of returning, not due to our school plan but reports of new COVID cases as well as closings nationally and locally.

Concerns teaching and parenting simultaneously.

Options for telework

Concerns about career change due to reopening and DOE response and lack of concern for safety

88% of our teachers agreed to model C. Most feel good about reopening schools and coming back face to face. Thanks for all your help and support!

Yes go back we are six feet apart like 12 kids have to wear masks etc why what is happening at your school. We all hate distance learning for lower elementary

I got your email and wanted to let you know I do have concerns about opening school. There are so many unknowns with this virus and I do not feel it is safe to open in 3 weeks. I will be teaching kindergarten/inclusion and feel it will be impossible to keep 18+ five year olds six feet apart. I want to teach in person, but with the increase in cases I think waiting until it is safe for all is the best thing to do. Our students need to be back in school, but I am scared. I feel unsafe and do not think the state is doing enough to protect our teachers and keiki.

I was part of a GLC meeting yesterday, and there was a lot of anxiety expressed. We have actually met a few times this summer, and this is the first time that I've noticed some of the other GLCs actually feeling anxious. Maybe it's because we are getting closer to opening school. Maybe it's because the COVID19 cases are increasing. It's probably a combination. Just working out the logistics for physical distancing is crazy! And how are we going to explain it to young children so they comply? We care a lot about our students,

but don't want to get exposed to COVID19. They go home to their 'ohana and who knows where they've been! I'm glad that you folks are reaching out to the teachers!

1. Best that we can expect in that we had decided before the BOE meeting that we would be doing 6 feet distancing for the whole school. I felt like our Principal - was sincerely concerned about our safety. K-2, sped, ELL = daily, 3-6 hybrid 1/2 class at school, 1/2 class distance learning. But realistically - how can we prevent the spread even with all that we are doing.

2. Overall - Quite worried and scared due to watching the news and learning a teacher in the mainland who was teaching summer school got ill and died from COVID. Also saw a doctor speak about when H1N1 was around and they opened the schools the infection rate greatly increased due to the children being carriers. Another teacher was making her will!! I feel like it's only a matter of time before the infection spreads and we will all be doing distance learning again. And I hope it will not be at the cost of teacher's getting sick and maybe even dieing! Wondering what will happen if/when teachers get sick and there are no subs available because many of our subs are older.

3. HSTA & DOE - Hooray! They were able to mandate the 6 feet distancing. I was disappointed we couldn't get a statewide mandate to have all students wear masks instead of leaving it up to individual teachers. Bev has been very responsive and knowledgeable. Our very own XXXX is also very responsive and has been keeping us up to date on all the news.

Well, keep safe and thank you for representing us so well. Our union is so STRONG and always FIGHTING for our RIGHTS!! We feel that you guys are protecting us and will not allow the government or Superintendent Kishimoto or the public to walk all over us or pressure us into doing things. Corey Rosenlee and his staff are TRULY AMAZING!! When I watch him speak I'm like - "YOU GO COREY!! YOU TELL THEM!!! YES!! HSTA!!!" We are so appreciative for all that HSTA is doing for the teachers of Hawaii!!!!

As for kindergarten, I do like the model to reopen school face-to-face for the lower grades but at the same time I am equally concerned for everyone's safety of contracting Covid. Really how safe are we as teachers being exposed to 18+ kids who then go home to their families which who knows who they come in to contact with and are they following safety precautions? There are still too many gray areas. Also all it will take is for one teacher/person to have a different belief on mask wearing or sanitation and this could possibly put others at risk. I was on campus during summer and taught a small class. Kids don't understand social distancing. We only had a total of 11. I can't imagine what it'll look like with 300-400 kids on campus at once.

Not all teacher's are comfortable with distance learning. We should be given PD classes that will prepare everyone to be confident and competent to teach on line. Also taught the programs that are available to use. I am one that is not comfortable with the computer. This is unfamiliar to many of us and given the right training will provide us a better foundation for distance learning at any grade level.

Of our 26 teachers, here are the results of a quick survey I gave to them.

9 would like to do 100% Distance Learning - 35%

12 want to implement our current plan with A/B rotation and K in face-to-face lessons 5x/wk - 45%

3 want a full class with desks 3 ft apart with masks and social distancing - 12%

2 want to go back to the OLD normal - 8%

Personally, I want to go back to the old normal. I do think there's a nasty virus, but I also know from the much censored media that early treatment with hydroxychloroquine and zinc you have a 99.999% of recovering. There have been over 6000 doctors world wide reporting on this.

I also am upset of the flip flopping of the "science". First they tell us not to wear masks and now we should. No matter how many scientific peer-reviewed studies I show people that say cloth face coverings don't reduce the risk of catching a virus, people continue to believe it helps. On the US OSHA website it clearly states too that they don't work to protect you from viruses

I propose we implement three models. Some schools can open according to model 1, some with model 2, some with 3.

1. Back to the old normal
2. New ABnormal (social distancing and masks)
3. 100% Virtual

That way teachers could teach where they are comfortable and parents could send their kids to what suits them. Everyone happy!

- how are teachers with kids supposed to help their child during their distance learning days?
- if we get sick from COVID, where does our sick leave come from? We should not have to dip into our own accumulated days since being forced to reopen
- if we are giving assessments to students on 100% distance learning, how do we validate that score? Are we now enforcing grading and attendance for those distance learning?
- our k-1 teachers have been particularly scared/worried since their students are younger and still learning good hygiene skills
- can we consider a 100% distance learning model?

"I have a suppressed immune system so I feel most comfortable with 100% distance learning because it would allow me to work safely from home. I read an article about a teacher in Arizona who passed away from COVID. I cried for a brief moment because I have one of the medical conditions that she had and it really worried me. I'm scared to return to the classroom but when it comes down to it, I need to work so I can get paid and have medical insurance, especially at a time like this. I purchased extra PPE (masks, gloves, face shields and safety glasses) in hopes that it will help keep the germs away.

I also find the amount of cases of COVID-19 very alarming. The numbers are higher than when schools were first closed back in March so I don't understand why we're reopening schools now.

However, last quarter was EXTREMELY stressful with distance learning. I rarely slept because I was so busy prepping lessons and making instructional videos for my students. I've never felt so stressed out in my whole teaching career. I do understand the safety that distance learning provides for staff, teachers, students and families. There's pros and cons in every situation.

Changing the distance between desks to 6 feet instead of 3 feet does make me feel a little safer. The 3 feet was way too close. Students could still touch each other. It didn't make any sense that we have to be 6 feet apart from people everywhere but in the classroom. I also feel that the face covering rule should be a school wide decision. I can see so many issues especially with the older students complaining that "so and so said I don't need it. Why do I need it in your class?" -teacher A

"Personally I am terrified about returning to school. While the idea of 6' social distancing seems much better than 3' there is still risk of covid being transmitted through airborne particles and we can't be expected to make sure our entire class does not touch desks, others, etc. The fact is, we do not know enough about Covid to insure the safety of the students or the teachers and I don't want to feel responsible if any of my students get covid.

On top of that, I have heard very little about procedural daily plans for how to deal with covid if students or teachers are suspected to have it. I have so many hypothetical questions that have yet to be answered and until they are, all I'm left with is the belief that it is inevitable for a student/teacher (or many) to contract covid and that we have no plan to deal with this situation. And let's be honest, one student contracting covid is one student too many.

I can't help but be concerned about my health and the thought of being around asymptomatic or presymptomatic students and bringing covid home to my toddler and infant breaks my heart. I also live with someone who is at high risk. Why do I feel like I have to choose between my career or the health of myself and loved ones?

With this in mind, I wholeheartedly believe that until the numbers are seriously controlled in Hawaii or there is a vaccine, teachers should be 100% distance learning. The BOE had ample time this summer to prepare for more effective distance learning. Give us time to plan and conduct rigorous lessons via distance learning. It can be done. Students can have quality education online without risking being exposed to covid. Give us time to see how reopening businesses and tourism affects our numbers during this pandemic. Do we really want schools to be the reason our covid numbers increase? Because spending all day indoors with a group of students who then go home to (often multigenerational) families is a sure fire way to exponentially increase covid numbers in Hawaii where the current numbers are already increasing to alarming amounts. I am an educator and I want to educate but we are in a PANDEMIC and I am terrified. In these unusually rare and dangerous times we should show that we VALUE our students and staff by pursuing action that keeps them healthy and alive. There is only one way to insure that: 100% distance education until we have a vaccine.

“ -teacher B

"Reflecting and pondering about what I'm feeling about the process of opening school... I'm disappointed and angry that HSTA, teachers' testimonies and voices, and the BOE (deferred approval) had to join forces to get the Superintendent and DOE to reevaluate their decisions on the social distancing guidelines-desks separation, mask issues,... I feel that they had no regard for the health and safety of the students, staff, and teachers of schools. The Superintendent and DOE concern was to open the schools so that students' parents could return to work. The economy "money" came before the health and safety of the school which is part of the community, and the community is part of the state. It also is annoying and frustrating to me that the Superintendent and DOE will present to the public that all parts of the organization are united and are supporting the efforts of the schools and educators. That's far from the truth! Teachers have questions that the principal can't answer, because the DOE has not "planned for" it yet.

Schools will reopen soon, and I know we will not be ready. The Superintendent and DOE will still be planning. Teachers will still be waiting for the answers that the principals can't answer without guidance from "their bosses". In the meantime, the health and safety of our students will be compromised because the Superintendent and DOE are playing politics with the public!" -teacher C

"My thoughts...1) I do NOT feel safe going back to school as the COIVD cases are on the rise. I would like to push back the start date or do a 100% distance learning model...2) I appreciate HSTA fighting for the 6 ft, however, I still feel that returning to school is unsafe...3) if the cases continue to rise I might consider trying to take LWOP." -teacher D

"I think we should wait to reopen until the numbers are lower. They are higher now than there were in March. I think for now a 100% distance learning model is needed. As a teacher that would suck for me, but as a parent, I dont feel comfortable spending my child back now." Teacher E

Some of them are ready to get back to class and aren't too concerned about getting COVID-19. The majority are very concerned about the increase in numbers lately here on Oahu and so are very worried about returning to school. Some live with elderly parents, young children, teenagers and/or all of the above!! Some already have underlying health issues and are concerned about getting COVID-19 from the students and/or other adults and bringing home to their families. The following are what some of the teachers said.

- I don't feel very safe at all, especially because of the recent surges and the incident at Kama'aina Kids. I think a few weeks of distance learning might be prudent until we have the proper training and prep to keep students and staff safe.
- My honest opinions about school reopening have changed within the past month. When our numbers were low with 2 or 3 positives a day, I felt confident with our ability to teach safely. However, with the daily counts being in the double digits with proof of community spread, I am terrified to return to work. What happens if I get sick and bring something home to my children and my husband? What happens if my children bring something home to me? This virus is scary and may have lifelong implications of having it. And my family is an island here. We don't have the support network to get help when/if we need it. I have spent the better part of my time at home and away from any group gatherings to protect my family. Going back to work opens us up to risk. I love the kids and the staff and that is the only reason I have not quit. But my family has called and begged me to do so because

they worry about my health and safety as well. They have gone so far as to research air purifiers to help keep me safe in the classroom. Because we all know our students come in sick all the time. I do not love the new schedule as I find it confusing and I feel as though it will confuse many of our students. They will not show up on the right days. And in all honesty, I am not sure how the schedule will actually work and look in the classroom. But it is very confusing. And it creates an impossible situation with my own kids who have a schedule of their own. Now I have to find someone to stay home with them on their virtual learning days because I have to be at school. Which introduces a new person with more risk into my life as well as is a financial burden. But I cannot plan any of this at the moment because I have to wait until their school plan is finalized.

In an ideal world, we would have prepared our students well enough in the spring to handle online work. We as teachers know that they didn't work on the things we assigned them to do. They didn't show up to office hours. They pretended like it was an extended summer break. We spent more time on the phone calling students and parents and writing emails to do our best to help our students. I, then actually teaching students. But as educators, we want to see our students' success. So it was worth it. Our students will have to know that we are serious about grades and attendance if we go to virtual learning.

In all honesty, there is no good answer here. People lose in every scenario. We know our students need additional attention due to home life, learning disabilities, economic challenges, etc. They need to be in school. But I don't think putting teacher's lives in jeopardy is worth it. I think we are rushing to put forth a schedule because it is when our 'usual' school year would start. This year is anything but usual. So we have to adapt that. Why can't we push back the start of school a few weeks? Or if we have to do the half days in school with students, do it only to prepare them to do virtual learning for the first quarter. Set up the technology. Teach them to use it, set up expectations, and then we go virtual. This is perhaps the biggest real life lesson they will have to learn: you have to be accountable for certain things and that is real life.

I am sorry for all of the opinions. I have spent a lot of time thinking about this (many sleepless nights). My friends son started up preschool before kindergarten, in Missouri (through the public school district). He has been in school 9 days And she got a letter home today that said someone in her son's class tested positive for COVID so they whole class has to quarantine for 14 days. This will be the pattern across our state/school/country. It is not a question of if it will happen, it is a question of when.

- I do NOT want to come back and I don't want to be a guinea pig for other states. Our COVID-19 numbers keep going up, so what's the point?
I have aging parents at home. My dad already is having health problems. My daughter has asthma. I do not want to put them at MORE risk!
- I feel anxiety in returning to school in regards to the safety of the staff and students, I would rather do 100% distance learning due to the fact that the cases are still high as a state and as a nation. I also don't feel confident that the state will make 6 feet and mask wearing mandatory. I don't know why with less cases during 4th quarter we went distance learning, and now with more cases we are going back to school. Seems like it doesn't make sense.
At the same time I feel anxiety that we may get a pay cut and if we don't cooperate with entering the schools this may incentivise the state or federal government to furlough us or worse.
- I am excited to return to school! I think breaking the school into two teams is a good idea. However, I am concerned that the schedule is not going to work well for us. I do NOT think that a virtual environment is an option for our student body, but I also know that our students need consistency, and this every-other-day-and-some-Fridays thing is going to impact attendance in a negative way. I would have preferred to see, for example, Team A on campus in the mornings and Team B on campus during the afternoons. This would have achieved the same social distancing goals while also providing a consistent, predictable schedule for our kids. And for us, too, for that matter. I hope the admin is open to exploring new options in Semester 2 if Semester

1 doesn't go well.

Yes, I am concerned about the community spread of COVID impacting our campus community. Still, I think we need to be back in the classroom.

- I would like to go back to school and teach!

I don't think virtual teaching is doing any good. I personally don't like it.

Schedule doesn't really matter to me.

I'm not scared just got to keep campus clean and practice clean hygiene.

- Honestly, it's a little scary with the number of cases increasing. I feel like some people don't take it seriously. I've been working all summer at HYCF and the students are not wearing masks and most of the guards. I can't say anything because I'm told that's just how it is. Well my grandsons have asthma and my mother-in-law had COPD so they are at risk if I bring it home. If the virus is now airborne in enclosed places, then all people in the classroom will need to wear those face shields because the droplets could enter their eyes. I just don't know if we're really prepared to be in school. I don't think the custodians will be able to keep up with the sanitizing and teachers/staff will have a hard time enforcing the social distancing and wearing face masks. I understand that our kids need to be in school but can we ensure the safety of our students, staff, and families? All it takes is just one infected person. Some states are going entirely virtual. Maybe we can take a look at how they're planning to do that.

At HYCF, the kids are not allowed any visitors, so I think they are okay to be together since it's like a family living together. However, how do we know that the guards, etc. are being careful when they are out and about? They could potentially carry the virus into the facility and they don't wear their masks so... This is what's happening at the nursing homes and hospitals, the employees are bringing it in and then spreading it.

- I have mixed feelings about going back to school.

I want students to continue education ASAP while ensuring health and safety.

I have confidence in the School model but not in the larger state or national level.

I am expecting a round two infection to be worse than the first.

- I am on the fence about the reopening of school. On the one hand, the virtual learning was unsuccessful with the students and teachers were scrambling to engage them. But I am apprehensive about the logistics to put safety measures in place to keep everyone safe. I think the limited information that has been coming out from the DOE and schools only adds to that uncertainty of a safe learning and work environment. Therefore the model chosen is a good one for our school. It allows students to get face time, while also allowing for deep cleaning when they are not on campus. However, flexibility should be allowed for teachers to be able to continue to work virtually as needed to feel safe.

Now that we're back to 6ft in all directions, will that necessitate a change? I was surprised we didn't do what most secondary schools are doing, and splitting the kids by alpha and then having each teacher teach half the class at a time (rather than teaching every other day). When our numbers increase, we may not be able to maintain 6 ft.

As a PE teacher, I'm also a little concerned about the virus being more prevalent with heavy breathing like in PE. But so long as my class does not have more than the max number of students than everyone else, then I'll live with it. I will have a serious problem if anyone says my class can have more students just because the room is bigger.

- I guess I'm on the fence about returning to school. For us the only option is in person. It helps that our facility is very vigilant about the crisis and the kids and the environment is pretty sterile. Temperature checks when you first come in for everyone and no outside visitors are admitted. Honestly for the rest of the state I think it should be all online or paper packets. The high risk should be in a FSC setting with temp checks etc everyday in person. For me personally I'm opting to keep my kids at home.

I think my big question is, if I get the virus is it workman's comp? Does it come out of my sick leave? If the school gets a case is it shut down? What's the scenario?

- I really want to go back, but thinking about the islands as a whole, I don't think that now is the right time. I'm confident in the plan, but we are asking for trouble by reopening the larger schools. This

is especially true of the schools that voted to completely reopen for face to face learning, which I believe that I read is 14% of Hawaii schools. Reopening now will almost certainly lead to another island wide closure of indefinite length.

- In regards to the school year opening, I am having some mixed feelings. I like our model that we voted in & I think the students need face-to-face instruction. . . but after listening to what the medical experts are saying, I am nervous for our students and at-risk staff. I also think the logistics of actually enforcing the six feet distancing & masks will be very tough. I think a majority of the students will take it seriously, but there are always those who won't & that could cause some issues. If possible, I'd like to stick to the plan we voted on.. but I'm on board with either one. I just want everybody to feel as safe as possible!
- With everything that is going on in our State, I am honestly scared to go back to school with students. I really want to go back to school, I do miss teaching and the students. My biggest concern for me is how fast the virus can spread, as we seen with the Hawaiian Air worker and how he spread it to 40 others. When someone is a symptomatic with no symptoms that is the scariest. I also feel that wearing a mask all day for me will give me more stress and anxiety. I can barely keep a mask on when I need to do some grocery shopping. I will be back in school if it does open up with students on August 5th, but I really hope that they extend the face to face to at least September or if the COVID cases decrease for at least 2 weeks. The high numbers that we had the past week is scary. This really proves how fast it can spread within our community and not by visitors from the mainland. I think the schedule is doable and that I can make it work. The only thing I don't like is teaching a subject that I have never taught before. I am open but need to start looking for curriculum. Mahalo for understanding and allowing us to express our thoughts. This is going to be a trying year for everyone, so I do not feel alone.

Of the 10 or so teachers I have talked to are apprehensive, mostly due to the likely possibility that we'll be closed again. And Again...Many are concerned about the cleaning of the classrooms, student movement, keeping track of kids both in the classroom and on line.

Some feel we should just start on line; it would be less disruptive than being in school one day and then being told we all have to stay home. Some expressed we could do 1 week at school to get to know each other a little, then a retreat.

I definitely have teachers who don't want to return and believe a distance learning/telework option should be offered if we an't just due virtual fr quarter 1. I think some are just resigned (we've been good lap dogs for too long).

We have another vote to modify our approved schedule based on comments gathered during our first vote. Our admin is trying to be flexible. I think they would go virtual quarter 1, but there is too much miscommunication about instructional models. A close reading of the MOU says that we can create something we agree with or use one of the 3 instructional models. As usual, the Sup etc. say that no - they don't want any all virtual, you have to choose from the 3 models. Some principals are saying model C allows all virtual. So as usual, no real leadership from above.

IT'S NOT SAFE AND SOMEONE IS GOING TO DIE! If it's a student there will be a hullabaloo; if it's a teacher or their family member - thoughts & prayers. I've told my son to sue.

WE ARE OPENING... NOT SAFE!

We are basically bleach bottle baby,sitters! While parents get to go do their dream jobs...this is not education... we are being used!

Not safe! I do not want to die, parent will medicate to dump sick kids off....this will happen! Not to mention other teachers and staff not taking this seriously following guidelines when out of school...and risking co workers. Please Not Now!

With states reopening, covid cases rising, and a vaccination at least half a year or more away, it seems pretty obvious what will happen if we return to school. There are quite a few teachers (including myself) who were surprised the continuation of distance learning wasn't at least considered (while not the most ideal). If a single covid case is enough to shutdown an entire school, to me that is telling of how the state views its severity. For that reason, sending students and teachers back to the classroom at this point is not practical. This is not a hospital where employees are trained medical professionals and face to face care is almost unavoidable. We are a place for learning that should only operate if the fundamentals of safety are not jeopardy. I understand the need to possibly revamp the school grounds moving forward, but I don't think the time to do it is with short notice and a "pay as you go" style in a half day setting up front. Perhaps distance learning is a more practical solution for at least the first quarter while a more thorough transition takes place in terms of reorganizing schools and training teachers to teach in the new (but hopefully temporary) environment.

We've decided on the face-to-face model, but some parents are hesitant to send their children back to school. Therefore, we went back and revised to include utilizing acellus for the students who will do virtual learning (didn't want to lose students to homeschooling). Teachers seem to be okay with the model decided and the use of Acellus so they don't need to do double the work. They understand they'll need to check in with students who opt for virtual learning weekly and are okay with that. We had a lot of difficulty with online participation in 4th quarter last school year so hoping it won't be the same for the kids opting for virtual learning.

Thank you so much for reviewing my (our) testimonies.

--

Jodi Beaty, Ph.D.
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Testimony BOE

From: Mahina Goo <mahina@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Mahina Goo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Mahina Goo and I am a teacher at Pearl City High School. I urge the board to reconsider the date of schools reopening. If schools welcome students back on August 4 as currently planned teachers will have four days of prep. While four days of prep worked well for teachers in previous years, this year is nothing like the previous years. Not only are teachers configuring their classrooms to meet the necessary safety guidelines, but teachers are also reworking their curriculum to meet the demands of a hybrid schedule. All with very little guidance from the Board of Education.

I understand that opening schools on August 4 is not only about returning students to an academic setting, but about providing child care so parents can return to work. If teachers, students, and support staff return to the classroom we should do so with confidence. Confidence comes when proper training, and sufficient time to prepare is provided. Teachers will not have either if students return to school on the scheduled date. Please reconsider the date that students return to school, four days and nine half days are not sufficient for the best possible outcome of a return to the classroom or classrooms (for those teachers who teach intermediate, middle school, high school).

Thank you for your time
Mahina Goo

Testimony BOE

From: Lehuanani Lilinoe Coloma <lehua24@gmail.com> on behalf of Lehuanani Lilinoe Coloma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Oppose temp stop of extra compensation to Kaiapuni teachers

Aloha,

I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language Immersion programs for the sy 2020-2021 and urge the BOE to reject the proposal.

I am a parent of three boys that attend Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala. My three boys and I, along with their classmates, attended the December 5, 2019 BOE meeting where the extra compensation was voted and approved on. As Kawano mentioned, the compensation for kaiapuni classroom teachers should already be in the operating budget because kaiapuni is already supposed to have a differential according to BOE policy 105-8: Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. Uemura said "it is justified" and majority of the BOE members concurred whole heartedly. Especially with this new covid-19 school year, they deserve this extra compensation and more because they will be working harder than English teachers, that already have Acellus and other online English programs, in creating an online curriculum.

Mahalo,
Lehuanani Coloma
lehua24@gmail.com
(808) 781-1604

Testimony BOE

From: Kai Mead <kmead@waialae.edu> on behalf of Kai Mead
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Testimony Letter to BOE on action item

[H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kalina Mead. Last school year (2019-2020) I was a 4th grade teacher at Wai'alae Charter School and have now transitioned into a new role as Literacy Coach, where I will no longer have a classroom of students and will be working more with school leaders to support teachers and school wide issues. Prior to working at Wai'alae, I was a teacher and then Academic Coach at Keolu Elementary. I have my MEd. in Curriculum Studies, STMS^2 through UH Manoa. I have worked with many non-profit and 'āina-based organizations across the island of Oahu and have developed many community education partnerships.

Over the back end of the summer I have had a small opportunity to hear some of the inner workings our school administration has been planning in order to reopen schools. Before I go on, I do want to say that I believe my school's administration is attempting to do all they can. I know they are burnt out and just as nervous and stressed about the current situation as I am and we are all simply trying to do the best we can each day. I respect them, I feel for them, and I am hurting for them. But with that said, I also feel a responsibility to be critical of the school I not only work at, but the school where I send my three children (grades PreK, Kinder, 2nd).

As a teacher leader at my school in my new role and probably one of the first teachers to hear about the plans for re-opening our school on August 4th, here is my current understanding of my schools plan for re-opening:

- We are offering blended learning to our students (2 rotational student groups, each group on campus only 2-3 days each week, the off days students are home engaging in distance learning). Classroom teachers will manage blended learning students.
- We are also offering a 100% distance learning option to students and families who are not comfortable returning to campus. These students will be managed by only TWO teachers school wide. Right now we are at 80 students registered for 100% DL - with only two teachers to manage them.
- We have received NO training or PD in distance learning. We are scheduled to receive our first distance learning PD on August 2nd and 3rd from 8:00-12:00. Then teachers will have those two afternoons for planning before school starts on August 4th. So teachers must receive the PD, digest and process the training, and create your plans for the start of school all within two days.
- In my role as literacy coach, I was also asked to be a 100% distance learning teacher, as well as RTI coordinator, and PD and coaching support. Those were previously 3 separate jobs.
- As a charter school, we tend to pride ourselves on being unique and doing things a special way. We claim to be a special educational opportunity in our community for students who are able to attend our school. The way we do things and our beliefs about how children learn are supposed to set us apart from the crowd. In one of my

meetings with admin last week regarding the 100% DL option, a couple of us coaches questioned admin about the 80 students being managed by only two teachers for the entire list of 80 students - we were told that these students who opted for 100% DL would be put onto the same online system as DOE, managed by those two teachers, and if parents don't like it they can enroll their child at another school." There was room for discussion or an opportunity to make a better plan because all of our backs are up against the wall. Everyone is just trying to do what we need to do to get by - then what is the point of being a charter school?

At this point I would now like to share my more personal testimony and what all of this has done to my personal life. After the meetings I've been in this week though regarding distance learning and what we will be doing, personally I do not have much trust or confidence that it is going to go well after the things I heard. I have been really distraught and a nervous wreck the last two weeks because of this... multiple serious anxiety attacks, insomnia... I had to call my husband home from work the other day because I couldn't get off the floor because my anxiety attack was so bad. I have never experienced these feelings in all my life. I just want to be a good parent and educator and I feel our school system is failing us, at Wai'alae and beyond. The decisions being made, the lack of communication, the lack of including teachers and staff in decision making - in many ways, even prior to COVID, I feel we are just strong-armed into going along with a plan that is actually ineffective and is not based on current educational research and knowledge and we are expected to follow along. And that feeling and way of doing things has been extremely amplified with COVID.

My personal situation:

- I am a teacher at the same school that my three kids attend (PreK, K, 2nd)
- I am expected to go to work each day with no telework arrangement opportunities
- My school offers a PreK program that my two older children both went through. Now my youngest is starting in the PreK class.
- Last week I discovered that the PreK class schedule has changed to only 4 days a week, 8-11:30am because of COVID. With that schedule change, I now have no other childcare options for my PreK child. So I am being forced to take a leave of absence under the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" (FFCRA) because I have no other childcare options available to me and my school is no longer available for childcare after 11:30am and on Wednesdays. Plus I was just informed of this last week.
- With there no longer being a full-time PreK class so that I can work full-time I am not able to work and do the job that I have invested in greatly. The job I have been waiting for, the position at the school I have been waiting for. I just got the opportunity - and now I have to walk away. Otherwise, I was proceeding ahead with my work commitments knowing that the PreK school schedule previously was a full day that both of my other children went through. And now with that last minute change that I was just recently made aware of, after my child's PreK paperwork was lost and we received no information regarding the program until just recently, I have had no time or options to make any other childcare arrangements.
- Pair that PreK situation with my lack of trust and confidence that my school will provide a solid 100% distance learning program for my other two children, and I am stuck at crossroads. Why should I send my two older kids to a school that does not value their distance learning education if that is what the parents are choosing?
- 100% distance learners are going to be managed by only TWO teachers school wide... so far we're at 80 kids doing 100% DL. Classroom teachers will only have to manage their blended learners and we're throwing the 100% DL to the wolves. And then when that concept was questioned the response was, "well if they don't like that option they can go to another school."

All of this does not align. It does feel right. It does not look right. IT IS NOT RIGHT. With all of this being said, for my family and my kids I really believe homeschooling and being in full control of the curriculum and instructional practices and the impacts it has on my kids will be a better option than 100% distance learning and trying to follow a plan that wasn't well-developed or thought out at all, whatsoever.

DO NOT OPEN SCHOOL CAMPUSES ON AUGUST 4th. We are not ready. Schools are not ready. It will be a disaster. We need time to effectively plan. Teachers cannot effectively plan under all of these new circumstances and conditions with only two days of planning time in the afternoons! This is a robust and fundamental shift in how we must educate and we are not setting ourselves up for success. We are setting ourselves up for complete and utter failure. None of the higher up people making these plans have truly gotten their hands dirty and have looked at this from a teacher's perspective, in a realistic approach to how we are actually going to make this happen. There is a whole lot of talk behind closed doors, but do they realize what will actually be happening in our classrooms and to our students on their computers at home? Teachers are leaving. Families and students are leaving.

Today I, myself, submitted Form 4140 to my school to withdraw my children, I am taking a leave of absence, and I will homeschool my own kids because not only are teachers not prepared for the blended learning model, even the 100% distance learning option will be a disaster.

Thank you for your time. Please reconsider.

Aloha,
Kalina Mead

--

Kai Mead | Fourth Grade Teacher
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Testimony BOE

From: Katherine Alarcio <kgalarcio@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine Alarcio
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Katherine Alarcio and I am an educator at Pearl City Elementary School. I am writing this email to testify to the H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As an educator, I am greatly concerned with the planned reopening of our campuses to students. Not only am I concerned for the health and well-being of the students, but their families, the physical and mental health of educators and administrators, our own families, after school caregivers, school bus drivers, and every person that will be affected by the haphazard re-opening of our campuses.

Our schools are nowhere near being one hundred percent ready to open. If we are not completely prepared to re-open, how will that benefit the students, their families, and our communities? This is all new territory for everyone, not just in the state of Hawai'i. Why rush into something that we have absolutely no experience with? How can we claim to be ready to open campuses to students, when teachers are afraid for their lives and have not been given the proper training for this drastic change?

I myself am a resource teacher for Kindergarten to 6th grade. I resource the entire school and am specifically trained for this area of teaching. However, as my school has too many students in some of the classrooms, I am being asked to leave my specific teaching area, and serve as a teacher for a grade level homeroom class, for which I have no training. Although I am willing to help my school and the students, I do not have nearly enough time to prepare for teaching a completely new area. I have heard this echoed from several teachers - how can we adequately plan for something when we have no time and training.

DOE claims that we have been receiving training since March, to re-open in August. But there have been no strict guidelines or plans, as to what we are working towards. Although there have been a few webinars, those webinars are strictly voluntary and not all teachers are able to attend these trainings. A few webinars is also not nearly enough to adequately prepare teachers for the reopening of schools, especially when it has not been made known what we are walking into. Teachers and children will be walking into this dire situation, blind. Please, for the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of everyone involved, delay the reopening of our campuses, so that teachers will be able to prepare well and parents and students can be at ease.

Aside from the general concern of being back in the classroom before it is safe, there are many questions that the DOE has not given answers to. Here are just a few:

- What will happen if a student contracts COVID-19? Will the whole class need to quarantine? What about for middle/intermediate and highschools, where there is no way to keep students in "bubbles;" will the whole school need to shut down?
- What if a teacher contracts the disease, how will that be handled? Especially for teachers who have travelled to several classrooms as a resource instructor or grade level assistant?
- Will teachers who live with a person who needs to quarantine from contact with someone who has COVID-19, also need to quarantine? Will this be paid? Will it be taken out of the teacher's hard earned sick leave or vacation days?

And as I'm sure you will see from others, the questions are seemingly endless. At the end of the day, the Hawai'i DOE has failed to provide a concrete plan for our schools, causing even more concern and unrest

in teachers and parents. We do not feel SAFE. Case numbers for COVID-19 are consistently much higher than when our schools initially closed; how is it acceptable to open our schools to students at this time? Ohana bubbles will not realistically work, no matter the grade level. Students, teachers, families, and communities, will be in contact with many people and ohana bubbles are an unrealistic expectation. Not all of the classrooms at my school are able to be kept well ventilated, and we do not have many covered areas for the students to work outside in, without being in the unrelenting sun or in the rain. Our campuses were not built with a pandemic in mind. For everyone's safety, I implore you to please rethink the decision to reopen schools to students on August 4th.

The safety and well-being of our students, teachers, parents, families, and communities, needs to be at the forefront of any decision making. I miss my students and the joys of seeing them grow, but I am not willing to put anyone's health and safety at risk, because of hasty decision making.

For these reasons, I am asking the Board of Education to DELAY the re-opening of our campuses to students.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Katherine Alarcio
Pearl City Elementary School
Resource Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Osa Tui <osa.tui@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Osa Tui
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony VI. G. & VI. H.

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM IS NOT READY TO OPEN. Individual schools may very well be, but as we approach August 4, it's evident that things are not fully in place to start school off on the right foot. Opening haphazardly will simply lead to a cascading effect of problems that will be more difficult to recover from once we begin down the wrong path.

SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIALS ARE CRITICAL TO MITIGATING WORKFORCE LOSS. So many have made plans based on Form 5's indicating continuation of the shortage differentials and comments by the Superintendent stating that if the Legislature did not fund the shortage differentials, she would find it in her budget. With assurances like that, teachers are now having the rug pulled out from under them as they pursued positions in other areas or locations and now for naught should you approve of the Department's request.

Please consider wisely.

Mahalo,

Osa Tui
McKinley High School &
HSTA Vice President

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Testimony BOE

From: Greta Martinez <greta.martinez@gmail.com> on behalf of Greta Martinez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

We cannot open school campuses by Aug 4, 2020:

My name is Greta Martinez, I am a teacher librarian at Kualapu'u Elementary Charter Public School. I am concerned that our school is planning on having students attend resource classes as before, not keeping them in their "clusters" all day as is suggested. There is much discrepancy between schools and we need CLEAR GUIDELINES mandated for all schools. There are lots of questions unanswered. This is not acceptable.

Thank you

Greta Martinez

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Summers <summersmichaelj@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Summers
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony regarding Reopening of Schools

My wife is a public intermediate school teacher on Maui.

We have all seen the "2nd wave" of Covid 19 sweep across the southern U.S. and California, and increasing rates in many other States. Such a situation occurring in isolated Hawaii would be a public health disaster.

Hawaii has done an exceptional job of controlling the spread of Covid 19 by controlling tourism to Hawaii and by facilitating the use of masks and social distancing. The reopening of schools should be done with the same level of caution to prevent uncontrollable outbreaks here in Hawaii.

Before schools are reopened, the following should happen:

- Rapid testing and robust contact tracing capacity should be widely available;
- Proactive testing should be conducted at every school to ensure Covid is not being introduced into the learning community by teachers, students, or staff;
- Local hospital capacity should be ensured.

Nobody wants to be the "last one to die" just before vaccines are readily available. Our educators, students, and their families deserve better than an underprepared response.

Sincerely,

Michael Summers

Testimony BOE

From: joanna@hawaiiintel.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Ms. Payne, Mr. De Lima, Mr. Barcarse, Ms. Cox, Mr. Kawano, Ms. Namau'u, Mr. Takeno, Mr. Uemura, and Mr. Voss,

As a veteran teacher entering my 22nd year of teaching at a middle school on Hawai'i Island, I would NEVER dream of walking into class on the first day of school without a concrete plan. From the seemingly minor to the major components that are imperative to creating a safe and effective learning environment for students, DAY ONE is truly the marker for the rest of the year. Being prepared will make or break a teacher, and in turn, positively or negatively affect student learning. Organization and preparedness are two of the most important traits of an effective classroom teacher. Again, I would NEVER walk into a classroom full of students without being prepared. My middle school students would eat me alive! By not extending the start date for students, YOU will be forcing teachers like me to be unprepared, thereby creating a physically, mentally, and emotionally unsafe environment for my students.

Please do not deliberately FORCE over 180,000 teens, children, and even toddlers to report to school at the beginning of August BEFORE schools and teachers have had a chance to plan everything from drop-off/pick-up procedures, to safety guidelines and rules, to classroom procedures, to adjusted unit and lesson planning... the list goes on and on. Because all aspects of teaching must now address social distancing and radical new bell schedules, please do the right thing and give educators the tools and time we need to safely and effectively prepare for the return of our students. Havoc across the state will ensue if you do not.

Joanna Silva

Testimony BOE

From: Theresa Miller <theresapikus@yahoo.com> on behalf of Theresa Miller
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Safe reopening of Hawaii Schools

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

Aloha and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony regarding the reopening of schools on August 4th. I write this not only as a teacher, but more importantly as the concerned parent of an incoming senior at James Campbell High School.

I am worried about the potentially dangerous situation that could arise by opening schools without a comprehensive plan to ensure safety. I keep hearing from numerous individuals, and the DOE, that our schools have everything they need to safely reopen. However, no one has explained exactly what is being done to ensure a safe reopening. Will every classroom have adequate supplies and time to disinfect and sanitize between every class and group of students? Will all teachers and students have access to personal face shields or individual safety partitions? Is there a plan for what happens when one individual in one class tests positive for COVID-19? Is a school-wide closure a reality in that situation?

I have been informed that the DOE is allowing individual schools and administrators to decide how to safely reopen. I applaud autonomy and self direction, but this is not the time to encourage different strategies regarding keeping our staff and students safe. It is my belief that the DOE must do more to uniformly and consistently address school safety statewide. Specific safety measures should be required to be in place at every single school in Hawaii with the resources available to ensure they are implemented effectively.

Frankly, I am tired of hearing that we have everything we need to safely reopen our schools. I want to know HOW we are going to safely reopen. There should be a detailed list of what the DOE is providing every school, classroom, teacher, and student to ensure said safety. Additionally, there should be specific and uniform safety requirements that each school must meet to safely reopen.

Currently, there is an enormous amount of uncertainty regarding students returning to school in less than 2 weeks and a myriad of unanswered questions. It is my belief that we are not ready.

I implore you to delay school reopening until there is a standard and consistent plan statewide to ensure that we are able to safely reopen schools.

Respectfully,
Theresa Miller

Testimony BOE

From: Lanakila Makua <lanakila_makua@anuenue.org> on behalf of Lanakila Makua
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Here were my points to the BOE on why you should reject the proposal...

- DOE is already underfunded and undervalued by the State.
- Teachers who are the front liners should NOT be the first budget cuts to happen.
- This SY 20-21, kaiapuni teachers will be working harder in dealing with
 - - digital learning: a non-immersion environment
 - increase language proficiency due to distance learning from Quarter 4 of SY 19-20.
 - Editing, translating, and adjusting to digital curricula and platforms created for English only learners.
 - Preparing digital learning AND in person learning to Hawaiian Language Learners.

You kind consideration is greatly appreciated.

Mālama pono,
Lanakila Makua

This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni 'O Ānuenue.

Testimony BOE

From: Jake Shearer <Jakeshearer67@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jake Shearer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I, Jacob Shearer am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I am a part-time teacher at Kalani High School.

I believe that any action to reduce or diminish compensation and support for ANY teacher in this state is a very short-sighted and disappointing. How can you look at the almost insurmountable struggles teachers face in this state and say they can do their work with even less? Especially teachers working with the most disadvantaged students and communities? We can no longer expect teachers to close all the numerous gaps in essential funding and support by on their own. Teachers depend on any and all compensation they receive to provide the best experience they can to their students. By reducing or removing this funding, you doom those teachers and students to even poorer experiences and even worse education results. It is unconcionable to think that cuts to teacher funding would even be considered. You realize it's near impossible to hire these teachers because of low pay and low support? Actions such as these will only lead to loss of teachers and disadvantages students getting the short end of the stick once again, worsening an already dismal situation. I can think of no worse response than cutting funding. To quote from the HSTA website: "The HSTA understands Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. "Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators' pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread," Rosenlee said.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. Please write to the BOE and make it clear that we cannot allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times."

Do better. Find other ways to make funding work. Do not put this burden on teachers and students. They suffer enough.

Mahalo,
Jacob Shearer

Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Herlitz <vanessaeherlitz@hotmail.com> on behalf of Vanessa Herlitz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Vanessa Owens and I work at Kapaa High School. I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

It is my opinion that we are not prepared to open schools. I think we need time to develop fully accessible distance learning opportunities to our students. We need to collaborate with other teachers and build online curriculum that is accessible and meaningful. As an art teacher, I would like time to create kits that students can pick up to create art at home.

The DOE and DOH need more time to collaborate on how to make face to face learning safer. We need to ensure that our custodial staff is able to keep up with extra cleaning and sanitizing that will ensure safe facilities.

The health and safety of our students and staff should be a priority. Until we are confident that we can guarantee a safe learning environment, we should emphasis online learning and have time to plan that effectively.

Testimony BOE

From: Deirdre McGrath <deirdre.mcgrath@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Deirdre McGrath
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern:

My name is Deirdre McGrath and I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a special education teacher currently teaching in Waialua. I consider myself to be very lucky, as I have always known that I wanted to work with children, specifically children with special needs. Coming from a family of educators, I knew that this would require additional schooling and certifications, ongoing professional development, extra time dedicated to mandatory meetings, and endless hours of documentation and paperwork. It is no secret that compared to most professions, teachers are underpaid for the amount of work that is expected of them. Which is why I was so grateful and relieved to learn about the shortage differentials this past January.

The differential pay has allowed me to provide my students with better learning opportunities and materials. Special education teachers often have to create their own material or curriculum to supplement the school's curriculum that our students have difficulty accessing. It has also allowed me to address my own needs in areas that I've had to sacrifice in the past. For example, I would often hesitate to make some doctor's appointments, or to schedule tests because of out of pocket expenses. I have also been able to start planning for my future by starting a retirement savings plan. As someone who was essentially living paycheck to paycheck, this was never a possibility for me prior to receiving the differential pay.

As we prepare to start the 2020-2021 school year, I have mixed emotions. I am excited to get back on campus and see my students again, but our health and safety is always a concern. I know that we have social distancing guidelines in place to make school a safer environment, but students with special needs will typically have trouble adhering to these guidelines and will often need more support (hand-over-hand, toileting, basic hygiene). I understand that Covid has presented us with unforeseen challenges with the overall budget. However, to use funds that were promised to teachers in hard-to-staff areas and who work with some of the most at-risk students seems extremely unfair.

As a native New Yorker, I am constantly torn between staying in Hawaii (working with students at a school that I love) while trying to make ends meet, and moving back home- closer to family and friends. The shortage differential was a main factor in my decision to stay teaching in Hawaii. I strongly urge you to reject the proposal which would discontinue the shortage differential pay.

Thank you for your consideration,
Deirdre McGrath

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Testimony BOE

From: Daria Boone <dar_kalia@hotmail.com> on behalf of Daria Boone
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: teacher testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

With little than two weeks to welcoming students, I do not feel prepared to welcome students back to campus safely. I only just got a new principal at my school two days ago and she has yet to share our schools plan with teachers, let alone families to feel secure sending their child back to school.

I work at Haiku School on Maui and pride myself in being an excellent educator. But during this new way of doing things and planning for a school that no one has yet to see takes time and collaboration with my colleagues to feel comfortable bringing students back to campus with a clear, coherent plan. Even another ten days will give our leadership, principal, teachers proper time to implement a school design of the future.

Thank you for taking the time to do what's best for public education to not be scrambling to begin the year. We have had zero training in any online platform and will need the time to become experts to best reach Hawai'i 's keiki in a safe, meaningful way.

Thank you,
Daria Boone
Haiku School
Fifth Grade GLC
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: patti hawkinson <phawkinson@hanalei.k12.hi.us> on behalf of patti hawkinson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying with regards to the proposed pay cuts due to shortage differentials.

My name is Patti Spaethe. I have taught school at Hanalei Elementary School for the last 11 years. I have a Masters Degree in Elementary Education. For my entire time working as a teacher in Hawaii I have had a second job after school. I am a single mother of two children who live at home with me. I just recently had to take my children off my health insurance because I could not afford to pay my living expenses and pay their insurance as well.

I understand that the Covid-19 situation has had a huge effect on what government funds are available to pay employees. What we are dealing with here is our children's future. Everyone knows that teachers are notoriously underpaid. I work 60 plus hours a week at school and go in at least one day on the weekend. I do this obviously not for the pay, but because I want to do the best possible job I can to be prepared and make the curriculum relevant and enjoyable for the students. As I assess my students and learn their different needs, I need to make plans for each one of them and that takes time which we are not given during the school day. I don't complain, I do it because I love what I do. But.... honestly if I would have to get a third job to make up for a pay cut in order to pay my bills just to get by, I think I would have to leave the teaching profession.

The children need to be our priority. They need to be taught and taught well and you could lose a lot of good teachers by not paying them enough to survive.

Please, please, please do not cut pay for licensed teachers. It would be devastating!

Aloha and thank you very much for your time.

Patti Spaethe

Testimony BOE

From: Candyce Makishi <candyce.makishi@gmail.com> on behalf of Candyce Makishi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am a teacher at Mililani Ike Elementary. There are many changes happening very suddenly and teachers are trying to adjust as best as they can. However, it's been a very stressful process and as the date for our opening of the school year approaches, it feels like there's information overload and we're being rushed to adjust to countless changes. We cannot rush the process or it will be chaos and could lead to unfollowed safety protocols. If safety is our number one concern, more time is needed to ensure each and every teacher understands all the little and big new changes that must occur in order to reopen schools safely. There are just too many unknowns and questions right now. We can't learn and adjust as we go in this case because it will put too many lives at risk. Teachers need more time to prepare so that we feel comfortable returning to work and knowing exactly what we need to do to keep everyone safe.

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Nakamura <lisa.nakamura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Lisa Nakamura and I am a 5th grade teacher at Pauoa Elementary. I am dual certified. I have taught for 23 years. And in all my years of teaching, I have never felt this way. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I just listened to the Superintendent's message emailed to us on July 21 at 8:20pm and I feel angry and frustrated, and I feel offended. She said that the governor has worked really hard to delay tourism for a month so that we can open our schools; so, teachers, let's work together to open the schools. Did the governor delay tourism only for teachers? He did not. My takeaway from her speech is that if schools don't open, it will be the teachers' fault. We are not babysitters, we are not merely caregivers, we are teachers. We aren't welcoming students back just so that parents can go back to work. So that our economy can get going. We want to teach.

The Superintendent said schools are ready. Schools are safe. Schools have the needed PPE. 15 more nurses to help all schools. Social distancing. This is all great, but I still don't feel safe. Dr. Park has spoken about creating "bubbles" in school. Really? We have no control over what our students do once they leave the classroom and campus. We don't know what students are doing after school. We don't know how safe parents and families are being, or have been during school closure and the summer. How can you say that we will have created a "bubble" that limits the amount of exposure when our students go home every day, are exposed to who knows what, then returns to school in the morning? How is our "bubble" safe? When we say WE are not ready, in this sense, WE are not just the teachers. WE is our society. Look at what is going on in the world, in our country, in our own state. Look at the places where they didn't get a handle on the virus and then opened their schools. "Bubbles" are not virus proof. Social distancing and PPEs will help keep us safe, but this too is not virus proof. Our state is experiencing more positive cases. WE don't have a handle on this virus yet. WE are not ready to open our schools.

We have heard about the online curriculum available to grades 6-12 for families who want full time distance learning. There has been talk about K-5 curriculum being put together. On Monday at the news conference, the Superintendent mentioned that there is online curriculum available for K-5. She didn't give any more details or specifics. I went searching all over the internet for this. Is this true? Where is it? Why haven't we heard about it? We need to provide the option of full distance learning to our Pauoa families. At our school, we are literally scrambling. This wasn't a part of the 3 models that we were supposed to choose from. Where is the department in helping us find the online curriculum that 6-12 has? Why are we scrambling, doing the research by ourselves, searching for solutions, networking amongst ourselves, with no support from the state? Where is the DOE in all of this? How can we be ready in less than 2 weeks? We have been left alone to fend for ourselves and it is so frustrating.

We need to get this right the first time. There is no room for error when lives are at stake. Teachers get it. We want to see our kids. We want to be back. In the end, I know that we are going to do what

we have to do for the kids. We are going to find a way to make it work. And that seems to be the "thing" that the state is relying on and assuming from us. Which is so incredibly aggravating and frustrating. We are not ready to open on August 4th.

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Testimony BOE

From: Jason Jestice <jason.jestice@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jason Jestice
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to ask you to please not discontinue the "Extra" compensation for SPED, Hard-to Staff, and HLIP teachers. These positions deal with some of our most vulnerable students. These teachers are routinely asked to provide services and supports that are not required of other educators and often do so under extremely difficult circumstances that impact their lives and families outside of their school day.

As a special education teacher of 10 years with the Hawaii Department of Education, I can attest to the growing hardships I have faced over that time. More and more demands have been placed on all teachers' time and this has greatly impacted SPED teachers. Teachers have been increasingly asked to spend many more hours a week on professional learning communities, WASC accreditation, and learning academies, to name a few. At my school, these demands can take up to 6 hours a week of my school day. That means that time spent on creating and monitoring SPED students' Individual Educational Program (IEP) goals and objectives, planning and attending IEP meetings, monitoring and creating quarterly IEP progress reports, and communicating with and supporting SPED students and parents must be found outside of our school day. SPED teachers sometimes work 10-20 hours a week outside of our school day to meet the demands of our position.

Our position supports some of our most vulnerable students and their parents. We are expected to main the main connection between the DOE and these folks. We are expected to be familiar with all current laws,

procedures, and supports. We create legal documents and facilitate meetings that have major impacts on students and their families. No other teachers have this kind of responsibility.

The extra compensation has several positive impacts on teachers and schools. First, it makes us feel appreciated and compensated for the jobs we do. Many of us would do this regardless, but I have to tell the feeling of support and appreciation makes us feel we are worth something. The second thing the compensation does is keep experienced SPED teachers in their positions. Every year, at my school, and many more, we lose SPED teachers. This means students have a long term sub or brand new teacher. This happens over and over because teachers burn out and say " its not with the money. " This year we have seen 25% less turn over in SPED staffing in schools, mostly due to higher compensation for SPED teachers. Finally, for me, the extra compensation has allowed me to start a savings account, something I had never been able to do, as bills and student loans took all of my paychecks each month. What a wonderful feeling it has been to know that I can actually put some money away for a rainy day or unforeseen hardship.

This compensation helps teachers afford to live in Hawaii and do what they love and feel wanted and appreciated, especially in these difficult and unsure times. This compensation shows that the board and the state realize the importance of the work done by these teachers and feel that all they do "over and above" should be recognized. It also shows your commitment to these student populations and their families and the equity of our school system.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

--

Jason Jestice
SPED/ELA Resource/Inclusion
Waipahu High School
808-307-9419

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Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Shiramizu <kshi89@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Shiramizu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 23, 2020
Attachments: July 23rd TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.docx

see attachment

Thank you,
Kathleen Shiramizu
Farrington High School
Special Education Teacher

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020
1:30 PM

BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON CATHERINE PAYNE and members of the BOARD:

My name is Kathleen Shiramizu. I am a Special Education LifeSkills Teacher at Farrington High School, grades 9 -12 and code 31-34 (post graduates). I am submitting testimony to BOE regarding cuts to shortage differentials and delaying student start date for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a Special Education Teacher, I am highly qualified for my job. "Thank you" for my differential in January 2020. It made me feel valued. However, my testimony today is not kind. I continue to advocate for all Special Education Teachers as they teach specialty students. In my program of Lifeskills, it is individualized and complex. Your recent consideration to not fulfill the agreement of providing shortage differential in 2020-21 SY is as real as my consideration to retire now. I wish for you to reconsider your decision on this matter.

Also, with the current COVID-19 considerations allowed to business and tourism, why is education different? There is no mention of pre-checked evidence to prove students or staff are COVID free before coming on campus. I would like to leave COVID free each day as I have family (high risk) needs at home to tend to. There is only mention for teachers "eye" to check whether student's experience illness. That is not preventive, this is after the fact. I also don't agree with DOE 's reference of teaching in a "bubble". My students daily ride the (orange) school buses, (some) live in housing areas where positive readings were present, and I cannot apply a thermal thermometer to protect myself and my support staff who work in "touch-distance" of 1:1, hand-over-hand applications. Students will bring their unhealthy unknowns to the "bubble".

My "special needs students" lack voice to express themselves and minds that need constant redirection or physical touch to re-do, prevent from harm, or move forward from distraction. Imagine the needs of my support staff when student needs bathroom changes or support when eating. There is no 6 feet distancing. This is a health risk.

Answers are still needed to provide for my health and safety as program is rendered. A delay of start date would allow details to include distance learning options besides daily, face-face, physical attendance to school. My program of Self-Management, Functional Academics, Recreation & Leisure, and a Pre-Vocational component acclimates to a home-based learning environment. The parent, like our presence, would be the support. It's safe. Parent can determine student's learning schedule. July 29th is less than a week away. I am only "one" Special Ed Teacher speaking on my behalf. It's personal and a lifetime of dedication to my profession. Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: kellee hearther <calikellee@gmail.com> on behalf of kellee hearther
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This is testimony for Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Board of Education MUST find a way to keep their promise and NOT discontinue the differentials for special education, Hawaiian immersion and hard-to-staff positions.

HAVE WE LEARNED NOTHING FROM THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC?
TEACHERS ARE ESSENTIAL WORKERS!

Teachers are essential to keeping our children safe, engaged, mentally stimulated and on the path to bigger and better things. Children need continuity of learning and keeping good teachers in our state is absolutely tantamount to the success of our future generations.

Teachers in Hawaii already make a meager living, with many of them working a second job in addition to their teaching job. You are well aware that the data show this additional money was effective in retaining educators in our state. The funds increased the number of special education teachers, charged with teaching and caring for our most vulnerable students. The funds also increased the number of educators in hard-to-staff schools and decreased the number of employees leaving those positions.

Our future, Hawaii's future, depends on an educated populace. How do you expect to keep qualified people in your most challenging positions without proper compensation? Special education teachers are required to go above and beyond what is expected of a typical classroom teacher.

If you vote to discontinue the differentials, YOU WILL LOSE TEACHERS. A loss of teachers IS A LOSS FOR US ALL.

A promise is a promise.

Sincerely,
Kellee Hearther
Radford High School parent

Testimony BOE

From: crosehill@abilitiesunlimitedhi.org
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum on Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 Covid 19 Response)

Keep Hawaii safe. Keep Hawaii teachers, kids and families safe. There are so many students and staff that go into making a school run efficiently.

Considering the people who are still out partying with family and friends, you cannot confidently say even the adults will stay in their cohorts let alone kids who haven't seen their friends in months. Or maybe they have seen their friends because again, not everyone is socially distancing. All the teachers and children are bringing to school everyone they've been with in the last two weeks.

I know everyone is striving for normalcy right now and parents may need a break, but it's not okay to put people's health at risk to do so. The only responsible action right now is to continue distant learning or provide more support for home schooling. Teachers are some of the most selfless humans and already sacrifice so much for their careers and their students.

Don't make them sacrifice their health.

Cara

Testimony BOE

From: Brittany Nakawatase <britnaka@gmail.com> on behalf of Brittany Nakawatase
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teachers and students lives at stake!!!

We as educators are in fear of our lives by having to go back into the classroom. It is like a Petri dish of germs inside a classroom, when one kid gets sick it spreads like wild fire! I was out sick last year for a week because my students were coming down with the flu and spread it to me! Unlike other essential workers we are not being provided with PPE or other forms of shields such as the plexiglass that other workers are getting to stand behind when coming in contact with customers! If the state is too scared to open, schools should be too!! We are putting innocent lives at stake and those lives are going to be on your hands!!!!

-Brittany Nakawatase

Testimony BOE

From: Marina Keizer <mkissawookiee@gmail.com> on behalf of Marina Keizer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This is my testimony for: Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Marina Keizer. I am a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School and I have been a public school teacher in Kona for 15 years. My children attend Holualoa Elementary School and Kealahou Intermediate School.

The current HDOE reopening plan is rushed, unsafe, and will likely result in an increase of transmission of coronavirus, severe illness, and possibly numerous deaths. Every one of the four members of my family in my household is at high risk for coronavirus complications. I also help care for my 92 year old grandfather. **For the sake of my family, our many multi-generational households, and our Hawai'i community, please demand that schools continue distance learning. The HDOE currently does not have sufficient plans or materials in place for a safe reopening.**

On July 20th, during the press briefing with Gov. Ige, Sarah Parks, Bruce Anderson, and Supt. Kishimoto, many alarming and misleading statements were made. They discussed the training that teachers had received. I am a teacher-- I have received NO TRAINING. They claim that teachers will receive additional time for training, but this additional time takes place AFTER students begin arriving at school. This is not acceptable! Training is needed for new health and safety protocol, for new curriculum being used for distance learning, and for additional distance learning platforms for teaching students while they are learning from home and for potential continued school closures.

They described extensive plans made by the DOE-- the plans lack crucial details about bus safety, the expectations for the use of substitutes, the plans for class/school closures when a student, staff member, or family member becomes Covid-positive. I have read all the plans and documents. I have done this on my own, during my non-paid hours. I have many questions that my administrator has not been able to answer. Our principals and staff members have been working hard to make this work. They have given their best effort in good faith to try to figure out, with very little guidance, how to reopen schools. The fact is that there are many unanswered questions, many preparations that remain, and a great deal of uncertainty. This is not safe and I have NO CONFIDENCE in the DOE's current reopening plan to keep me and my students and our family members safe.

They discussed keeping children in "bubbles"-- this is a misleading statement that gives the public a false sense of security. Children will be in multiple groups while at home with their siblings and family members, while on the bus, while talking story in the bathroom, **while switching to their multiple classes (if in Inter or High School)** while in their sports/after school programs, etc. There are no safe bubbles in a classroom full of students with multiple bubbles. Every individual child in each individual class will have this same situation played out-- "classroom bubbles" are a fallacy and should not be used to rationalize that schools are safe to reopen. Calling a classroom of children "a

bubble" is ludicrous. This situation would also be exposing each child and their family to the shared germs of dozens of students.

Yet, the HIDOE, the HIBOE, HODOH Director Bruce Anderson, all are planning to open up schools to hundreds of students and staff with the attitude that we will figure it out as we go along. This is not acceptable.

I personally know two teachers who have retired earlier than they expected due to the risk of Covid-19. As a HSTA School Level Leader, I have participated in meetings with hundreds of teachers who are seeking information about leave and seeking information about ADA accommodations to continue teleworking. If the reopening of schools continues as planned, there will be many teachers who do not return. Teachers are not willing to sacrifice their health and safety unnecessarily as a result of poor planning, poor funding, and poor communication. With the looming threat of losing the pay differentials, possible upcoming pay cuts and furloughs, the current teacher shortage crisis will likely only get worse-- and what does the DOE have planned to address that situation on the first day of students' return to school?

I urge you to demand to delay the reopening of schools and for distance learning to continue at all Hawai'i Public Schools until the HIDOE addresses the concerns of the HSTA by answering the questions regarding health and safety of students and staff.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Marina Keizer
5th Grade Teacher
Holualoa Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Kathy Lomont <kathlomont@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kathy Lomont
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Re-Opening of Schools

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kathleen Lomont and I am a Special Education teacher at Honoka'a Elementary School. I understand that the Board of Education, School Superintendent, and the Governor are committed to opening schools August 4. While they are anxious for this to happen so that parents can go back to work and the state can open up to mainland travel, they are rushing to sending kids back to school so soon without really thinking about the logistics and repercussions. There are a number of questions that need to be answered by the Department of Health and Board of Education so that teachers understand what to do when the Covid-19 virus hits the schools, and IT WILL. Dr. Bruce Anderson stated that the number of cases will increase once the schools are open. Many teachers are older and in the high risk group of getting the virus. Please push back the opening date of when students return to school. Allow time for teachers to learn all the new protocol that will be implemented at school so that we can confidently teach our students that protocol. Teachers need to feel safe and confident to do their jobs effectively and by giving us more time before students return will help greatly.

Respectively,

Kathleen Lomont
Special Education Teacher
Honoka'a Elementary School
(808) 775-8820

Testimony BOE

From: Shana English <shana@paia.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shana English
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Extending the opening of SY 20 - 21

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5](#)

I am a very concerned educator as the opening of the new school year approached quickly. Myself and as a 2nd Grade teacher and a parent I find myself filled with uncertainty for the safety of our children and consider pushing back the start date of school for the 20-21 school year due to the uncertainties of teachers' and students' safety. There are simply too many unanswered questions and concerns related to the following:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning model for their children? Classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to what they are currently expected to teach?
- What are the **clear protocols** for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wear face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially in close proximity of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other staff member, or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be implemented for employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile or young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, have completed days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a virtual learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

To continue to be effective educators that deliver quality instruction to all of his/her students; teachers need to get these answers and to plan accordingly on how to keep everyone safe, including the families of our students.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.
Shana English



ReplyForward

Testimony BOE

From: Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com> on behalf of Liz Benson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony, July 22, 2020

Elizabeth M Benson
444B Mauna Iho Place
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

RE: Reopening of Schools

July 22, 2020

To the Hawaii Board of Education,

As an educator, I am offended by the political rhetoric inundating the media trying to convince teachers, parents, students, and our larger community that it is safe to reopen our schools. People are afraid and the thought of reopening our schools terrifies us because we teachers understand the day to day operations of campuses and what that means in realistic terms based on teachers' experiences nationwide. Teachers in Florida filed a law suit against their state yesterday about their state's plan to reopen. The board needs to delay the reopening until all safety measures are well in place and not this hasty attempt at "answering the call" set by our current president. Look at the huge fail by our federal government in protecting the safeguard of its citizens. Deplorable. I do however, applaud our governor for pushing the reopening of the economy back to assure safer reopening of schools. Still, until reliable testing is available to all our citizens, we will not understand the scope of the spread of the coronavirus in our communities. We've seen growing numbers of cases in our first responders, hospitals, the local travel industry as well as care homes. Experts estimate numbers could be 10 times higher than what's being reported in the media. Needless to say, confidence is low. To ask our administrators, teachers, and staff to get-it-together to reopen schools in just 13 days, is yet another huge fail by government in building public confidence in its education system and foremost, truly making our children and families a priority.

We, as a state, cannot continue to follow trends being set stateside – federal or otherwise. The thing I am most proud of, being from Hawaii, is that we have always been at the forefront of change – first to enact pro-choice legislation when the rest of the country was in turmoil. Hawaii has set many precedents in the past. We should again be at the forefront and be the example to err on the side of caution in reopening our schools, in how we respond in the face of this pandemic and REALLY focus on the best solutions for our community. Yes, covid will pass, but, realistically we all know, its not going to be anytime soon. Remember, we are still in the early stages of this pandemic.

Allow schools time to really get the necessary structures in place that they need. Personally, I've only heard from my administrators less than a handful of times since March and just once since we approach opening day. The discussion was based on new bell schedules and learning models, not how we plan to operationalize all the safety measures talked about in the press. There needs to be a statewide mandate to focus on refitting schools to provide true safeguards for our school communities. Safety shouldn't translate into me standing in my classroom with a spray bottle of disinfectant in one hand while conducting face-to-face AND online learning opportunities. There is no way to safely implement this plan and you are opening up the state to countless law suits that would result when we start to see cases in schools and we will see cases. I don't believe having one-way traffic patterns in high school hallways is going to keep us any safer at this juncture. We need to have a wider scoped, long-term vision, look into the technologies now available like UV robotic cleaners, infrared scanners and secure our campuses before inviting our students back.

I implore the board to reconsider the reopening of schools at this time. Confidence in government is at an all time low, but Hawaii has historically been at the forefront of change. People need to SEE and understand the modifications that are being made to our campuses to assure everyone that serious measures are being taken, but we may have to wait a little while longer to do that. We just don't know enough about the virus let alone how to DEAL with it. What we do know, is that it is a respiratory virus, the deadliest kind because it is airborne. This, alone, should be enough to convince the board that it is too soon. We are still scrambling at every level daily to address the questions and fear our people have about reopening. Let's give our people a solution you, as a board, can be proud of when it's all said and done. Godspeed.

Elizabeth M Benson
Social Studies High School Teacher

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Dunhour <ashlynnsmommy29@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Dunhour
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am a parent of a Kauluwela Elementary School student. It is important that we delay the reopening of schools in order to ensure the safety and health of our students, families, teachers, and school administrators.

There needs to be clearer protocols among all schools before schools can be reopened safely again.

Thank you,
Ashley Dunhour

Testimony BOE

From: Joanne Kimura <jokimura@earthlink.net> on behalf of Joanne Kimura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Joanne Kimura. I am a teacher Special Education teacher at Pearl City High School. I am testifying against Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I think the compensation for special education teachers is even more warranted this year returning to school in a COVID-19 pandemic. Special Education teachers will be more at risk working with students who do not understand the dangers of COVID -19 and do not understand the requirements to prevent the passing of COVID-19. Many of these students are unable to express if they have symptoms and many already have pre-existing behaviors that are health risks to teachers. In addition special education students are not being required to wear masks if they are unable to cope with the stress of wearing masks. Special education students are also being allowed to have more face to face instructional time to meet their educational Out of my 13 IEP students I have already recommended 5 for more face to face time because of what they experienced during the shutdown. I have 4 incoming 9th grader who I have no knowledge whether they too will need more time.

During the shutdown many parent opted to have face to face IEPs. I am sure they will be given the option this year. This means exposure to more people, of whom we do not know their past practices in social distancing and health status. I anticipating having to attend more than the 30 IEPs I attended last year since my student load has increased.

I think teaching in a COVID-19 pandemic is a risk. I think that being a special education teacher in a COVID-19 is even more than a risk. I think the extra compensation will be looked upon this year be a front line essential worker compensation. If taken away may make some people think about their value to the DOE and make them chose not to be special education teachers, much less teachers at all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony BOE

From: mg mgg <mgcoupons3@gmail.com> on behalf of mg mgg
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am writing in relation to Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am expected to return to school with many questions that remain unanswered regarding protocols, such as:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease."

This is a perfunctory response at best that does not seem to regard the ENTIRE community of school staff. Without sufficient responses and time for training, I think most teachers and administrators are putting themselves at high risk, as well as their students. Although, we can walk into a viral “battlefield” with creative and strategic thought, I think that our parents and children deserve better than this.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts.

Maria Gordon

Kindergarten teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: June Kawaguchi <hakinidevi@yahoo.com> on behalf of June Kawaguchi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear BOE,

I'm testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

The public school system has been short-changed and underfunded for decades. It appears that those who make the big decisions in this system want this to continue by suggesting that the extra compensation that teachers received for 1 semester is frivolous and overly generous and something that should be taken away for any emergency that you deem more important. By doing so, you are telling the public that teachers are unimportant and of no consequence. You do not value us and that is apparent as I need to write this letter to beg for pittance.

I ask you to please do the right thing and give teachers their due.

Regards,
June Kawaguchi
Fine Arts and Fashion Design Teacher
Nanakuli High & Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Aimee Nakama <aimee.nakama@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Aimee Nakama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Good morning-

As a parent of a child enrolled in the Hawaii DOE and a teacher in the DOE, I have many concerns with the start of school and campuses opening up starting next week.

There are many questions still left unanswered. The health of students, teachers and staff should not be jeopardized to try to open school campuses as scheduled. The top priority as teachers is the safety of our students. We have monthly fire drills, active shooter training, earthquake drills, tsunami evacuation plans that we practice and train for as teachers and as a school..we hope to never have to use them but we know what to do in case of any of those emergencies. . We have class and school procedures and routines to keep the school safe for all, but so far we teachers have had NO training or briefings of the procedures for COVID-19. We have expressed our concerns and questions and have not had them all answered.

There are plans to keep the students in cohorts to try to reduce exposure and be able to have enough room to keep the desk 6 feet apart. But at some schools there are 3 cohorts. Group A will attend campus Monday and Tuesday, Group B will be on campus Thursday, Friday. Group C are students who receive other services like ELL, special education, etc. Group C will be on campus and in classrooms every day. Although we as teachers would love to be back in the classroom with all students present, having a group that comes every day in this situation defeats the purpose of trying to reduce exposure, as group C will be exposed to both group A and B. Although it is out of our control, we would feel terrible if there was a spread or if any of our students or their families got COVID-19 because of being in our classrooms. Many of our students and teachers go home to babies, infants and elderly grandparents.

Until there is a clear plan, students should start with virtual learning. Meeting in small groups on webEx could help meet the needs of students, while keeping students and teachers safe and healthy.

Thank you,
Aimee Nakama
Pu'u Kukui Elementary School
SPED inclusion teacher/SPED Dept. Head

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Testimony BOE

From: Best Built Incorp <bestbuiltinc@gmail.com> on behalf of Best Built Incorp
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Compensation for kaiapuni teachers

To Whom It May Concern,

I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language Immersion programs for the sy 2020-2021 and urge the BOE to reject the proposal.

My keiki attend Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala. They attended the December 5, 2019 BOE meeting where the extra compensation was voted and approved on. As Kawano mentioned, the compensation for kaiapuni classroom teachers should already be in the operating budget because kaiapuni is already supposed to have a differential according to BOE policy 105-8: Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. Uemura said "it is justified" and majority of the BOE members concurred whole heartedly. Especially with this new covid-19 school year, they deserve this extra compensation and more because they will be working harder than English teachers, that already have Acellus and other online English programs, in creating an online curriculum.

Mahalo,
Abel Coloma
Bestbuiltinc@gmail.com
(808) 688-0761

Testimony BOE

From: Jayde Bumanglag <jaydebumanglag@gmail.com> on behalf of Jayde Bumanglag
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jayde Bumanglag and I am writing to testify and urge that you delay the return of students to schools.

I am a concerned aunt, who have a nephew about to start kindergarten; and have family members who are teachers (aka front liners) that I reside with and am uneasy to know they are all returning to school/public settings too soon.

I am concerned for the health and safety of all of our school communities and beg that you rethink this move. Please consider taking time to thoroughly prepare your teachers, faculty and all staff members, students and families. Ensure everyone is equipped with proper PPE and follow CDC guidelines regarding hand washing/infection control, social distancing, mask and/or face shield wearing, etc.

I believe continuing distance learning and advising that special classes like physical education teachers to be able to create and upload videos to a platform that students can access and participate in at home, may be helpful in the interim also.

COVID-19 is a tricky virus that is still developing and we have absolutely no control of it, we need to act like we have it (as many carriers may be asymptomatic) and be mindful of everyone else; if we can take control of this matter and delay the reopening of schools and students returning to campuses, that would make a huge impact to help keep everyone safe.

Please do not rush this. Educate students and families on discussion about this virus and the pandemic to ensure everyone has the same understanding and common courtesy for each other.

Mahalo,
Jayde Bumanglag

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Gail Chun <gailchun@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Gail Chun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Defer Opening of Public Schools

With rising numbers of covid positives, Why is the BOE pursue opening up of schools as scheduled.

It's my understanding that even the wearing of masks by students will be left up to each teacher. That is ridiculous; So if my child has a "Karen" as a teacher, it'll take one infected student to exponentially spread the virus to so many others.

If you have gone shopping in your local grocery store, you will witness adults not following the one way signs; adults not social distancing or wearing masks. If adults can't follow basic rules, it will be much worse with students. What is the rush to open up in August when even mainland schools and colleges have committed to online classes only.

Education is important but the health and safety of our children is more important; it is premature to open up the schools. Please reconsider reopening date until the numbers show no positives for At least a month. In the meantime, continue virtual learning for all with more effort in making provisions for students without computers to have access to one.

Gail Chun
(808) 286-9910

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Devin <devin@kilauea.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heather Devin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good afternoon. I am testifying on Action Item: H. Board on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association. My name is Heather Devin and I am a 3rd grade teacher here in Hawaii.

Let me begin by saying that I am in favor of teachers and students going back to school as long as safety measures and plans for educating the students are clear and consistent. I am speaking today because I don't feel that to be true.

Presently all of the rules and regulations handed down to the schools have been vague and unclear. There is no consistent understanding among teachers, principals, parents, and frankly the HSTA, the BOE or the DOE.

We continue to hear 3 feet used alongside with 6 feet when discussing social distancing. We continue to hear differing viewpoints on which students must wear masks and when masks can be removed. Lastly everyone across the board is confused as to what is meant by distance learning and what responsibilities teachers have in providing this.

Right now we are sending a message to our families that we have no clear plan in place! Students are leaving our schools and we are losing staffing positions and money because parents are unsure and confused. If we want the children back in school we have to be clear and concise and present a plan that can be implemented consistently across the board.

Please delay the reopening of schools for students until this can be accomplished. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Heather Devin

Testimony BOE

From: Donna Iwaishi <doiwaishi@gmail.com> on behalf of Donna Iwaishi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

RE: Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha,

I am writing to you as a concerned prekindergarten teacher. I WANT to go back to school. I WANT to give my students face-to-face instruction every day. My concern centers around the fact that the DOE is not prepared to have students safely return by August 4th. Teachers need time to prepare for students' return to campus and to set up a successful distance learning experience for those who have requested it. Schools need to have the PPE in order to ensure appropriate safety measures can be followed. Please do not allow our students to be guinea pigs as part of Hawaii's reopening plans. I urge you to support HSTA's request to delay the reopening of schools for the students. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna S. Iwaishi
Prekindergarten Teacher
Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Teresa Kaholoaa <teresa.kaholoaa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Teresa Kaholoaa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Cuts of shortage differentials

Aloha,

I am opposing the proposal of cuts to shortage differentials. It is a difficult time for all, it should not be encouraged and/or supported to increase the difficulty by cutting what was previously promised and long awaited for (especially while the work load is being increased due to the pandemic). One should not have anything to do with the other since a commitment was already put in place.

Mahalo,
Ululani

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Testimony BOE

From: Pua Burns <Pua@paia.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Pua Burns
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Extending the opening date of schools

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My name is Puanani Burns and I am a 1st Grade teacher at Pā'ia School. I urge the BOE to consider pushing back the start date of school for the 20-21 school year due to the uncertainties surrounding both teacher and student safety. There are simply too many unanswered questions and concerns including but not limited to the following:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?
- Will teachers be ready to do virtual learning if they haven't been trained yet? Isn't that a bit late in the game? Not all teachers are created equal in technical skills.

Teachers need more time to get these answers and to plan on how to keep our students and ourselves safe.

Mahalo Nui,

Pua

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Ann Hubbard <10129874@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melissa Ann Hubbard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hi,

There are only two weeks left until school begins and I do not feel safe to return. There are many critical questions left unanswered. With that, I am anxious about returning on campus. For example, what happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19? I personally do have the answer to that. It's unsettling since we there will be so many of us returning. Another example is, when a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained? I haven't received any word about training or its availability. I feel underprepared in many ways. We will all be at risk. I've always thought school was a place to provide education in a safe environment. I do not feel safe physically or mentally.

Thanks,
Melissa

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Testimony BOE

From: John Witeck <jjw008@gmail.com> on behalf of John Witeck
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the reopening of our schools

As a father, grandfather and former highschool and college teacher on Oahu, I urge the Board to delay in-person, on-campus instruction until 2021. It simply is not safe now for the students, teachers, administrators and staff to resume in-person instruction. Instead, on-line instruction should be utilized.

My daughter, a middle school teacher and mother of 8-year-old twins, ably conducted distance learning last semester and worked well with her faculty team and the students. My spouse, a grandmother, is a substitute teacher for an elementary school. Our grandkids live with their mom and us. I do not want any of us or any school teacher or staff to be put in harm's way by a premature reopening of our schools.

Special provision needs to be made for students with disabilities so they can attend classes on campus with their instructors.

I believe the schools may also be able to play a role and make space available for childcare for parents in critical need of such services—if the state government can provide funding for essential staff.

Sincerely,

John Witeck, Kamemeha Heights
Phone: 347-3306

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jonelle R C <jonellerc@gmail.com> on behalf of Jonelle R C
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of School Testimony

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kekaha Elementary School on Kauai, and I believe that our state is not ready to reopen schools. Even with the protocols and procedures that have been laid out, there are still major concerns that need to be addressed.

I'm most worried about 2 things. The first is how our school would be able to deal with a positive case of COVID-19. How can we instantly switch from our blended schedule to 100% distance learning in a day? We need to be able to plan contingencies for the scenarios we are sure to face in the future. Our school had 1 case over the summer bridge program, and the distance learning alternative that we had to switch to made me realize that we couldn't possibly give our students quality learning if we had to do this during the new school year. There was no time to enact a plan B, and we were unprepared with insufficient planning time to deal with that scenario. This is what we need for this coming school year.

The 2nd biggest concern for me is teacher safety and availability. There are several teachers at our school with underlying health issues that make them more susceptible to contracting COVID-19. Not only are they concerned about their own health and safety, what about their families contracting the virus? How would schools be able to accommodate a lack of sufficient teaching staff due to personal or family illness? Not to mention the fact that teachers might have insufficient childcare. There aren't sufficient substitutes if a teacher needs to take leave, and there haven't been enough even before COVID-19.

Listing just these few reasons, I am definitely against the scheduled reopening of schools. It's too much of an unnecessary risk, and we will be overwhelmed, should the worst case scenario occur. Unless these issues and many others are resolved, at the very least, the reopening of schools should be postponed.

Sincerely,
Jonelle Renti Cruz



Sender notified by
[Mailtrack](#)

Testimony BOE

From: M Higa <asiramtake@gmail.com> on behalf of M Higa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Marisa Takeguchi and I am a teacher at Ho'okele Elementary. I am also a parent of a child attending public school on Oahu. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am urging the Board of Education to delay the start of reopening schools. Why does the reopening need to occur on the particular date of August 4th especially if schools, parents, and teachers feel we are not adequately prepared? We want to protect the safety and well-being of our students and all the adults who come into contact with them. We also want to deliver effective and high-quality instruction. Delaying the start date will help to ensure these objectives.

- The reopening of tourism was delayed due to surging cases on the mainland and lack of pre-testing. Our COVID-19 numbers are higher now than when we shut down in March. Will teachers and students be tested? How often? Especially with new information showing greater community spread and with new information that older children spread the virus just as much as adults?

[In search for hidden COVID-19 cases, state program tracks surge of virus in Hawaii \(7/21/20\)](#)

[Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds 7/18/21](#)

- Schools are set to reopen but we don't know what the infection rate threshold within a class, school or district is to determine closure. If the parent or close family member of a student, or teacher tests positive for COVID-19, does the whole class self-isolate for 14 days? Do the siblings' classes also self-isolate? Will this procedure repeat each time a new student or adult who comes into contact with the class tests positive?
- "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Schools and teachers do not want to fail their students and their families. We went into this profession because we are compassionate and care about our students and want to make a difference, but we are being set up for failure. I do not want to see my students, their families, colleagues, or my own family fall ill to COVID-19. We learn new things about COVID each day and week. Even with recovery, we don't yet know what the lasting effects on someone's health are from contracting COVID-19. We need to ensure schools are adequately prepared to deliver high-quality instruction in a safe environment.
- Four days of training before the start of school is typical, yet this is an atypical year. To provide training on the half-days of school is too late because the school has already reopened. Teachers need adequate time prior to the start of school to learn new digital platforms, reconfigure their curriculums with their grade level teams and adjust their delivery and methods to provide students with the most meaningful instruction in a socially-distanced classroom as well as virtually. We need time to understand and practice the new safety expectations, procedures, and guidelines so that we can confidently care for our students.

We can recoup learning loss for our students but we can't recoup people lost to COVID-19. Thank you for your time, consideration and allowing our voices to be heard.

Marisa Takeguchi

Testimony BOE

From: Ella Joy Grande <ellajoygrande@gmail.com> on behalf of Ella Joy Grande
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continue funding shortage differentials

My name is Ella Bolosan and I am a resource/FSC Special Education teacher in Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area. I am asking the BOE continue funding shortage differentials. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii was ALREADY facing challenges in retaining Special Education teachers and teachers in hard-to-staff areas. Having worked as a special education teacher in the Waianae coast for five years, I saw the effects teacher shortage had on the schools and how students being taught by substitute teachers, and teachers who have not completed a state approved teacher education program.

Discontinuing the pay differentials will FORCE QUALIFIED TEACHERS to leave the profession, and this will bring us back to an even more unpleasant situation prior to COVID-19. This goes without saying that this in turn affect our keiki. Teaching shortage forces schools to have to use the bodies they have and those numbers already less than what is needed to address the school's count and special education needs. That takes away from the students and having their emotional, physical, social, and academic needs met.

BOE, please take care of your teachers and keiki. Do not go back on your pledge to fund the differentials.

Thank you for your time,
Ella Bolosan

Testimony BOE

From: Dari Shim <d_kshim@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dari Shim
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Re: Differential for Special Education and Hawaiian Emersion Teachers

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I respectfully submit my testimony in support of keeping the differential for Special Education and Hawaiian Emersion teachers.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAI BOARD OF EDUCATION

WED. JULY 22, 2020

My name is Dari Shim Matsuura. I am a Special Education Teacher at Ali`iolani Elementary School in the Honolulu district - Kaimuki, McKinley, Farrington (KMR) Complex on Oahu.

I am married and have a single child with special needs. Sixteen years ago, my husband suffered a massive stroke that left him physically disabled, no longer able to speak, and no longer able to work. Being the primary provider in my family meant working two jobs. No longer able to physically care for my husband, I recently put him in foster care—paid for by his entire social security. Maintaining a healthy environment and managing the chronic needs of a child and adult with special needs in Hawaii's high cost of living has been a challenge. I've never complained and have always worked very hard to make sure my family's needs are met. Three years ago I made the decision to go back to school while working a full time and part time job. One year ago, I received my teaching license and qualified for the differential for special education teachers. Excited to be doing something I genuinely love, I was finally able to quit my second job. With additional monies allocated to special education teachers, we moved from a 1-bedroom to a 2-bedroom apartment during the recent Spring Break. Everyday I think about how fortunate I am to be finally making enough money to not have to work a second job and to be doing something I love doing. I love, love being a teacher and am humbled and fortunate to be working with children who have so much to give. Special education teachers significantly impact the well-being of students with disabilities to promote their academic

I have also been fortunate enough to put money back into Hawaii's economy by continuing to meet my bills on time, contribute to others, and spend money on more than essential needs, as well as support local eateries. Taking away the differential for special education would severely impact my ability to provide for my family and my ability to put back into Hawaii's economy. The idea of working a second job is agonizing. Working a second job would greatly impact the quality of my instruction and ultimately impact the student's I am committed to helping succeed academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally. Something would suffer and knowing me, I would put myself last—staying up all hours to make up for the time I would then spend working a second job. Please don't take the differential for special education and Hawaiian immersion teachers.

Mahalo,

Dari Matsuura, Special Education Teacher
KMR Complex in the Honolulu District of Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Kim Blanchard <keanuhea01@gmail.com> on behalf of Kim Blanchard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I want face to face learning. I believe that face to face learning is more effective in reaching all our students. I have spent this summer preparing my lessons incorporating fourth quarter learning activities from last school year to help ensure that no learning has been lost. However, as of yesterday's department meeting within my school, I realize that we are simply not ready to safely provide any face to face learning because there are too many concerns that have not been addressed or clarified by the DOE.

For instance, the issue regarding face masks. It is still not clear whether it is the DOE or the individual schools who are requiring face masks to be worn. I believe that wearing face masks on school campuses, especially in highly concentrated common areas, need to be clearly addressed to the public by the DOE as a mandate.

Additionally, Superintendent Kishimoto stated in yesterday's video that Governor Ige has approved funding to provide schools with additional nurses from the University of Hawai'i. However, procedures to take place when a student or teacher tests positive for COVID is unclear. Our teachers have been told that should this situation occur, the Department of Health will then become involved and provide the school with direction. However, as of yet, I have not heard anything from the Department of Health regarding this concern.

My exposure to distance learning during the fourth quarter of last school year has shown me one thing...I lack the skills and knowledge to effectively provide distance learning to my students. Now that our students will be provided "blended" learning, I need adequate training and time to plan the implementation of on-line lessons.

In my mind, we are no longer in a time of uncertainty. We are now certain that COVID is a pandemic, it is here, it is contagious, and students and teachers are at a high risk of contracting the virus. The only area of uncertainty is when and how many will be affected. I want face to face learning to take place, but it needs to be done safely.

Testimony BOE

From: Raena Shigeta <raena.shigeta@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Raena Shigeta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening schools

Board of Education Members,

I am a 6th grade teacher in the Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani Complex. I am writing to you because I'm concerned about students returning to campus on August 4, 2020. I'm hoping that the board will consider having all schools continue teaching through distance learning rather than having students return back to school.

Throughout my 9 years of teaching, the words scared, anxious, or uneasiness have never been the first words to describe how I felt about going to work or being at school. However, due to COVID-19, these are now the first words that come to mind as we approach the start of the new school year. Although I'm eager to meet my new students and see my colleagues, I have a lot of apprehension. I have attended virtual meetings in which our school has shared out their plan to reopen, as well as their plans for safety precautions and sanitizing. However, even with the measures that our school will be implementing, I still don't feel completely comfortable with teaching in-person. I understand that there are schools who were successful at having in-person summer school or in-person summer fun programs, however, they had additional safety precautions that our school will not be implementing. For example, taking students' temperatures upon their entry to campus is one of the safety precautions that some of the school's used to monitor students' health. However, our school will not be doing temperature checks and has just asked us to monitor our students throughout the day for any signs of a health concern. I feel taking a students temperature was a contributing factor in making those programs successful and giving teachers, parents, and students some peace of mind. If stores and restaurants can require their patrons to have their temperature taken before they enter the establishment, schools should consider this a necessary step to take to give our parents, students, and teachers the same peace of mind.

In addition, the summer school sessions and summer programs also had a significantly smaller student population compared to what we will have during the regular school year. To accommodate our class sizes, our students were split into smaller groups. Even though our students will be grouped, they will not be in true "bubbles," because they will be switching classes throughout the day, meaning that they will not be with the same group of students all day. The students will also have the opportunity to interact with other students in different grade levels and classes throughout the day as well during passing periods, recess, lunch, etc... Even with the social distancing expectation that our school has, the students will be exposed to multiple individuals and different group settings throughout the day because they will not be staying in the same group for all of their class periods and break times.

COVID-19 has caused an immeasurable amount of disruption and has literally turned the world upside down, forcing us to adapt to a completely new way of living. The changes that we have had to make are ones that have not been easy to adapt to, but were necessary in keeping everyone safe. I understand that many in the community are eager for schools to reopen, but we need to remember that the disease is still a strong force. There are measures and guidelines to be proactive and limit the spread of the disease, but there is not a 100 percent way to be completely safe. Recently, COVID-19 cases have been on the rise in our community and it is disturbing that the term "community spread," is being used more often as the number of cases are reported each day. People are aware of the safety precautions as well as the precautions and guidelines that businesses have set up, yet they sometimes have trouble following them. Even with all of the safety precautions and guidelines the school has planned, I fear that if individuals don't take the precautions or guidelines seriously during the reopening of schools, reopening could add to the growing number of cases in our community.

As a teacher, I want to be able to provide the best learning opportunities possible for my students. However, with all of the new guidelines and precautions that need to be taken, I feel like the focus is more on monitoring students' health and making sure they are following the guidelines to keep everyone safe, rather than being able to focus on teaching and learning. In addition, the schedules that my students will be on are overwhelming because the students have multiple options for attending school or doing full distance learning. With my students on all of those different tracks, I fear that I may be doing my students a disservice because there are so many different groups that I will need to plan for, monitor, and support. I ask that you please consider continuing distance learning to begin this school year. Doing so would allow for parents, students, and teachers to focus on teaching, learning, and building positive relationships. Even though this may not be an ideal way to begin the school year, hopefully, this sacrifice will have a big impact on keeping everyone in the community safe and healthy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Testimony BOE

From: Kai Mead <kmead@waialae.edu> on behalf of Kai Mead
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Testimony

Edit to above testimony after proofreading:

Testimony Letter to BOE on action item

[H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kalina Mead. Last school year (2019-2020) I was a 4th grade teacher at Wai'alae Charter School and have now transitioned into a new role as Literacy Coach, where I will no longer have a classroom of students and will be working more with school leaders to support teachers and school wide issues. Prior to working at Wai'alae, I was a teacher and then Academic Coach at Keolu Elementary. I have my MEd. in Curriculum Studies, STEMS² through UH Manoa. I have worked with many non-profit and 'āina-based organizations across the island of Oahu and have developed many community education partnerships.

Over the back end of the summer I have had a small opportunity to hear some of the inner workings our school administration has been planning in order to reopen schools. Before I go on, I do want to say that I believe my school's administration is attempting to do all they can. I know they are burnt out and just as nervous and stressed about the current situation as I am and we are all simply trying to do the best we can each day. I respect them, I feel for them, and I am hurting for them. But with that said, I also feel a responsibility to be critical of the school I not only work at, but the school where I send my three children (grades PreK, Kinder, 2nd).

As a teacher leader at my school in my new role and probably one of the first teachers to hear about the plans for re-opening our school on August 4th, here is my current understanding of my schools plan for re-opening:

- We are offering blended learning to our students (2 rotational student groups, each group on campus only 2-3 days each week, the off days students are home engaging in distance learning). Classroom teachers will manage blended learning students.
- We are also offering a 100% distance learning option to students and families who are not comfortable returning to campus. These students will be managed by only TWO teachers school wide. Right now we are at 80 students registered for 100% DL - with only two teachers to manage them.
- We have received NO training or PD in distance learning. We are scheduled to receive our first distance learning PD on August 2nd and 3rd from 8:00-12:00. Then teachers will have those two afternoons for planning before school starts on August 4th. So teachers must receive the PD, digest and process the training, and create your plans for the start of school all within two days.
- In my role as literacy coach, I was also asked to be a 100% distance learning teacher, as well as RTI coordinator, and PD and coaching support. Those were previously 3 separate jobs.

- As a charter school, we tend to pride ourselves on being unique and doing things a special way. We claim to be a special educational opportunity in our community for students who are able to attend our school. The way we do things and our beliefs about how children learn are supposed to set us apart from the crowd. In one of my meetings with admin last week regarding the 100% DL option, a couple of us coaches questioned admin about the 80 students being managed by only two teachers for the entire list of 80 students - we were told that these students who opted for 100% DL would be put onto the same online system as DOE, managed by those two teachers, and "if parents don't like it they can enroll their child at another school." There was NO room for discussion or an opportunity to make a better plan because all of our backs are up against the wall. Everyone is just trying to do what we need to do to get by - then what is the point of being a charter school?

At this point I would now like to share my more personal testimony and what all of this has done to my personal life. After the meetings I've been in this week regarding distance learning and what we will be doing, personally I do not have much trust or confidence that it is going to go well after the things I heard. I have been really distraught and a nervous wreck the last two weeks because of this... multiple serious anxiety attacks, insomnia... I had to call my husband home from work the other day because I couldn't get off the floor because my anxiety attack was so bad. I have never experienced these feelings in all my life. I just want to be a good parent and educator and I feel our school system is failing us, at Wai'ala'e and beyond. The decisions being made, the lack of communication, the lack of including teachers and staff in decision making - in many ways, even prior to COVID, I feel we are just strong-armed into going along with a plan that is actually ineffective and is not based on current educational research and knowledge and we are expected to follow along. And that feeling and way of doing things has been extremely amplified with COVID.

My personal situation:

- I am a teacher at the same school that my three kids attend (PreK, K, 2nd)

- I am expected to go to work each day with no telework arrangement opportunities

- My school offers a PreK program that my two older children both went through. Now my youngest is starting in the PreK class.

- Last week I discovered that the PreK class schedule has changed to only 4 days a week, 8-11:30am because of COVID. With that schedule change, I now have no other childcare options for my PreK child. So I am being forced to take a leave of absence under the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" (FFCRA) because I have no other childcare options available to me and my school is no longer available for childcare after 11:30am and on Wednesdays. Plus I was just informed of this last week.

- With there no longer being a full-time PreK class so that I can work full-time I am not able to work and do the job that I have invested in greatly. The job I have been waiting for, the position at the school I have been waiting for. I just got the opportunity - and now I have to walk away. Otherwise, I was proceeding ahead with my work commitments knowing that the PreK school schedule previously was a full day that both of my other children went through. And now with that last minute change that I was just recently made aware of, after my child's PreK paperwork was lost and we received no information regarding the program until just recently, I have had no time or options to make any other childcare arrangements.

- Pair that PreK situation with my lack of trust and confidence that my school will provide a solid 100% distance learning program for my other two children, and I am stuck at a crossroads. Why should I send my two older kids to a school that does not value their distance learning education if that is what the parents are choosing?

- 100% distance learners are going to be managed by only TWO teachers school wide... so far we're at 80 kids doing 100% DL. Classroom teachers will only have to manage their blended learners and we're throwing the

100% DL to the wolves. And then when that concept was questioned the response was, "well if they don't like that option they can go to another school."

All of this does not align. It does feel right. It does not look right. IT IS NOT RIGHT. With all of this being said, for my family and my kids I really believe homeschooling and being in full control of the curriculum and instructional practices and the impacts it has on my kids will be a better option than 100% distance learning and trying to follow a plan that wasn't well-developed or thought out at all, whatsoever.

DO NOT OPEN SCHOOL CAMPUSES ON AUGUST 4th. We are not ready. Schools are not ready. It will be a disaster. We need time to effectively plan. Teachers cannot effectively plan under all of these new circumstances and conditions with only two days of planning time in the afternoons! This is a robust and fundamental shift in how we must educate and we are not setting ourselves up for success. We are setting ourselves up for complete and utter failure. None of the higher up people making these plans have truly gotten their hands dirty and have looked at this from a teacher's perspective, in a realistic approach to how we are actually going to make this happen. There is a whole lot of talk behind closed doors, but do they realize what will actually be happening in our classrooms and to our students on their computers at home? Teachers are leaving. Families and students are leaving.

Today I, myself, submitted Form 4140 to my school to withdraw my children, I am taking a leave of absence, and I will homeschool my own kids because not only are teachers not prepared for the blended learning model, even the 100% distance learning option will be a disaster.

Thank you for your time. Please reconsider.

Aloha,
Kalina Mead

On Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 11:49 AM Kai Mead <kmead@waialae.edu> wrote:

Testimony Letter to BOE on action item

[H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

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Over the back end of the summer I have had a small opportunity to hear some of the inner workings our school administration has been planning in order to reopen schools. Before I go on, I do want to say that I believe my school's administration is attempting to do all they can. I know they are burnt out and just as nervous and stressed about the current situation as I am and we are all simply trying to do the best we can each day. I respect them, I feel for them, and I am hurting for them. But with that said, I also feel a responsibility to be critical of the school I not only work at, but the school where I send my three children (grades PreK, Kinder, 2nd).

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forced to take a leave of absence under the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" (FFCRA) because I have no other childcare options available to me and my school is no longer available for childcare after 11:30am and on Wednesdays. Plus I was just informed of this last week.

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Thank you for your time. Please reconsider.

Aloha,
Kalina Mead

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Kai Mead | Fourth Grade Teacher
Wai'alaie Elementary Public Charter School
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Kai Mead | Fourth Grade Teacher
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Testimony BOE

From: Kristel Florendo <kristel.florendo@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kristel Florendo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Kristel Florendo and I am speaking as a special education teacher. I teach at Ewa Elementary.

I am asking that you **REJECT** this proposal and continue to fund the teacher shortage differential for this upcoming school year. The special education teacher differential, which was already promised, is imperative as an incentive for all special education teachers to stay in their current “critical shortage” area. The teachers who work in this area with the “most vulnerable” student population will be putting themselves even more at risk right now since most of these students are not able to follow CDC recommendations for social distancing or wearing masks. These students would also not benefit as much from distance learning or hybrid schedules and therefore need to be in school. It is in my opinion that we continue to maintain our limited certified special education teachers in the classroom by continuing to give them the differential pay. Without it, you will lose a great number of CERTIFIED special education teachers, forcing the state to fall further behind in providing appropriate educational services to our most vulnerable students. Please consider other ways to reduce the budget shortfalls. I understand that we all need to sacrifice things at this time, but let’s not have it be at the expense of our “most vulnerable” student population or these “critical shortage” areas. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kristel Florendo

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Testimony BOE

From: Amie Yanuaria <yanuariaamie@gmail.com> on behalf of Amie Yanuaria
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I believe that we should not open public schools on Aug 4. If our state is not open, we should not open schools yet, either. Consider on delaying the start of school please.

Thanks!

Testimony BOE

From: Tammy Tomita <tammy.tomita@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tammy Tomita
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY Regarding DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools

To The BOE,

Everyone would love to have school open with students attending full time IF it was safe to do so. We do have a plan for reopening our school with theoretical safety measures in place.

We were told that students wearing masks will be six feet apart from head to head and not necessarily from desk to desk. The first grade students will have lunch in class and they will have recess with their own classmates. Even though my room is larger than an average classroom, I still believe that it will be difficult to safely distance 17 first graders in my class. They are first grade children. What would happen if more students came to our school? How big would our classes get?

I had an opportunity to teach summer school in person and for the first part of the day the students had phonics instruction. That was a challenge in itself as students had to hear the sounds and say the sounds out loud. The masks, although very necessary to keep them safe, were a hindrance to their learning. We were also fortunate that four children came to summer school regularly. I had another student who showed up a couple of times and her parents decided to keep her at home for the remainder of the session. I had four students and it was difficult to distance them in the classroom. What will it be like with 17 students? I am also to be six feet away from the students. How is that possible? When we had recess the children played together, ran together, and masks eventually came off. They were reminded to put their masks back on and to keep their distance. BTW, no one has asked me or surveyed me about my experiences with summer school.

Dr. Anderson did say that he believed that children will become sick with COVID-19. He made it sound as if it was a "simple" recovery period for the students. However, these students can potentially infect their elderly relatives, teachers with underlying conditions, and whomever they come into contact with. We also do not know the long term effects it will have on those who have been infected with COVID-19.

We were told that if children are sent home with symptoms related to COVID-19 it was up to the parents to have them tested and seek treatment. We were also told that if a child went home with a fever, that child had to stay at home for 3 days fever free before returning to school. What happened to the 14 days of isolation?

I am learning that we have to treat everyone as if they are asymptomatic. That is hard to do in the class especially when the children need help. It will be in the best interest for everyone to delay the physical reopening of the schools. With the number of COVID cases rising in the islands it will just be a matter of time before the Governor closes the schools. Let's be safe...start later and end later.

It's not too late to make a change. It will be too late if someone dies.

An Anonymous Teacher who Cares

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Testimony BOE

From: Skye Darnell <skyemikki@gmail.com> on behalf of Skye Darnell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Skye Darnell.

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I teach about one hundred fifty 7th graders math at King Intermediate School, in Kane'ohe, my husband teaches physics at Mililani High School, our oldest child will attend Castle High School and we have a fourth grader at Kapunahala Elementary. I think about how many people the four of us will interact with each day and worry, "do we need to mask and distance ourselves at home to stay safe too?!" If one of us were to contract COVID, how would that then impact everyone else? Who is thinking about the safest procedures for these situations?

I know our economy is suffering and folks need relief. I have volunteered to help our school over the summer to see what changes are being proposed to protocols/procedures, I read about what situations are like in other states' schools and seek the professional development and training I want, but I am almost certain many of my colleagues will return with very high anxieties, not to mention personal health conditions that will make them vulnerable as we reopen.

Our schools, state and country are all at different levels of readiness to bring our precious children back to school, even though teachers know very well, the sacrifices we're making by not reopening. Please consider first, the safety of our people, amid a global pandemic, with one of the highest rates of cases and deaths in the world. The numbers we talk about daily represent REAL PEOPLE. We placed our confidence in you when you were elected and appointed. Please consider yourselves in our positions.

Sincerely,
Skye Darnell

Testimony BOE

From: Jen Fordyce <jen_fordyce@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jen Fordyce
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action Item H

Aloha Board members,

I am writing to submit testimony for **Action item H: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Ed.** I am a charter school teacher at Hawai'i Technology Academy, and I am confident that my school will take measures to keep everyone safe. But we are a small school, not a statewide agency. We can make decisions more efficiently and take precautions as needed. I am writing out of concern for my family members who are teachers and students at larger DOE schools, as well as the public health and safety of all of our island communities.

I understand that the push to open schools NOW is part of an effort to have things up and running before tourism resumes. I think this is completely backward and will cause a lot of struggle and frustration in a month or two when tourism resumes and schools have to shut down again. It would be much safer and more efficient to ensure that the State is prepared for tourism with adequate safety measures, testing, and quarantine measures in place; THEN open tourism and see how things go. If all is well, it would be appropriate to return kids to F2F classes once we see a month or so of tourism resuming without significant stress on our medical facilities and significant increases in COVID cases.

In the meantime, of course, we need to resume education. Slowly. Take time to prepare teachers for quality distance instruction. Use resources to make sure students have access to the internet and devices to engage in their classes. Work with experts who have been doing distance learning for more than a decade already. Share best practices. Take time to connect with families virtually and make sure everyone is up and running before delving into course content. This is a learning opportunity for everyone.

As a teacher at Hawai'i Technology Academy, I teach virtual classes three days a week under normal circumstances. We have been fully virtual since March, and I taught creative writing summer school for HTA and DOE students from across the islands. It took some time, but by sharing our ideas, writing, jokes, and support, my summer school students and I were able to make real connections with one another. We were teary-eyed when our class ended today. Our collaborative blog is complete and ready to share with the world. I am proud of the gains my students have made as writers this summer -- particularly my students with identified learning challenges, who I was able to support one-on-one (on any island) during virtual office hours.

IT CAN BE DONE, and it can be done safely. If students go to school 1-2 times a week in classes where they cannot interact with their peers and their teacher is 6 feet or more away at all times, what is the value of that classroom time? Pedagogically, it is a disaster. Not to mention, the savings in PPE, classroom adjustments, and all of the other preparations could help fund the need for quality PD on virtual education strategies and implementation.

It is a shame that we are having this conversation one week before teachers are to report for duty. Distance learning could have been addressed WELL had state leaders started planning in March or April. But here we

are. A delay and a change and direction might feel like a huge inconvenience, but imagine the stress and the regrets of having COVID outbreaks in our schools and communities. It can be mitigated by staying virtual for phase I of reopening, taking time to improve plans for phase II: limited contact (4 weeks of no new cases WITH tourism), and then eventually and gradually reaching phase III: full reopening (when cases are eliminated).

Hawai'i has worked together and sacrificed a LOT to keep our numbers low. Please, let's not throw that progress out the window by carelessly rushing the reopening of our schools and the care of our students.

Mahalo,
Jen Fordyce
Waikapū

Testimony BOE

From: Karyn Birgado <karyn.birgado@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Karyn Birgado
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Members of the BOE,

Thank you very much for hearing the concerns of educators and parents regarding the 6 feet distancing and facial coverings. I am a Kindergarten Teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary School.

I am writing today regarding the reopening of schools on August 4. As an educator, I understand the need to reopen schools and the impact that it has on children, families, and communities. I understand that things will not be the same this school year and we all need to be flexible and adapt to the changes. However, with that date being 2 weeks away and looking at the situation in my own classroom as well as my colleagues in other schools, we are very apprehensive and feel that more time is needed for teacher preparation in order to make this work and be the best experience for our students. We educators have so many unanswered questions and are fearful that when school opens up, we will not have the solutions or support that we need to deal with situations that come up, especially if there is a positive Covid case in our classroom.

My Principal, Blaine Takeguchi, was kind enough to allow us to go into our classrooms a few weeks early starting on July 13. Please remember that we are on summer break (unpaid) and many of us do this every year. I returned to my classroom on Monday, July 13 and have gone in several times during the week and all weekend to set up. I am still not done! My desks are set up wall to wall, facing the same way (with 6 ft distancing) with very little walking space. I've asked if this is even safe regarding fire code and no one has any answers. Kindergarten classrooms take a lot more time to set up because of the materials that we provide for our students and we have to make sure that it is extra safe for them (like baby proofing a home). My own family had to come in with me (as they have every year for the past 18 years) to help me move furniture and clean everything thoroughly. If I don't do this, my room will be dusty and dirt laden when the students return and that is unacceptable. I have even bought my own sneeze/cough shield to put on my desk and face shields because I'm afraid that the PPE provided will not be enough. My husband is a police officer and he was only provided two n95 masks and hand sanitizer throughout the entire pandemic so far. The masks were given late. He even had several run-ins with people who tested positive for Covid while on duty. In schools, we don't even have enough soap and paper towels during a normal school year. The 2 of the 4 days we are given up front (for us it will be July 29 and August 3) are simply not enough prep time for a regular school year and is definitely not enough for a school year like we are facing. Had I not gone in early to set up, there is absolutely no way that my room would have been ready to welcome any students. Once school begins, educators are more focused on curriculum and planning, not setting up their classroom.

Another concern that I have is that my school selected option B and will have the students in grades K-2 return for face to face instruction everyday all day. I can only fit 16 desks in my classroom (no matter what furniture I removed) and will be starting my year with possibly 17-18 students. This number could grow and then what? The only answer I got when I asked was that we would then move to a rotation schedule...when? in the middle of the month? All of a sudden parents will have to now secure daycare at the last minute? The lower grades have not been setting up for rotations and that will take time. The upper grades may be more prepared than we are because they absolutely know that they will have split classes. I am also baffled at how I will manage keeping them 6 feet apart. I was very disappointed in the way that the DOE portrayed the reopening of schools to the public. They keep emphasizing that the class sizes will be smaller and safer. However, why are they or anyone else for that matter not calling attention to the fact that this is not entirely true? Many people I have talked to (non-educators) have the impression that the class sizes will be smaller. They say "Oh aren't you

going to have less kids each day?" My answer is "NO!" The next thing they say is "How are you going to manage keeping them socially distanced?" My answer of course is "I don't know?". And, this is the answer that I believe many of our poor, hard working Administrators have as well. This option for having the students in grades K-2 return daily would absolutely work if our Admin was able to hire more teachers so that class sizes would indeed be smaller. However, funding and space is hard to find so this is wishful thinking. I am very proud of my Principal and VP for the way that they have been hands on, involved in the process, and transparent. I know that they are stressed as well, especially because they don't have all the answers that teachers are seeking. This is frustrating for both sides.

Another misleading thing that the DOE did was portray the summer hubs as they did saying that it worked and teachers and parents were happy. This is not the true picture of what the classrooms who have all kids return daily for face to face instruction will look like. After talking to teachers who have taught these summer hubs, they said that it was impossible to keep the students separated. They also had students show up coughing and sneezing "due to allergies". This is concerning because there has to be a policy in place where students are sent home or separated from the class for things like coughing and sneezing. We also shouldn't be second guessing if something is just allergies or more serious. They said that all they could do was wipe the area down and spray Lysol (???) This is not ok and is a safety issue for teachers and other students. There should be something in place for situations like these. And, the DOE needs to make a policy where sick students (no matter what kind of illness) should not be allowed on campus until they are cleared/well. Also, I hope that this year the DOE will be modifying the attendance policy and not punishing families for keeping their sick children home as the current policy does.

One last concern is the lack of teacher training and preparation. I've already painted a picture of the classroom setup part of the prepping. The other part is preparing to teach should we have to go 100% distance learning. It is not very fair to offer "voluntary training" during the summer. In every other profession, anytime you have to call employees in outside of the workday, they are paid for their time. (In our case, this happened during unpaid summer break, however, I am not going into this part of our profession because that is a whole other issue). Many teachers have summer jobs, have to watch their own children, or may have returned home (off island or out of state). Training should be provided when everyone is in school and on the clock. That way, we can be sure that everyone received the training and heard the same things. We are only given 2 days of training before August 4, and that is no different than any other school year. How is this enough time to prepare for something that is going to be so new for all of us? I attended a "voluntary training" on blended learning and that was a wake up call for all of us. What many of us thought was blended learning and were doing from March through May is not blended learning according to the DOE. Many of us are not trained or prepared to teach in this manner and using technology to accomplish this is not always quick and easy. Issues and scenarios kept coming up and all the presenter could say was "that can be a future training"...when is that? By then it will be too late. Also, the presenter did not give us a practical view or step by step instructions on how to accomplish this. Once again, a new style of teaching is being dropped on us and we are not given enough time to learn it and be comfortable with it. Are we expected to just prep on the fly and have everything come out subpar? I know that the first 9 days are half days so that training can occur...many times these trainings are not tailored to specific grade levels and many of us are left with unanswered questions. Also, we will already have begun the school year...the reality is that most teachers will be focused more on what needs to be done to prepare for the next day or week. When do we have time to think about and digest what we get from these "trainings" while trying to comply with meeting all learning targets and other school initiatives?

Please hear the concerns of us very concerned educators and parents. We have some parents who are also educators who are choosing 100% distance learning for their own children. That is very telling of how they feel about sending their children back to school so soon when schools are really not 100% prepared and cases keep rising.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Karyn Birgado
(Grade K Teacher)

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Testimony BOE

From: D Chang <dchang4@icloud.com> on behalf of D Chang
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

From: D Chang <dchang4@icloud.com>
Date: July 22, 2020 at 8:51:21 AM HST
To: BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

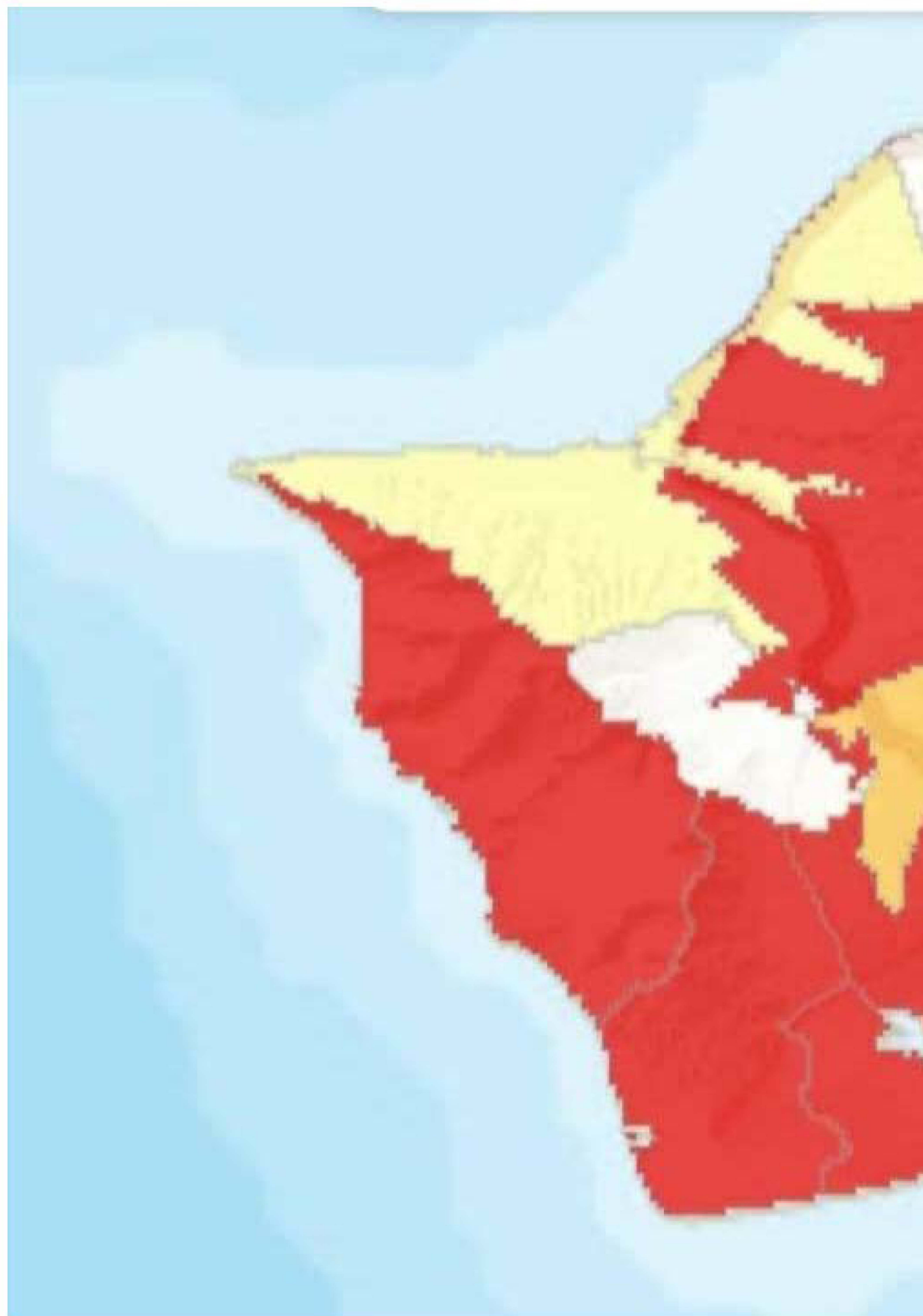
Board action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teacher's Association (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response):2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and conditions of work related to Covid-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

July 22, 2020

Dear Board of Education members,

Hi! I am a high school teacher in the Campbell-Kapolei complex and wanted to let you know that I listened in on the last BOE online meeting and watched the senate committee meeting on television last Friday. Today I am writing testimony out of concern and humbly ask that you consider our concerns and help us stand up for better preparation and safety for schools to re-open.

I, like many others are deathly afraid about schools re-opening too soon. The map below was taken a couple of days ago. The Corona virus has really increased



since our schools closed in March, yet some of our leaders want schools to re-open as scheduled and risk safety of the people over the economy? I pray that there will be no cases of the virus transferred at school and no deaths, but due to the high number of people within schools and highly contagious nature of this virus without a vaccine, that would be miraculous.

Unlike what Superintendent Kishimoto said about training at the senate committee meeting, my school has not had safety training, new procedure training, nor good enough technological training for hybrid learning this year. We did receive a school handbook, but it is not clear enough and it doesn't seem as if the makers of it have had enough time to think of the total possible scenarios as well as procedures, and is misleading. Many questions are still unanswered. The principals are all working hard, but with such a short amount of time and I imagine that can be even harder for larger schools. At the last BOE meeting, I heard a board member state that even the Superintendent's handbook to the principals had typos, was confusing, and appeared to be rushed. The board was then informed that only four days was spent on something as important as operations during this pandemic and guidelines for safety. If important guidance from the top is rushed, that filters down to administrators and teachers feeling overwhelmed, confused, and afraid when they can see through all these handbooks and lack of training that we are not ready enough yet to re-open and more so to be safe for ourselves as well as our students. In addition to that, at my school, we are not even allowed to go into our classrooms at all to set up and prepare for the children to return until August 4th and 5th. I still have to set up furniture and measure for myself if the 6 feet radius social distancing will be doable with the number of students I will have in the classroom I have been assigned. What if the students based on alpha rotation do not fit to properly social distance? Rosters are still being worked on by the registrars. How are we to deal with that basic safety measure at the last minute? I have also asked for permission to purchase a certain type of PPE and was told not to because another staff might have some. When I inquired with that person, I was informed that there was one piece of it and there might be one more, but more time is needed to know that. I still don't know if I have to build and construct to be able to use the piece of PPE requested yet. Has the board and department checked if all of the PPE's that our administrators ordered will arrive in time when delays are occurring due to demand? I usually am done setting up the furniture well before this time and can focus on planning and preparing for the new school year, but with no training, an unclear handbook, and not being allowed to get ready for social distancing, it is obvious that more time will certainly be beneficial for all.

At the last BOE meeting, I heard a board member tell the Superintendent that school administrators and staff need more support and time to really be ready for the re-opening of the schools and not be rushed. I agree with you! I also heard all of the senators at last Friday's senate committee meeting trying to encourage a delayed opening until the schools are better prepared and the corona virus numbers decrease. The numbers have increased and on more than one given day was well above the number that prompted our previous stay at home order. I heard each and everyone of you and we need to continue to stand up for the safety and well being of the people!

I am for starting up school, but through telework/distance learning. I am not the most technologically savvy person, but I would be there with my students on the computer guiding them along. According to CDC, that is the safest and best solution right now. I understand that it might be difficult for the young ones to be left at home to learn that way, but it was done in the 4th quarter and the high schoolers are definitely able to do distance learning. I am an at-risk teacher and fear for my life and the lives of anyone that might get the virus unnecessarily because of school. So, I will do my best to enforce safety procedures in class, but what I have no control over is what people do outside of class and in the community. We need to keep our people as safe as we possibly can so there isn't even more widespread community outbreaks or

worse. No one should be getting this virus especially when we see on the news that a nurse tested positive, was cleared, and later got the corona virus again 3 more times. No one wants that burden of liability on their shoulders and who will pay and accept responsibility for it when students and staff get the virus? Only two weeks leave is fully covered by the Families First Coronavirus response act. Why should the employee use their sick leave and only get partial pay after that if needed when we are not being allowed to operate school in the manner that the CDC deems the safest? Telework/distance learning would be the best for safety of all and if that is not possible, then more time to be trained, work out and develop better plans for learning and safety for all will be critically essential.

Thank you again for all the hard work you do for the education of our school communities. I humbly ask for your continued assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Darlene Chang

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Olivia Moore <omoorepe@gmail.com> on behalf of Olivia Moore
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

My name is Olivia Moore and I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees](#).

I am a Teen Health and Physical Education educator for Highlands Intermediate School. As excited to get back to school as I am, I also have many concerns for the up and coming school year.

One of my concerns are about how distance learning and social distancing will impact our students. Enforcing social distancing throughout the school day (in class and during recess) impedes students ability to socialize and create vital support networks with peers and teachers.

Another of my concerns is that the ohana bubbles at school are unrealistic. As an elective teacher I will be seeing students face-to-face all week except for our designated distance learning day. This not only increases my risk of contracting Covid-19 but also puts my students at a higher risk as well.

While these are only a few of my concerns, myself and many other educators also feel ill prepared to effectively teach this next school year. It is my hope that this testimony will help the BOE to reconsider the opening of our schools. The health and safety of our communities should take priority during this pandemic.

My suggestion for this issue is to consider adapting to main schools schedules which start in late August or early September. This will allow for more preparation time for all.

Mahalo for your dedication and time,

Olivia Moore

Testimony BOE

From: Kandice Kartchner <kandice_k@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kandice Kartchner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony on agenda item H

- Kandice Kartchner, Teacher, Lahaina Intermediate School
- General Board meeting: Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:30 p.m.
- Agenda item H. [Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees](#)

I teach middle school students in Lahaina Intermediate School. I was born here in Hawaii. I was forced to leave as a child at the age of three because my parents were not able to make a living teaching here. At the time my mother was pregnant with my brother. My dad felt that there was not way to afford raising children here as a teacher-- it was just too expensive. As it was we were living in the first HUD housing development in Red Hill. It has taken a lot of personal sacrifice to return home to Hawaii and teach.

While the financial losses and fiscal hardships are a large issue in our islands, the medical situation we have is super fragile. On all islands there is a limited amount of medical care, supplies, and hospital beds for patients to use. Here in Maui we only have 15 ICU beds. That wouldn't even bed half the kids in one of my classes, much less myself-- and that is for the whole island of Maui, 150,000 people!

In these past 5 months of world pandemic with an airborne virus, it seems very odd that the Department of Education and this Board of Education have not taken real financial and active steps to provide for every school the cleaning supplies and necessary increased janitorial and maintenance staffing. Yes, even before this, in many schools there are not enough janitorial people to adequately clean classrooms well. This is not the fault of the people who are overstretched, understaffed, and often not trained well enough and in many cases elderly people who are most at risk for severe outcomes with Covid19.

I do not blame the folks who are there -- a small crew of people are being asked to clean, sanitize, and maintain as many as well over 60 rooms including classrooms, offices, as well as the bathrooms for staff and students, the cafeteria, and the rest of the campus in whole, including water fountains and bottle fillers, sidewalks, staircases with hand rails, and more to an increased and high degree. I put the onus on the Department of Education, its leadership, and the Board of Education. Even Bruce Anderson from Department of Health said that if we don't have it all in place, we shouldn't open schools on the 4th to students. "If the schools aren't 100-percent ready to open by Aug. 4, we can't support that opening. The schools have to be ready, disease levels got to be down to a point acceptable before we can support that."

If The DOH says were not ready, then why this game by the DOE to say we are ready? Yes, I understand you want in person schools, but that might not be really viable! Better virtual classes with real teachers at least for the first quarter and then reassess-- because no one wants to see a repeat of what happened in Aiea when a parent knowingly took a young child sick with Covid19 to a day care

and 41 people were infected. This is the kind of spread NO ONE wants! Which brings me to the bubble concept proposed by Dr. Park for young elementary students, expecting parents to not let them socialize at home and to not send them when ill to school. Its not realistic.

Plenty of parents will send them anyway, just as they do for other illnesses because they have to work. Only, this isn't just something low level like lice, pink-eye, or mumps (which no one ever contacted the way it was presented to the senate. That seemed to be an after thought for Dr. Park to add in at the testimony, and frankly if your not going to inform parents and school teachers and schools of infected kids since you can infect folks for up to two or three weeks before they show symptoms, your being negligent and opening our schools to litigation.

Schools have been asked by the HIDOE to do impossible provisions without enough money, because they have now individually put the burden to pay for a much larger number of items out of the schools budget that previously to this coming year the Department of Education paid for, like substitutes-- which are already hard to find. Imagine trying to get subs to cover classes when a teacher is out for Covid because of a student infecting them? Many of our subs are elderly in their late sixties and early seventies, which puts them at risk. So even if you can get a sub to cover a teacher long term, the schools can't spend the money for the necessary things to train and program subscriptions this year they otherwise normally might have because they have to reserve the money to pay for subs to cover classes. On average, they will have to pay them 40 days or more if they are out for Covid19. If more than a couple teachers get ill, especially after December, what will schools do?

In reading some of the protocols for how to deal with symptoms and people on school campuses there are glaring holes. If a parent fails to come pick up a student who has symptoms and is isolated in a room by themselves (assuming there is only one child, which is highly unlikely, especially when a whole class is exposed including the teacher and any aides) it says that they will be transferred to a medical facility based on the information on their emergency card. Who is doing the transfer-- the parents or other emergency folks clearly are not there, so WHO is transferring this student? Is the school supposed to call for an Ambulance?

In Lahaina we only have three ambulances, and they are some of the hardest worked EMT crews on the island. IF one of them leaves, it is a 2 hour round trip for ONE call! When multiple parents or emergency people are not able to pick up children, how will they be transferred?

There are not enough Ambulances to address this need on all of Maui, much less in our area! Who will pay for the ambulance? The schools can't afford it, and given how Maui is the hardest hit place in the whole of the United States for unemployment due to Covid19 emergency quarantines it is not likely the family will be able to either.

Further, lets talk real liabilities.

When a teacher, especially a teacher for middle and secondary students (6-12th grades) with existing high risk medical realities goes back to teaching in person, like myself, what will you do when they get ill?

Currently, DOE will not allow teachers to telework from home. This is opening the BOE and the DOE to liability legally by not allowing teleworking/virtual teaching for these teachers without penalty. Though Superintendent Kishimoto signed a legally binding paper stating that it was a choice that they could allow for, no principal or teacher has been allowed this option for high risk teachers. There is a universal refusal to give teachers the ability to do teleworking as part of their ADA accommodations. DOE is willing to give this to students, virtually telecommuting to classes, so then teachers and other staff should be allowed to do this as well without penalty.

I personally have many high risk medical realities-- more than one or two. And I am almost 50, which the CDC says the older you are, the more at risk you are. I have doctors who literally do not know how to say stay home more strongly due to the high risks, because we will have numbers of exposures in close confined rooms daily that equate or go above those of front line medical workers but without the PPE and ability to distance.

In fact, recent studies scientifically have definitively shown that secondary students, especially middle school students, have some of the highest rates of transmitting or infecting others particularly adults. They still have too many poor habits from childhood yet are physically able to transmit as adults.

So, to tell a dedicated and professional teacher like me who has uncontrolled diabetes type 2, a severe metabolic disorder that has caused me to be obese most of my life, scarring from pulmonary embolisms at age 26, a compromised immune system recovering from Cancer surgery just over a year ago, and 30% increased chance of DVT's (the average healthy person has .001% chance) which Covid19 causes in healthy people and a series of other risks like asthma, and who has a highly concerned endocrinologist, PCP, and other doctors to just suck it up and go to school, because we won't approve telework for you-- go expose yourself to 150 middle school kids multiple times daily each week, and put a plastic barrier between you on your desk to stop only the direct spittle when they forget to mask up or don't listen-- is literally saying go sacrifice yourself.

Are you going to personally visit my wife in sorrow if i die, and let her slap you across the face in disgust, while you try to explain my death was necessary because telework and virtual class with a real teacher and lessons was unreasonable-- when in schools elsewhere, and business offices across the world right now its the only way to do business, including this Board of Education meeting being held virtually?

There is little point in putting plexiglass around a desk unless it is floor to ceiling and seals off the desk area and I don't go past that. The Covid19 virus travels in the air, which floats above the open plexiglass sheet and will get on my clothes, face and hands, in my hair, on my desk, and everything around me. This is true as well for our students. Also it leaves another thing for overworked janitors to clean and sanitize daily-- needlessly. Allowing for teleworking and virtual teaching with students actually keeps us all safe, and further enables us to provide real teachers to kids, not just a canned program. Its a shame the DOE did not work on training teachers in spring and summer, despite claims they had one training for SpEd teachers, like teachers requested over and over-- we'd be prepared to reopen blended and virtual classes better. Delaying student report dates would give them time to do these trainings, and ensure that schools are prepared with enough staff, supplies, and ability to address the glaring holes in the protocols DOE hasn't thought through.

Plus, students in secondary do not have one or even three bubbles-- to use the term Dr. Park choose in her deposition to the Senate. They have an unlimited number of groups or bubbles that rub on each other and thus burst all the time, including 5-7 classes they rotate to daily, friends inside and outside of school they are socializing with. Most also have siblings at other schools, so their family bubble is continually burst by more exposures and then of course their parents have work, community, and friends bubbles that burst too. I quote Josh Green, our Lt. Governor and ER physician himself, " Bubbles burst. I am concerned. I view our teachers now as first responders because they are out there with our keiki, caring for them and educating them, during a time where we've had significant numbers of Covid-19 cases. We have to make sure it's safe to open schools and some of our teachers would be vulnerable without a comprehensive health plan. I think we should insist on that before we put anyone into harm's way."

Who will write the long term sub plans for sick teachers? There are already not enough subs, and now due to Department of Education new rules this year, schools must pay out of their budgets for

every sub, not the Department of Education who contracted to provide that for them. the average case of illness stretches MONTHS, are schools going to have to bankrupt themselves to cover a teacher's subs while they are ill? What will you do if the teacher does not get well and dies? How will you provide enough support for the community, school staff and faculty, and students? Will you notify the parents for all 150 students who have this teacher in a timely way, and quarantine them? If you trace back who likely gave this teacher the virus, and its a student, how will you help that child and family cope with the knowledge that they killed their teacher?

This is a huge failure of the HIDOE to our children, families, their employee's and our communities especially now, as we are in the midst of daily large increasing numbers of cases daily without tourists being here in Hawaii on masse.

The extremely limited availability for medical care are ever increasingly important and troubling realities on our islands. To ask students and teachers, and families to be OK with enforced attendance physically in schools in groups larger than CDC says are safe, in enclosed classrooms within less than 6 ft is not right. Please reconsider allowing not only for a delayed opening, but a teleworking virtual start for all schools and teachers. Lets protect the already small number of teachers we have.

Thank you,

Kandice Kartchner

Lahaina Intermediate School
Maui Island

Testimony BOE

From: John Crommelin <john.crommelin@k12.hi.us> on behalf of John Crommelin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

John Crommelin
HIDOE Teacher
7/22/2020 BOE Meeting
Cuts to Shortage Differentials
Oppose Any Cuts to Differentials

Dear Board of Education (BOE),

I am writing about the possible cuts to differentials. This cannot happen. When I return to the classroom in the coming weeks, I will be in one of the only work environments where I am in constant contact with others. The only spaces that are as congested and have as much personal contact as schools are care homes and hospitals. These are medical facilities that are equipped to handle disease: schools are not. Due to the high risk nature of our working environment, we deserve more compensation not less.

As a SPED teacher, I work in an extremely challenging environment and it is only going to be more challenging due to the pandemic. For example, I have to hold a meeting with every student regardless of their annual or reevaluation date when we return to school. My job is already incredibly difficult, which is why we receive a differential, and it is only going to be more difficult because of the current pandemic. Due to the increased workload, we deserve more compensation not less.

We are risking our health and the health of our families to provide a critical service to our communities. We are working harder than ever before and having to prepare under the looming threat of a virus that could kill us or our families. While I understand we are not alone in this, we are one of the few occupations that are this high risk. Due to the toll on our physical and mental well-being, we deserve more compensation not less.

You might say we don't have the money, yet when the government needs money for an over budget rail project, they can find it. The roughly 3 billion dollar (I'm underestimating because it's likely 4-5 billion) oversight of this project is enough to give all 12,000 teachers in the HIDOE a 12,500 dollar a year raise for the next 20 years. The federal government's contribution of 1.55 billion dollars is enough to give all teachers a 12,500 a year raise for the next ten years. Yes, all teachers. Due to the fact we are worth more to our communities than a rail system, we deserve more compensation not less.

Thank you,
John G. Crommelin V

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Testimony BOE

From: Laura Goodrich <goodrichl001@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Laura Goodrich
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: 'testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Laura Goodrich and I am a Special Education/English Language Arts inclusion teacher at Kamakahelei Middle School on Kauai. I am testifying today on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees, and urging board members to reject the proposal and not reopen schools on August 4th. To paraphrase a promise from within the Hippocratic Oath for physicians, we must “first, **do no harm.**”

The CDC has reported that COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is also thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Yet, how do teachers keep students appropriately distanced when they are social creatures by nature who crave the social contact they haven't experienced since schools closed down last March? There will be students who, despite being taught the importance of wearing a mask and socially distancing, won't. We've already seen it happen in childcare programs in Hawaii.

What happens when a teacher and other students become infected with COVID-19 because an asymptomatic child or adult came to school and unknowingly spread it to everyone he or she came into contact with at school?

I am honestly afraid to return to school without having solid protocols in place to prevent community spread based on an effective model that has already been tested in other school environments. It feels like we teachers have been reduced to the position of glorified babysitters because Hawaii wants to get the economy moving again. As a single parent who raised 3 children in Hawaii, I understand the dilemma of needing childcare in order to work to put food on the table. However, putting the health of our teachers, children, and their multi-generational families at unnecessary risk shouldn't be the answer.

I'm hopeful that there is another alternative to reopening schools while our state COVID numbers are still increasing. I would like to begin the academic year with distance learning or at least postpone the reopening of our schools until teachers, parents, and students can be assured we won't increase the rate of COVID-19 spread by reopening our schools without proven safety protocols in place. As others have mentioned before, community spread of COVID-19 could ultimately lead to full school closure with 100% distance learning again as we had last March, and possibly even a shutdown of our island and state. As Lt. Gov. Josh Green has said, “We owe our teachers a comprehensive health care plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk.”

Secondly, I understand that the State of Hawaii is struggling financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdown of many local businesses. In your efforts to balance the state budget, however, kindly remember that teachers are also part of the economy. We teachers have family members who also count on our income to provide food, housing, healthcare, and other basic necessities.

As I previously mentioned, as a single parent, I raised 3 children who all attended public schools here on Kauai. I am such a proponent of Hawaii's Public School System that I obtained a master's degree in education from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and am dually certified in English Language Arts and Special Education. Working with students with special needs is a humbling experience. I see gifts that each child possesses and aim to use multiple strategies to teach them in ways they can best learn content. I also see how if these multiple strategies are not utilized, students with special needs fall farther and farther behind in their learning, come to believe they cannot learn, and ultimately give up trying to learn. Is this how we want to support our future generation of Hawaii's citizens? My colleagues and I who teach special education put in numerous hours outside of our regular working hours to prepare meaningful lessons to support struggling students. The reality is that since we live in Hawaii, with its high cost of living, we also need to be able to earn a decent wage in order to provide for our families. Please, do not retract the pay differentials for special education, hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian language immersion teachers. Please, find another alternative to balance the state budget so we teachers can still afford to support our own families in Hawaii.

Thank you for all you're doing to protect our state during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Laura Goodrich

8th Grade Special Education/English Language Arts Inclusion Teacher

Kamakahahei Middle School, Kauai

Testimony BOE

From: Juliana Romero <julianamoose6@gmail.com> on behalf of Juliana Romero
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Safe Reopening of Schools

20 July 2020

Board of Education
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Esteemed Members of the Board of Education:

My name is Juliana Romero and I am a special education teacher who taught in the state of Hawaii for 19 years and 6-months, with two years international teaching experience.

I am writing because I am deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on 4 August. The current state plan not only does not ensure the safe return of our students to school, but indeed it actively jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. The measures announced by Hawaii DOE do not meet CDC recommendations, and do not adequately consider the risks to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with the current plan. It is unacceptable.

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces in which individuals are not wearing masks. (Thus it is not a merely matter of maintaining adequate physical distance.) Many of our classrooms exhibit precisely these qualities that we know, scientifically, to be unsafe. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the current DOE plan does not sufficiently address the fact that reopening our schools under the current plan will create exactly the conditions that are most conducive to transmitting the virus. It is a recipe for a public health disaster.

While it is encouraging the state and HSTA reached an agreement to maintain six-foot distance between students in the classroom, this is far from adequate to even minimally protect the health and safety of our community. Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking". Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental

matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

4. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.

5. Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan there is no possibility that [CHOOSE ONE] my family will be sending our child to in-person classes [OR] that I feel comfortable teaching under the proposed classroom rules and conditions.

Therefore, I am calling on you to announce and implement the following measures:

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;
2. Delaying the re-opening of all public schools for at least one month in order to allow schools more time to prepare online learning systems [OR] Delaying the opening of schools until at least 4 weeks have passed with no Covid cases in our state;
3. A statewide mandate to require the use of masks at all times when on public school premises. (With reasonable exceptions only in the case of teachers and administrators who are alone in their classrooms and offices.)
4. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule.

I appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of Covid in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. Failure to improve the current reopening plan by adding the above additional measures would constitute a severe dereliction of your duty as a public servant to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns I have expressed.

Best regards,

Juliana Romero
91-1058 Kekuilani Loop, Apt. L-1104
Kapolei, HI 96707

Testimony BOE

From: Su Walters <su_walters@icloud.com> on behalf of Su Walters
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Dear Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on MOU between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020 - 2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions.

I respectfully request that you consider delaying the reopening of our schools and return of students to campuses on August 4, 2020.

In particular, I request this for our elementary school community of approximately 780 students on the Island of Maui. Each and every individual member of our school community of teachers, EA's, Office Staff, Administrators, food workers, custodians, Counselors and others work together very closely to support the mission of our school and the academic progress of each and every student.

Right now, if we reopen our school too soon, while we are seeing COVID-19 Case numbers increased to double digits anxiety is high. We face the very real possibility of one of us becoming infected with the virus. To me, this is unthinkable. Who could we afford to be without in facing this fight to continue to provide for the education of all of our students.

There are those in our school community with underlying health conditions that will put them a serious risk of life threatening complications from contacting the virus, by coming to work at this time. Is this a chance we can take?

Due to the high teacher shortage that we face in Hawaii, and at our school we cannot afford to risk losing one teacher in our school Ohana. Everyone is too important to the overall mission of our school.

Please, please, please consider delaying the reopening of schools until the data supports a safer time to do so.

I am also asking for you to reconsider cutting teacher shortage differentials at this time.

Last year, I started out the year working two jobs to afford the cost of living on Maui. I worked seven days a week until I received a shortage differential that made it possible for me to stop working my second job in January. For this, I was very grateful. So, I'm asking that for the love of Hawaii's teachers who give so much, please continue funding shortage differentials. They make all the difference to your educators.

With much Aloha,

Suzanne Walters

Counselor Grades 3-5

Princess Nahi'enaena Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Tommie T. <tmt0340@gmail.com> on behalf of Tommie T.
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tommie Tibayan and I'm a 6th grade teacher at Lehua Elementary School.

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

Many of the teachers at our school are frustrated, overwhelmed, and worried about the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. Since, I teach in the 6th grade, most of my students are between the ages of 10-11 years old. According to the numerous medical reports on the local and national news, this places many students of my students in the category of ages 11 to adults who can easily knowingly/unknowingly transmit the Coronavirus to others. Like many teachers who have been teaching for several decades, I am part of the high risk age group (55+), so I need to take extra precaution when I need to be out in the community. Now that school is starting up for the new school year, you can only imagine how overwhelmed and worried educators in my age group are feeling. Some of us have even made sure to have our will in place not knowing what will happen next.

At the present moment, many of my colleagues and I feel we are not ready to open the school year on August 4th. The DOE and our public schools need time to plan and prepare properly and adequately before we let students return to school. This additional time we are requesting will help us to properly plan and thereby, provide a healthy and safe environment for the students, teachers, staff, and families in our communities. Decision-making planning and precaution factors are key elements we educators need in order to prepare safely for the opening of school so please provide us the adequate time we need to accomplish this goal.

Thank
you,

Tommie

Tibayan

Lehua Elem. School

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Pascual <marypascual808@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Pascual
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Distinguished members of the Board of Education,

I am testifying on behalf of Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year](#) and Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My mother is a special education teacher and has taught at a variety of public schools for over 20 years. During that time, my mother has had to work long hours for subpar pay but has done so because she is passionate with educating our keiki. However, the online classes during the fourth quarter has tested her limits.

During the online classes for the fourth quarter, my mother did not have the privilege like other public school teachers to assign non-graded assignments. Instead, she was expected to teach to ensure a maintenance of progress. However, this proved to be nearly impossible.

Even though I was attending online classes and lived with my mother, I barely saw her. My mother worked between 10 to 12 hours each day. Her schedule included: 1) getting in touch with each student's parents to make sure they knew to pick up their child's work/turn in their child's work; 2) learning and teaching online classes without training; and 3) calling/video chatting individual students, who did not attend class with their classmates due to their parent's work schedules. Besides working with her students, my mother was also required to turn in a variety of different documents (ex. She had to make a log of when and how she contacted each parent) and was not given adequate time to prepare these items.

Right now, teachers are expected to be fully prepared to welcome their students back on August 4 with all safety requirements put in place. However, given that there has not yet been mandatory training for the COVID-19 crisis as promised, the lack of clarity of what is required by schools from the HDOE, and the pay cuts instead of the \$10,000 compensation, the HDOE cannot reasonably expect: 1) teachers to be ready to welcome their keiki back into their classroom; or 2) veteran teachers to stay when there is no incentive and their health is on the line. Therefore, I respectfully ask that the BOE consider funding for teacher shortage differentials and delaying the student's start date.

Sincerely,
Mary Pascual
Daughter of a Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Stefanie Won <swon808@yahoo.com> on behalf of Stefanie Won
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am testifying on Action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please consider delaying the start date of school for students from Aug. 4 to give the teachers more time to prepare for a totally different school experience. We know as the students return to campus, they will be very excited to see each other and their teachers so we need to have safety measures in place for them. We owe it to our students and their families as well as our own families to have safety measures in place and to have a thoughtful plan which answers all of the many questions we all have. We also need time to learn how to do distance learning with the rigorous curriculum and new standards we have to teach. Last year, we used a lot of our spare time to learn how to do enrichment with the children. Please give us more time so we can all feel safe when the students return to school.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Stefanie Won
Kapalama Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kari Debusca <kari.debusca@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kari Debusca
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony COVID-19 Reopening of Schools Meeting Thursday July 23, 2020

To the Board of Education,

I am a public high school teacher and parent of two students who attend the same school. Ideally, I would like to go back and see all of my students face-to-face but many unknown factors make me and many of my colleagues extremely hesitant. Please take into consideration the following when determining how to reopen schools this fall.

1. There is not enough data to safely and confidently reopen schools for students and all adults who work with them. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/07/school-openings-across-globe-suggest-ways-keep-coronavirus-bay-despite-outbreaks>
2. CDC reported this week that the real number of COVID cases could be up to 10 times higher than reported. How can we know for sure our numbers in Hawaii are accurate or what the transmission rate is in our community? <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/25/coronavirus-cases-10-times-larger/>
3. Will there be routine or any type of screening?
4. Why won't teachers be allowed to take students' temperature upon entry to their classrooms? This seems like a very basic and easy way to identify students who may be ill and is already taking place at the airport.
5. What is the protocol for quarantine when a student or faculty member is found to be positive? Will students who made contact with this person be asked to quarantine? If yes, for how many days? Will these students be tested?
6. If a teacher is quarantined due to a positive student, will the days be deducted from sick leave or paid by the state?

Although the Department of Education continues to say there is a plan in place for the reopening of schools, many of my teacher friends and I are extremely hesitant and would like to postpone the reopening for a few weeks. I think it would be best for faculty and staff to meet without students to learn the protocols and science behind how we will be reopening, as well as receive training on how to most effectively conduct lessons in the "hybrid" model.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kari DeBusca
Mililani High School Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: psculpta <psculpta@gmail.com> on behalf of psculpta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Written Testimony

July 22, 2020

Hello,

My name is Kevin Johnson. I have taught biology and chemistry at Kauai High School for 19 years. I am eager to reenter the classroom with my students. The staggering lack of participation among my students with online learning last spring has taught me how important face-to-face personal interaction is to student learning. Unfortunately, Kauai High School is not prepared to reopen safely. There are numerous areas in which the school has no plan (health check screening of students, teachers, and staff. A rigorous policy on all attendees wearing face masks. Plans for dealing with all the myriad situations that would occur if and when someone gets sick. Who is responsible for teaching the fully online students? etc.). The list is a long one. The baseline situation for reopening is, obviously, safety to everyone who visits the campus. The D.O.E. has not met that baseline requirement.

It is imperative that the B.O.E. postpone reopening for at least the first quarter. This will give us teachers time to learn how to implement online formats, and the myriad unresolved problems that require more time can be addressed. This is manifestly obvious to us teachers.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Johnson

Kauai High School

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"We are not here concerned with hopes or fears, only with the truth as far as our reason permits us to discover it."

-- Charles Darwin

Kevin Johnson
P.O. Box 1201
Kalaheo, HI 96741
psculpta@gmail.com
808-652-6696

Testimony BOE

From: K. L. Hansen <hulahansen@gmail.com> on behalf of K. L. Hansen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Testimony for Consideration to Delay School Opening.

To The BOE Members:

I am testifying on Action Item H: [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#) As a DOE middle-school teacher, I feel strongly that DOE schools are not now and will not be adequately prepared to welcome students because of the following 10 reasons:

1. The President held a briefing today and stated the COVID pandemic is going to get worse before it gets better. If this is so, and I believe we all agree that it is, then the BOE should ask, "Why are we opening our schools before anywhere else?" By doing so, in effect, Hawaii folks and their children will become the "guinea pigs" in this back-to-school-in-person experiment, and this is NOT acceptable.
2. Since there is well-documented evidence that COVID cases rose dramatically and quickly in Israel, Singapore, and South Korea when students went back to school, the BOE should carefully consider this evidence and delay a return to school until a later date.
3. COVID-19 cases have been increasing in Hawaii in general and particularly so on Oahu. The COVID "curve" has NOT flattened in Hawaii, and the "curve" is likely to increase quickly once students start attending school in person.
4. Recent stats indicate that about 40% of people in the US are wearing masks, and it is recommended we need to get to 95% before it is safe to return to school, work, etc. Until mask-wearing increases, it is NOT safe to return to school, where hundreds of students will be socializing and coming in contact with each other frequently.

5. PPE safeguards, equipment, procedures, and training are not fully in place in all DOE schools, and teachers feel inadequately prepared.

6. As of today, Federal funds to implement educational COVID safeguards have not been approved and allocated yet. Consequently, these funds have not been distributed to schools, nor spent on resources, and this is unlikely to happen before August 4, 2020. (According to CNN, the Senate GOP proposal includes \$105 billion in education funds -- \$70 billion for K-12, \$30 billion for colleges and universities, and \$5 billion for governors to utilize on their own. Of the \$70 billion, half -- or \$35 billion -- would be allocated for the needs of schools re-opening, including PPE, transportation, school meals, retrofitting buildings, and classrooms).

7. Although youngsters are more resilient to COVID-19 and less likely to suffer serious consequences, the same cannot be said for teachers and family members who are more vulnerable. This is particularly important to consider given that in Hawaii we have; (a) a high rate of multi-generational families living together, (b) a larger number of family members living in the same household, and (c) families living in smaller housing units where social distancing is less likely to be possible.

8. It is well documented that kids spread illnesses to each other as soon as they begin to attend school. Indeed, teachers also become infected, and I personally have been sick every school year for 20 years....it is simply something that is unavoidable, but something that we can and should do something about this year, as much as possible.

9. Every day counts! Every day we have before school starts, is another day scientists have to get closer to a vaccine and/or to learn more about the efficacy of therapeutic treatments, which can save more lives.

10. Delaying school openings will give the DOE more time to receive federal funds and adequately prepare, save money spent now on resources until the federal money arrives, reduce the time-off teachers may take because they are concerned about their personal health and safety, and ultimately save lives later.

Please, please reconsider delaying the school opening date, now scheduled for August 4, 2020. Each day of delay will save lives and slow the spread of COVID in our communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and carefully considering my 10 points, which are based on facts and science, as well as the President's opinion on the coming rise of COVID cases, which should be obvious to everyone by now.

Respectfully submitted by K. Hansen,

Middle School Science Teacher at Kaimuki Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Andrea Stanton <astanton@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Andrea Stanton
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Andrea Gig
Subject: Testimony for cuts to shortage differentials and H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and cond

Aloha,

I am a preschool special education teacher and I am writing to you to convey my concerns with the cuts to shortage differentials and special education teachers, and returning back to school on August 4th. I feel teachers should be given more time (paid time) to prepare their classroom and receive the proper training to keep themselves and children safe.

I feel that Special Education teachers have more work than regular education teachers and we deal with a lot more behaviors. It is definitely not an easy job! I really enjoy my job as a Special Education Teacher and working closely with my students families so that their student can succeed, but if this pay bonus goes away I am not sure what I am going to do. We(special education teachers) have IEP meetings before and after school during non paid hours and they require a lot of paperwork to be filled out/written that can take hours. This cuts into our planning time that we would do after school each day. I have been doing IEP meetings throughout the summer, in fact, I have one today at 12:30. This extra pay that started in January made me change my mind about leaving at the end of the this past school year and I decided to stay. It made me feel like I was appreciated for all of the hard work I am doing for my students that I truly care about. Now that they are wanting to take it away or suspend it has me questioning if I want to even teach this year. Knowing I will not be getting paid the same amount (which is a huge difference!). the stress that we go through each year, and working even harder because our case loads will be even larger with teaching in class students, distance learning, 1:1 and who knows what else. How does 1 person have a life and time to do all of this on top of IEP meetings and planning? I am really concerned about this and the safety of my students and myself.

I heard today that other schools are doing distance learning so I am concerned that those teachers won't be writing testimonies because the opening of their classrooms doesn't affect them as much. I would keep that in mind.

I agree with the following statements from HSTA. There are many unanswered points of concern. I am especially concerned with my safety and health and well being so that I do not contract COVID. I would like more guidance on how to keep preschoolers safe from getting COVID. I feel I am at high risk because naturally young children do not know or understand about social distancing and are unable to take precautions on their own.

I am concerned about military families who may/may not self quarantine and unknowingly contract and/or are asymptomatic carries of the virus. Children do not take the same precautions as adults and can easily pick up the virus. I was alarmed at the insensitiveness of Dr. Bruce Anderson regarding the health and well being of the teachers and staff as he mentioned that children are low risk to getting sick with COVID but what about the teachers?

I need time to set up my classroom properly so that it will be safe for both me and my students. This requires packing up many materials to create space for social distancing. Changing out furniture to provide distance. Clear guidelines and proof of what 6 feet physical distance between all persons (both teachers and students)

look like and how it can be accommodated. My administrator says 12 students can fit in my class and I'm not sure if this will be within 6 feet distance.

Will I be expected to teach face to face AND Distance Learning for my students. What kind of case load will special educator's have with IEPs, teaching face to face and planning for distance or blended learning with out adequate prep time and training.

Can we ask parents to phone/video conference with teachers
ONLY and keep them off campus and out of our classroom?

Can the educational assistants meet the children on the curb and watch them for pick up after school?

What type of workload will I have with blended, distance and face to face teaching? Already I am expected to do IEPs on my own time. Virtual IEP meetings keep me safe but take longer to prepare for.

I agree with the following points from HSTA

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

The video clip I watched made me feel like we/teachers are being "selfish" about putting off the reopening of schools. This is not the case. It woefully attempted to remind the teachers to remember that "we need to do our part" and "now it's our turn". It also clearly communicated that we did not lose our pay (yet) during this pandemic and just made me wonder about when it would be "our turn" for this as well. It made me upset because I did not need to be reminded of why I chose to be an educator, what my heart feels for the families and students who need the schools to reopen. I miss my students and grieve their loss of educational experience, I am very concerned about their social emotional wellbeing during this pandemic, and would like nothing more than to be back with them.... teaching. I also did not appreciate the perspective the superintendent took trying to appeal to my raw emotions about this entire pandemic and although children have a lower risk for developing serious symptoms if infected with the virus I would be exposed and infected then would not be able to teach, and infect my family with the virus as well. Additionally, she stated that "all teachers had an opportunity to participate on their own time for distance training" reveals how disconnected she is from what is really happening in the schools as I was not aware of any distance learning instruction that I could participate in and if something was available it was not made known to me properly as I was on summer break. Further, whether I had known about it and was not able to participate during summer break should not be a reason to defer training for teachers once they return from summer and prior to children returning to our campus.

Rather than motivate me to begin the school year it made me feel guilty about sending in my initial testimony (yesterday) to delay the opening of schools. It tried to touch my heart in a way that was wrong, making me feel

bad for advocating for a safe environment for teachers (and students), requesting more time to plan for instruction, to receive proper training for distance learning, and the right to receive a clear understanding of what I will be expected to do as a teacher implementing face to face instruction for my preschool students with special needs. There are many questions I have about the type of work caseload I may have this upcoming school year. Will I have to teach and prepare for 3 different educational scenarios that were options provided to the parents at my school? 100% distance learning, blended learning (combination of face to face and virtual learning) in addition to the 100% face to face instruction for my special education students who will be in the classroom for the entire school day 5 days a week (1815 minutes/week). I am unsure about what my caseload will be and what my work load will be as a special educator.

After listening to the superintendents message I reminded my self of the following:

As an educator, I am a professional, I have a two masters degrees (special education and school psychology) and although I am thankful for the service they provide, I will not be compared to other workers in a "blue collar industry" who have been providing services to our community. Nor will I be compared to the healthcare frontline respondents who have clear guidelines for safety and resources readily available to them to keep them safe from the virus. I am asking for more time to adequately prepare because 2 teacher work days is not enough for lesson planning and arrangements of the physical space. Although my principal (administrator) is the best and I'll say that again, "the best" as she has been clearly communicating to our families and teachers during this entire pandemic and in preparation for school to resume in the fall. I am asking for more time as a school to prepare our campus' once all staff is back to work from summer break. I am asking for a clear understanding to what will be expected of me within the guidelines of my teacher contract. I am asking for more time for proper training of how to do distance learning. I am asking for answers to the questions posed by HSTA (

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

I am grateful that I have and am part of a strong teacher's union that will be there to advocate for safe working conditions, appropriate pay and then provide our right to vote to determine what the majority of educators agree to be a fair and just option.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Mahalo,
Andrea Stanton
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Dylan Ramos <dylanpk.amos@gmail.com> on behalf of Dylan Ramos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action Item G - compensation

Aloha,

This testimony is in regards to Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I understand that economic problems have put immense pressure on public budgets, but we should not and cannot cut our nose to spite our face. We cannot think short-term and shortchange those we cannot afford TO LOSE during these times. These groups that already needed more help before COVID and will now be asked to risk their health to return to normal deserve better. Please ensure that all hardworking teachers and their students get the support they need. If budgets are a concern, pressure those in charge of them to figure out something different because this is simply not the way.

Thank you,
Dylan Ramos
Honolulu, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Chris Neppi <cwneppi@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Neppi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello, my name is Chris Neppi, and I am a 4th grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary in Waikiki. I am testifying on action item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

In the beginning of July our school voted on 1 of 3 schedules. I voted for us to go back like before covid, everybody back in the classroom as that is going to be best for the kids and parents. Our school voted the other way, choosing a blended option of half the class in school and the other half at home doing online learning. Since then my attitude has changed completely because covid cases have gone up since then all over the country, including Hawaii. Now, we are scheduled to go back to school and teach and learn in an environment that has forced us to figure out how to teach with an overwhelming amount of necessary restrictions and rules that interrupt the learning experience. We've created a logistical nightmare that we still don't have figured out that is going to put everyone, including kids, parents, grandparents, teachers and staff at risk of death, so we can try to go back to a normal learning experience that is never going to happen as long as covid is out there without a vaccine. It is simply too early to go back to school in any capacity with this threat out there. The current plan has students separated in the classroom at 6 feet apart. That means no groups, no helping individual students when needed because of 6 foot distancing rules and masks. With these rules in place, and this threat out there in our minds, teaching and learning under these circumstances is not worth the risk. We should be doing strictly all online learning for the first quarter, then reassess a month before the beginning of the second quarter to decide what to do then. This will increase the chance of cases going down, and keep everyone safe. Please consider this option, and all the lives at stake as our health and our lives is more important than a feeble attempt at providing a normal education under unsafe and underprepared circumstances.

Mahalo,

Chris Neppi
Jefferson Elementary
19 years of service

Testimony BOE

From: Arnie Kikkawa <arnie.kikkawa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Arnie Kikkawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony from Farrington Complex Principals
Attachments: Hawaii State Board of Education Testimony from the Farrington Complex Principals.pdf

General Business Meeting
Agenda Item D Board Action
Department of Education
and Comments

Arnie Kikkawa, Principal
Pu'uhale Elementary School
345 Puuhale Road, Honolulu, HI, 96819
Office 808-832-3190 Fax 808-832-3195

Dream. Believe. Achieve. Pu'uhale is where we dream of a bright future, believe in ourselves and in each other, and achieve our highest goals.

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**Hawaii State Board of Education Testimony by
Farrington Complex Area Principals**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

The health and safety of our students, staff and school community is of the greatest importance to us. Our message has been and always will be a message of HOPE² -- Heart, Opportunity, Perseverance, Excellence and Equity for all Students -- which all ties into the BOE direction/message of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness and Working toward Togetherness. We strive to build trust with each of our families and bring out the best in every student and family. Each of us have kept our students and their needs in the center of all of our decisions.

It is because of our great concern for our students and communities that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. As we reopen schools, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we have in regards to reopening schools safely. Our primary concern and decision making has always been focused on the health and safety of our individual school communities.

Normally, the months of June and July are enough to prepare for the opening of a new year. However, we are not operating in "normal times." School administrators have worked tirelessly to close an unprecedented 2019-20 school year, planned and opened Summer Hubs for students, and worked alone to open a new year under the umbrella of COVID with confusing and contradicting guidance. This has been no easy task for any of the principals in the field. Due to the lack of timeliness and continuous changing of the guidance, it has impacted our ability to successfully plan for the opening of the school year.

Critical for the safe opening of this school year is the time for collaboration, planning and training of school level stakeholders, such as classroom teachers, educational assistants, school health assistants, custodians, office staff, and cafeteria workers. As of today, custodians and office staff are the only two role groups on campus. Teachers, educational assistants, school health assistants, and the cafeteria managers do not report until a few days before students are set to return. Based on additional requirements of safety, distance learning, etc., more time is needed.

There is no disputing that schools must reopen. We acknowledge that our students and staff must return to a school environment where we have established safe practices so they (all stakeholders) feel safe on campus.

As Farrington Complex Principals, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Health and Safety of our Students and Staff

- Prior to reopening, the department's safety division must provide additional safety, cleaning and disinfecting training. Custodians, School Health Aides, Cafeteria, Clerical Staff, and Educational Assistants have not received adequate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Principals have had to independently seek information from various resources like the CDC website to inform staff.
- Schools need written guidance on the documentation from the Department of Health, Public Health Nurses for our School Health Aides (SHAs) and our complex area Hawaii Keiki nurse for new Health Room protocols in the areas of safety protocols, cleaning, disinfecting and training in a timely manner.
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult "bubbles", including bus transportation, should the DOH ask for specific information.
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of school operations with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, custodians, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom do not report until students do. In a typical school year, opening and training everyone with compliance training and setting the tone for the school year takes up the entire allotted time. This year we must complete this in a virtual format, with a compressed leadup, utilizing inconsistent information, with no additional time allotted to train our faculty and staff who are scared and returning from a complete school system shutdown.
- In order for schools to be fully equipped with PPE supplies, schools have had to fund their purchases which have put a strain on our funding. Schools are also concerned with their abilities to maintain PPE supplies during the school year.

Access to Devices and Connectivity

- Some of our low socio-economic families lack internet access at home, hotspots are needed to ensure equitable internet access for all students. Our schools will have to provide these access points.
- Schools lack devices to ensure equitable access to distance learning platforms. For example, summer learning hub chromebooks were delivered to the school during the last week of the summer learning by the Office of Information Technology Services(OITS). Schools were tasked with inventorying these chromebooks and disseminating to students and families.
- Schools lack the time to train students and families on how to access hotspots and chromebooks which will provide them access to distance learning content for all schools with a Blended or Hybrid model. Additionally, training is needed to access distance learning platforms and communication tools to maximize distance learning engagement for students.
- Schools lack the personnel to ensure that devices are cataloged and inventoried properly to ensure accountability.

Priority for Vulnerable Students

- Some of our low socio-economic families lack hotspots and training on devices to ensure equitable internet access for all students. Our schools will have to provide these access points.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.

School Food Services:

- Clearer guidelines needed for Serving students who are not on campus.Guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- OSFSS - School Food Service does not have the supplies to provide for Grab-n-Go packaging allocated in their current budget, this is currently being provided by WSF for schools who will be providing curbside pickup for meals.
- Additionally, many schools have received a reduction in Meal Ticket Clerk (MTC) hourly allocations when there exists a greater need to service students and scan in both a face to face and distance format during the school day.

Distance Learning Option:

- "Opt In" form for distance learning option not officially available yet.
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, etc for special education students to participate in full Distance Learning Option.
- Additional time is need to finalize full Distance learning options, contracts, funding and training
- Guidelines needed for families to enroll in Distance Learning Options.
- Time needed to communicate with parents regarding Guidelines and requirements in order to contract licenses.

Workload Changes:

- Due to the increased demands of cleaning and sanitization of rooms and areas, the length of time for cleaning a classroom has more than doubled, however, no adjustment has been made to the expected time on custodians/room cleaners schedules. Changes in duties, allowed work hours, pay compensation, and additional funding to schools will be needed to account for this dramatic change in workload.
- Teacher workloads have also been expanded with the onboarding of distance learning, and many other changes. Guidance on adjustments are needed.

Substitutes:

- With the uncertainty of this school year, the training and quantity of substitutes is critical. As many of the current substitutes are of the at risk category, schools need assurances that there will be enough subs in order to fill positions for those teachers and staff who are absent.
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teaching staff reports to school?
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult “bubbles”, including bus transportation should the DOH ask for specific information.
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of school operations with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, custodians, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom do not report until students do. In a typical school year, opening and training everyone with compliance training and setting the tone for the school year takes up the entire allotted time. This year we must complete this in a virtual format, with a compressed leadup, utilizing inconsistent information, with no additional time allotted to train our faculty and staff who are scared and returning from a complete school system shutdown.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators we feel that the reopening of schools on August 4 is feasible with the proper support and guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated. An invitation is extended to any board member to visit our campuses to assure our school community members that our schools are prepared, safe and ready to receive children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Farrington Complex Principals

Farrington High - Alfredo Carganilla

Dole Middle - Mavis Tasaka

Kalakaua Middle - Lorelei Aiwohi

Fern Elementary - Glen Miyasato

Kaewai Elementary - Bert Carter

Kalihi Elementary - William Grindell

Kalihi Kai Elementary - Marc Kawahara

Kalihi Uka Elementary - Derek Santos

Kalihi Waena Elementary - Daniel Larkin

Kapalama Elementary - Patricia Dang

Linapuni Elementary - Tami Marie Haili

Puuahale Elementary - Arnie Kikkawa

Testimony BOE

From: Megan Sherwood (via Google Drive) <drive-shares-noreply@google.com> on behalf of Megan Sherwood (via Google Drive)
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE testimony.docx

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Testimony BOE

From: Natasha Taketa <natasha.taketa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Natasha Taketa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

The concern I have is for all of those who will be at school that are asthmatic and in the higher risk categories because of their pre-existing health conditions. This is for students, faculty, staff, custodial workers, security guards, cafeteria workers, and their families. We're being put into a situation that is not ideal for the health, safety and well being of everyone and especially those who are high risk. Most adults will social distance, but the students may not. We're also being exposed to a larger population because many catch the city bus, socialize on their own with or without social distancing, and may or may not follow sanitary and mask guidelines.

Yes, parents have the option to have their student's distance learn this school year. That's great, but students will not be learning with their actual teacher(s) but rather a computer program. I do not feel that is in the best interest of the child as a real teacher should be working with the student. Not many students and adults can self learn in this manner. It takes a lot discipline which many do not have.

As for those who work at the school, we all don't have a choice to protect ourselves and our health and lives unless we quit our job which we can't afford. Many of us need to make some difficult decisions because of the position we're being put into.

My personal story; **I'm an asthmatic.** I'm high risk. I work with a variety of students from honors to severe **special education students who scratch, bite, spit, and throw up** on me. Why, because I teach music to all students and they all deserve it.

I'm newly married. My husband and I have decided that we need to **live separately for his health and safety** because I'm no longer going to be in a safe environment. He'll stay with his father to keep him company since his mother just passed away in January. We've only been married for 4 months. We **can't try to have a child** because my own **doctor recommended against it** since I need to go back to work with a large group of people and raising my risk to COVID-19 exponentially. If I were to get sick it would be even more complicated.

I also **can't see or help my grandmother** anymore because I might potentially expose her, and she just lost her husband in May. She lives on her own now and this is a critical time for her to be with people. She's 80 years old and can barely get along on her own.

I love my job, I love working with my students. But do I have the option to leave the profession for my own health and safety? **No**, because I'm the breadwinner for my husband and I and I'm still paying loans off from college. **I need to continue to work and I'll continue to do so even though my life and well being is at a risk because I have no other choice.**

Please, make a wise decision. Not all our schools are prepared to return physically. My own classroom doesn't have all the protections it needs. I'm buying supplemental items for the protection of everyone in my classroom. Can we do it with distance learning and teach the students online first? Absolutely! But in person, not yet.

Please! We are not ready.

Sincerely,

Natash Taketa
McKinley High School Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Teri-ann Osumi <teri-ann.osumi@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Teri-ann Osumi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Hello,


I'm a high school math teacher and I would like to strongly request that the opening of our school year be pushed back until proper protocols are in place. We are all trying to get through this together and we all want the best for our students, school, community, and state. I am asking for the DOE to place proper guidelines and protocols for what will happen if someone were to get sick or if students travel. The responsibility can not solely be put on the principal and teachers. We need help executing, implementing, and holding everyone accountable for what needs to be set in place. If all schools are doing different things, the state is vulnerable for infection.

Leadership in the state has prolonged tourism in our island because we know the potential risks of allowing outsiders coming in. I am praying that we strongly consider and take the time to ensure our safety, in the same way the state has hesitated with tourism. We are simply asking for every school and community to be fully informed on guidelines and protocols. I want the reopening of schools procedures to be taken seriously and cautiously as we are thorough in those guidelines. With the extra time, we can also properly be trained on using technology and ensuring our students are ready for the school year. I am at a title 1 school and I specifically teach EL students. Before Covid, my students traveled here from outside of the US to live and to come to school. My students are sometimes already at a disadvantage of not having consistent schooling from their childhood years. I know this time will be even more devastating to their education because not every student has the proper training or devices to log in for lessons. Lastly, as we reopen, I would like our state to do their best to provide the proper PPE for our classrooms, students, and teachers. This will help support our reopening and ensure that we are doing everything possible to maintain cleanliness and stop the spread of germs and infection so we can stay open for students.

Thank you so much for reading through this statement. I am praying for our leadership because I know this is not easy. Praying for peace, guidance, protection, and wisdom as we move forward in doing what is best for all.

Aloha,
Teri Osumi

--

 **Teri Osumi**
*ELL Math Teacher
Class of 2020 Advisor
Waipahu High School
Room G6 Phone: 307.9431
Teri-Ann.Osumi@k12.hi.us*

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Testimony BOE

From: I umeda <lumeda@gmail.com> on behalf of I umeda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am writing to testify on **Action Item G**, Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I urge you to continue with the compensation pay for the above mentioned groups of teachers. I have been teaching for more than 20 years and in all my years as a special education teacher, there has never been a year that I did not put in extra time to write IEPs, hold IEP meetings, contact parents, fill out an endless number of forms or amount of paperwork, in addition to working with students and EAs/PPTs. Meetings and paperwork often require time beyond my 8:00-3:00 work day. I would not even consider it "extra" but rather compensation for work that has already been done and time that has already been put in, time that my own family has sacrificed because instead of spending time with them, I had paperwork to do to meet timelines. During COVID-19, having to do distance learning took up even more of my time working from home. I found myself on the computer for 12 hours on many days. If not in session with students, in meetings with other colleagues, in training webinars to learn how to do distance learning, or logging documentation of time spent with parents and students.

It is also compensation for money that was spent out of my own pocket. During the last quarter of this past school year, during the COVID-19 stay-at-home mandate, I found it necessary to pay for online resources out of my own pocket in an effort to provide my students with decent distance learning opportunities that met their needs. There were also many times in the past that I paid for classroom supplies out of pocket. Having to fill out a purchase order, wait for approval, then make my purchase is a waste of time and money. Teachers are always on the lookout for good deals. If we have to wait for a purchase order to be approved, the deals are gone.

I am asking that you do not discontinue this compensation for teachers.

Lin Umeda
Kapunahala Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Kelsokamauliola Coloma <kelsokamauliola@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelsokamauliola Coloma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Compensation for Kumu kaiapuni

Aloha,

I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language Immersion programs for the sy 2020-2021 and urge the BOE to reject the proposal.

I'm an alumna of Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala. I attended the December 5, 2019 BOE meeting where the extra compensation was voted on and approved of. As Kawano mentioned, the compensation for kaiapuni classroom teachers should already be in the operating budget because kaiapuni is already supposed to have a differential according to BOE policy 105-8: Ka Papahana Kaiapuni. Uemura said "it is justified" and majority of the BOE members concurred whole heartedly. Especially with this new covid-19 school year, they deserve this extra compensation and more because they will be working harder than English teachers, that already have Acellus and other online English programs, in creating an online curriculum.

Me ka ha'aha'a,
Kelso Kamauliola Coloma

Testimony BOE

From: Carly Rizzuto <c.rizzuto@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Carly Rizzuto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good afternoon,

My name is Carly, and I am a teacher at Waianae High School. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I urge you to not open school campuses to students on August 4th. COVID-19 continues to spread in our communities. I fear for the health of our students, our teachers, our school staff, and the families that we all go home to. As a teacher, I am not confident that the systems set up will protect the people we love or benefit the education of our students. We need to control the spread of COVID-19 before students return to school in-person. This is the only way to bring consistency to student learning. Please, delay opening school campuses to students.

Mahalo,
Carly

Testimony BOE

From: Zach <evolutioncity@gmail.com> on behalf of Zach
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Schools opening

Good afternoon. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

School exists for kids to obtain greater knowledge to set themselves up for success in life. One of the fundamental classes everyone has to go through is science, yet in our recent weeks as a country and as a state, we are ignoring the science of Covid-19. With the scientific evidence of super spreaders like busses, classrooms (especially if not social distances and masks being worn) and especially, children being children, the probability of Covid-19 being spread is inevitable.

The percentage .2% is being tossed around recently. According to studies and data taken by the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) along with data from the CDC, that is the mortality rate of children. Roughly 180,000 kids go to public school every year. This alone would, statistically, mean 360 children will die. Not to mention teachers, families, faculty, community members, that could catch Covid-19 and potentially die, due to children being in super spreading events caused by forcing students back to in person learning.

All signs and more importantly, science, point to not opening up schools. My question is why? Why take such a massive risk of so many lives? Why not follow procedures to allow safe opening like multiple other countries have already done? With spikes of Covid 19 across the United States and no end in sight, why ignore science?

This in no way only effects only me or my family. It effects us. Do you have a child? If you do, wouldn't you do anything and everything you can to protect them? If your answer is yes, then you're on the wrong side of history attempting to open schools.

Would you send your child out every single day to school knowing your actions could cause their death, or the death of a fellow community member?

History has its eyes on you.

Mahalo for your time.

-Zachary Var

Testimony BOE

From: Marco A. Silva, REALTOR® <marco@konaluxuryrealestate.com> on behalf of Marco A. Silva, REALTOR®
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action Item U

I am testifying on Action Item U.

I strongly urge you to consider delaying the opening of schools for the near future. The lives of our most vulnerable and cherished are at stake. We need a firm plan with adequate training of teachers, parents and children before we even contemplate such an action.

Our teachers and other educators have been put in the terrible position of having to choose between their (and their family's) safety and their jobs. No teacher wants to deny children the opportunity to learn - if they could, they would teach. But they have been woefully let down by their state, which insists on putting the burden of a difficult decision on schools and teachers. Why has more not been done to support teachers and communities in distance learning?

And why are the real health concerns of the community not being considered? In the countries that have reopened schools, there have been alarming increases in covid cases, often attributed to schools.

Please, consider that many families in Hawaii have elderly caretakers or grandparents who are part of the fabric of their families lives. How do families continue to function if they have to quarantine from each other in their own houses? How are teachers meant to teach effectively in a way that children can learn and maintain all of the necessary precautions required to keep everyone safe? How do children make it to school safely on buses?

You cannot send the community back to school whilst you try to find the answers and with only vague plans that force people into dangerous circumstances. By refusing to answer you are putting the burden on schools and teachers. If you are meant to support schools and teachers, then please, support them.

Many thanks for your kind consideration.

with aloha,

Marco

Marco A. Silva
REALTOR®, Broker
Direct: 808.557.8921

2018 Top 100 REALTOR® Hawaii Business Magazine
2017 Top 100 REALTOR® Hawaii Business Magazine
2016 Top 100 REALTOR® Hawaii Business Magazine

Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist ®, CLHMS
Certified Residential Specialist, CRS
Certified Negotiation Expert, CNE

RB - 20599

Coldwell Banker Island Properties, Kona

Testimony BOE

From: Joleen Oshiro <joleenoshiro@gmail.com> on behalf of Joleen Oshiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the board:

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5.

I am not a public school teacher or an educator at all, nor do I work for the state. I am simply a taxpayer who doesn't see the logic of throwing the teachers and students back into the classroom in a rushed manner without a clear, well-considered, thorough plan that outlines responses to the many and varied outcomes that can result from opening the public schools amid a pandemic. I do not pretend that I can clearly get a sense of just how difficult it is to be light on your feet with such a behemoth of a public school system, yet the DOE and the state has had four months to create some sort of thoughtful policy and protocol, a general structural approach, yet seems not to have done so. If I am mistaken and you indeed have done so, how is it that you cannot articulate it in a clear enough fashion that teachers and families can see the path forward? Not to mention the taxpayers who pay for your system and send their children into it.

I come from a family of public school educators, and I listen to my sister talk about what's happening at her school, where socio-economic challenges abound. That means many families can't afford personal computers, much less Wi-Fi, so teachers there face extra challenges to educate their students even without the coronavirus. Add to that scenario (and this is my opinion) administrators who aren't looking out for the welfare of the folks in the trenches, but seem much more interested, if their policies are any indication, in protecting themselves from the virus. It's absolutely ludicrous. I know your system is huge and you can't check in on individual schools, but if you don't provide a basic structural approach with thoughtful policy and protocol to guide the schools, this is what happens with irresponsible leadership.

Then there are the children. Are you truly ready to open schools in less than a couple weeks without a clearly articulated protocol for how to protect students beyond the masks and 6'-x-6' distance rule? Not to mention addressing sick children that come into the classroom — and then the rest of the class, including the teacher. What happens to the rest of the school? At a school like my sister's, where the community isn't equipped to easily turn to distance learning, what happens next? Schools need guidance and some funding for this unprecedented time.

Please never forget that you are beholden to bring your A-game on behalf of people who have devoted their entire careers to educating children, and families who are putting their most precious assets in your very hands. It is incumbent upon the board, the schools superintendent, the health department and the governor to put into action the highest level of best practices you can practically execute — and share them with the community.

Joleen Oshiro

Testimony BOE

From: david espina <davidcespina@yahoo.com> on behalf of david espina
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Espina

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this as testimony toward the reopening of public schools in Hawaii. I have worked for the Department of Education for nearly 20 years in different capacities, including para-professional tutor, educational assistant, and teacher. I enjoy my job and find it very fulfilling. Though this year I am finding it difficult and frustrating to return back to the classroom. The Covid 19 Pandemic and its effects worry me to my very core. I feel as if I have had to make a choice between my family and my well-being versus a job that I love so much.

One reason why I am concerned is that we have not yet seen the effects of Covid 19 on our young people. One may argue that children are not affected by Covid 19 as much as adults, but in Colorado, The Denver Post writes, "The rate of infection among those between the ages 10 and 19 jumped 53.5% over the same period, according to a Denver Post analysis of data from the state health department." (Seaman, 2020). I service over one hundred middle school students. I am hoping and praying that what has happened in Colorado does not happen in Hawaii.

Another reason that I am concerned about going back to school is that I live in a multigenerational house, which includes my elderly mother-in-law, wife and three-year old daughter. I am extremely worried about their exposure to the Covid 19 virus due to my return to the workplace. The CDC writes "As you get older, your risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases. For example, people in their 50s are at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 40s. Similarly, people in their 60s or 70s are, in general, at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 50s. The greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 is among those aged 85 or older" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). My mother-in-law falls within that high risk group.

The third reason that I am worried about returning to the classroom is that I, too, fall into a high-risk category. My medical history includes multiple, serious, chronic conditions. The CDC states, "There are also other factors that can increase your risk for severe illness, such as having underlying medical conditions. By understanding the factors that put you at an increased risk, you can make decisions about what kind of precautions to take in your daily life."

There are other alternatives that could be explored, including distance learning through virtual technology. For example, distance learning was done during the fourth quarter of the last school year. Over the past couple of months, schools have been equipping themselves with technology to ensure equality and equity in education. Florida is one US. state that illustrates this. The Florida Department of Education wrote "On July 6, 2020, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) provided further guidance to school districts through an Emergency Order – 2020-EO-06: Further Guidance for Closing Achievement Gaps and Creating Safe Spaces for Learning. FDOE took bold steps to ensure that Florida schools will be open while also providing equally as pivotal flexibilities that directly prioritize health and safety and benefit families, school districts and schools. This order also gave districts the financial security and confidence to secure a seat for a student that may decide to begin the school year in a non-traditional setting, be it virtual or one of the many innovative ways Florida districts are providing education, and later return to the classroom" (Solodev, 2020). I, too, believe that continuity of education would be successful in a virtual setting.

I feel strongly that I am being forced to make a choice between making a living for my family, versus exposing the Covid 19 virus to my family, and potentially losing my life due to my multiple chronic medical conditions. I truly believe in our children's education and am very passionate about it. I am aware that some people are anticipating a return to the classroom, including students and parents. However, given the high-risk circumstances, some of which are previously mentioned, it seems more than reasonable and appropriate to explore safer alternatives to the classroom. I feel that it is worth pursuing these alternatives, including the continuation of distance learning (via virtual technology).

Thank you,
David Espina
Kapolei Middle School Teacher

"Older Adults." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 25 June 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html.

Seaman, Jessica, and Meg Wingerter. "As Colorado's COVID-19 Cases Increase, Teens and Young Adults See Higher Rates of Infections." The Denver Post, The Denver Post, 27 June 2020, www.denverpost.com/2020/06/27/colorado-covid-cases-rise-young-adults-teens/.

Solodev. "Coronavirus (COVID-19)." Wwww.fldoe.org, www.fldoe.org/em-response/.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: nilton oyama <niltonoyama@gmail.com> on behalf of nilton oyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing to implore the BOE to ensure that all the concerns that HSTA that are listed below have been addressed before schools can reopen. If health and safety for the students, faculty and staff is the utmost priority, then please communicate a plan on how we would respond to these situations. I am really concerned because I am in a high risk category because of my underlying health issues. I am also a parent of a student who attends that same school I work at and I am worried that I may be jeopardizing her health and safety. Please do not reopen schools until these questions are answered. This could be a disaster in the making if we are not prepared for it! Thank you for your attention on this matter.

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning options for their children? And will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? HSTA believes everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employee, and or one of their household members test positive for COVID-19?
- What standard practices and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others, especially students who are medically fragile and/or very young?
- How will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?
- When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100-percent distance learning environment, and when will teachers be trained?

Nilton Oyama
Hilo High School
Counselor

Testimony BOE

From: judy <judy2383@aol.com> on behalf of judy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - On Delaying the School Start Date

Aloha Board of Education:

I am Pre-K Teacher, and a mother of (2) children that attend public schools. I personally do not feel safe sending my children back to school nor do I feel safe working so close to others at this critical time. I would like to Board of Education to please consider pushing back the start date, so as parents and teachers can start to feel more comfortable with our new reality of COVID-19. As a teacher, I have not had the proper amount of time to be trained in all the CDC guidelines, and think about the new ways I will be delivering instruction to my students. As a parent, I want my children to stay healthy and as of right now staying home is the best way I can do that.

Thank you for consideration.

Judith Ryan
'Ele'ele Elementary School
Executive Office of Early Learning Pre-K Teacher

July 21, 2020

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

Subject: Testimony

To the Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education,

My name is Lani Rodriguez. I am a teacher at Dole Middle School in Kalihi, O'ahu, and have been for the last 15 years. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I am writing to urge the State of Hawaii, the DOE and the BOE to delay the reopening of schools to students. Simply put, schools and teachers are not ready to reopen, and it's just not safe to do so, either.

While not the experience of most teachers in the State, I know that many teachers entering the classrooms in a week were hired or our positions were changed this summer. I just found out a little less than two weeks ago that I'll be back in the classroom teaching a subject I've never taught before after being in a non-classroom support position the last two years. On top of that, despite what the Superintendent claims, teachers have not been trained in effective distance learning instructional strategies, certainly not at our school by our own faculty or even outside providers. Last quarter was a blur of adjusting quickly to not returning to the classroom while still attempting to provide instruction to our students, a majority of whom didn't have access to distance learning technology. The collective focus was on trying to make contact with each student and their family to give information about school and community programs, providing academic supports to our students, and ensuring that students completed their work to get promoted. In the midst of the flurry, it became clear that developing lessons for effective virtual instruction requires a very different skill set that most teachers and even our school-level instructional coaches and coordinators were not prepared nor trained for. Teachers had to seek out any training or professional development on their own time and on their own dollar. Even that was challenging because up until two weeks ago, teachers didn't know what to plan for. Without knowing if we would be holding classes in person, instructing completely online, or a mixture of both, teachers didn't know how to adjust curriculum and what instructional strategies they'd need to utilize. Now that we finally know, we need the time to collaborate with our colleagues to make the transition back into this new way of doing school as smooth as possible for everyone who will occupy our school buildings and our online classrooms.

I'll admit that when my colleagues and I voted on the instructional model and schedule proposed by our principal at the beginning of this month, I consented, assuming that the Governor or the Superintendent would look at the COVID19 data for our State and the island of O'ahu and make the logical decision to delay the reopening of schools for students. After all, the State was and is experiencing new positive COVID19 cases in the double digits similar to those that prompted the initial government-mandated shelter-in-place orders. Moreover, the island of O'ahu is now in the red, meaning most of our communities have over 20 active COVID19 cases within the last 28 days. Just looking at the data, it's clear that reopening schools while the virus is still very active is just not safe. While I know that school administrators are working hard to develop as safe plans for school reopening as they can, these carefully laid plans can be quickly foiled due to the highly contagious nature of this virus. These "safe" reopening plans are contingent upon the assumption and hope that every single person on campus abides by the health and safety protocols of remaining six feet apart, wearing a nose and mouth covering properly for the entirety of the time that they're in classrooms or in close proximity to others, washing their hands, not sharing any supplies and materials, and staying home if they are sick. We know that this is not how it will play out in reality. I walked into a summer school class on campus last month at a time when there were fewer cases on the island and in our school community. There were only about 8 or 9 students in the class (much less than the 14 to 16 students per class we're anticipating this school year), but even then they were not practicing physical distancing and about one-third of them were not wearing nose and mouth coverings. Compound the probability of this kind of behavior by four different classes of students we'll see in a day (at our school, at least) and the threat of contagion on our campus and many others becomes very real. Insisting that schools reopen on August 4th will needlessly endanger thousands of students and school staff. I help take care of my elderly mother who is immunocompromised. I work with individuals who are caretakers of elderly relatives, who are medically vulnerable themselves, and who are in the at-risk age group. Many of our students have pre-existing medical conditions and/or have family members who do. Who will take responsibility if any of our students, our staff, or any of our family members dies from COVID19 and their initial infection was traced back to someone from our school?

The reopening of schools to students must be more thoughtfully and carefully considered and planned than it has been. This virus has no timeline, and to force over 200,000 students and staff to return to campuses in the middle of another spike in positive cases simply to abide by an arbitrary start date is putting too many lives in danger. Moreover, if we truly care about providing students with a quality educational experience upon their return, we must be given enough time to adequately prepare those educational experiences for them. Therefore, I am asking the Board of Education to delay the reopening of school campuses to students until it is safe and responsible to do so.

Mahalo nui loa,
Lani M. Rodriguez

Testimony BOE

From: Nora Schubert <noraschubert@hotmail.com> on behalf of Nora Schubert
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Schools Reopening

As a kupuna community member and family member of DOE students and employees, I am very strongly opposed to the scheduled reopening of our schools.

After listening to both the press conferences yesterday of the Governor, DOE, BOE, DOH and then the HSTA, it is very apparent that we are NOT ready to safely open our schools. Not by a long a shot. To open them as scheduled based on the current status quo is unethical, irresponsible, and deadly.

To open our schools now does a grave disservice to the safety of our front line school personnel - teachers, security, maintenance, cafeteria, office staff - and our students.

To open our schools now exponentially increases the risk of our schools becoming superspreaders and our precious fragile communities of becoming deadly hotspots.

To open our schools now is a grave dereliction of duty of care by leading government officials.

Do not open our schools without all essential protocols, training, equipment, staffing, and information firmly in place.

Schools are not ready. Our communities deserve to be safe. Our keiki deserve to be safe. Our school personnel deserve to be safe.

Do not open our schools now. People will get gravely sick and die. Our communities will become sickened and people will die.

Do not open our schools. Do not have fall sports and extra curricular activities.

Just say no. We are not ready.

Nora Schubert, BSW, MSCJA
Member, HGEA Retirees Unit 6
Retired Family Court Probation Officer

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Caraang <jcaraang@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Caraang
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony delay student start date
Attachments: TestimonyCaraang2020.pdf

Aloha,

Attached is my testimony in regards to the student start date. Thank you.

Jessica Caraang

Testimony in regards to delaying student start date:
Jessica Caraang

To the Board of Education,

Many may claim that teachers had months to prepare for the new fall semester, therefore a delay in students starting school is unnecessary. While it's true that teachers were preparing during the summer break, what people don't realize is that we were preparing for uncertainty.

I am pleading for the delay of the student start date in order to give teachers more time to learn new content, to learn new online platforms to display the content on, to prepare teaching in the classroom, and to prepare a safe working environment.

Imagine being told that you were going on an important trip. You don't know where the trip will be, you don't know the exact day and time you'll be departing, you don't know how long you will be on this trip, you don't know what kind of weather you'll face on this trip, you don't know how much money you should bring, you don't know if you will have any transportation and accommodations once you arrive at the destination, you don't know who will be with you on this trip, you don't know a thing!

You ask the organizer to answer these basic questions for you and all they tell you is you are only allowed one carry on sized luggage for this trip and make sure you pack correctly.

You ask for more clarifications.

All you are told is to be ready when the shuttle comes to pick you up or they'll leave without you and you don't want to be left behind because your entire livelihood is at stake if you miss this trip. Vital and basic information that any traveler would obviously need is withheld and you are expected to have a chipper attitude and take care of what you "can" control. You pray to whatever higher being you believe in that you choose the right items to pack in your insufficient sized luggage and that you'll be ready for when that shuttle comes.

You pack a little for warm weather, and a little for cold weather, and the shuttle comes. As you get closer to the destination you realize you packed nothing that will benefit you on this trip and there is no going back and you won't have time to buy additional things on the way to the destination. You are told you are stupid for not preparing well, and to just deal with what you got.

This is exactly what teachers went through this past summer and quarter. We were taken on a trip with insufficient guidance and resources.

We are practically being pushed into a vague notion of having to go back to the classroom and teach, yet with the most essential questions unanswered and provisions being unmet.

Our lives are at stake! Literally! I have an autoimmune disorder which puts me at highest risk of fatality if I get COVID-19. I am currently waiting for approval of accommodations that will protect my life, and I am almost certain my accommodations won't be approved by the time students start coming in through my classroom door.

I care about my students, and I truly miss their learning moments, but if I as their teacher do not feel safe and healthy, there is no way I can provide proper instruction for my students.

Decisions are constantly made for teachers without consulting them and without their interest in mind. Decisions start from the top and trickles its way down to the teachers and we are told not even part of the conversation or process, just told, last minute the end result.

For example, classroom movements. I worked at one school for 7 years and have moved classrooms 6 times. I moved classrooms almost every single year I've been at that school, and almost every time I moved I was told last minute. I was not consulted or given a voice in the decision. Being told I was lucky to even have a classroom, made me feel guilty and so I always mildly complied and moved, taking along all the books and materials that I housed for my department and inheriting all the other materials left behind in each new room. Moving classrooms is as difficult as moving to a new home, having to box everything up, unpack, set up, furnish and decorate. I moved so much that I gave up on decorations. Once I had to move in 2 days. Other times I was usually given a week. This year I thought I could finally set roots, but as always I am kept on my toes. 3 weeks into summer break and I was told I had to move, without being asked, and even accused of having known prior to the end of the school year in May. Such a manini decision made for me at the school level, clearly demonstrates the heart of our leadership, lack of communication, lack of consideration, and lack of care. 4 weeks into summer break, I packed up all my things. 5 weeks in, and I start to unpack in my new room. 6 weeks in and I repack after being told we were only allowed a certain number of items and to store most of our things due to space issues. During that same week, being an ELL teacher, I am told I must provide daily face to face instruction to the targeted ELs and that in order to accommodate about 20 at a time with social distancing, I might need to move to another room, again. And get this, maybe back to my old room that I just moved out of because that one is bigger than the new one I just moved in to.

Yet it is still unknown who will exactly be in my daily class, so just stay put for now. On my toes. But first I still need to finish organizing my things for storage,

measuring 6 feet between desks, on top of teaching 3 grade levels, 4 different contents, and figuring out how to teach them all face to face and online. Additionally, during week 7, we learned our content material just changed, and we are moving from one type of online platform to a new one. Enjoy your last week of summer. Now, we have less than a week left of summer, and I am far from ready content wise and with my physical classroom.

Teachers are after thoughts and made to feel guilty for complaining about how we are treated. Decisions are constantly changing, even up until now, so until plans are finalized and clear, teachers should be given more time. We can't bring the students along on this trip until we know where we are going, what to bring, and what to expect.

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Ann Doles <maryanndoles@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Ann Doles
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Mary Ann Doles. I am a teacher in Ewa Beach. I am emailing to testify on reopening the school year. Due to the increased number of cases in Hawaii, I am concerned that it is still not safe to reopen the school. It is true that our number of cases are small compared to those in the mainland. However, we should prioritize the safety of everyone, especially the students. Please delay the reopening of the school. year. Give us more time to prepare to safely open our school to our students where they can have a safe and better learning environment. We are really reaching out to you for support.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I hope that you can hear our voices of concern.

Have a wonderful afternoon
Mary Ann Doles

Testimony BOE

From: Yolanda M. Keehne <yolandak@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Yolanda M. Keehne
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Formal Testimony for Hawaii State Board of Education Action H

Dear Hawaii Board of Education Members,

I am a very concerned grandparent of 3 young children, (ages 11, twins who are 7). I am writing to urge you to reconsider and **postpone the opening** of Hawaii's public schools on August 4, 2020. Although Hawaii may be one of the first states to begin the **2020-2021** school year, the threat of **COVID-19** has not subsided and in fact, the active cases in the state of Hawaii have risen over the past several weeks.

There are many unknowns and the current pending "plan" to open the schools is **not** comprehensive and needs to include detailed and specific strategies for the possible detrimental & life-threatening impacts of the exposure to **COVID-19** by students, teachers, and miscellaneous school staff members, as well as parents and other family members.

Action Item H: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between the State of Hawaii BOE and HSTA

As a lifelong resident of Hawaii, I implore you to delay the start date for public schools for the **2020-2021 academic year**. Some parents have not been kept apprised of their children's schools plan, and have received little or no communication from the respective schools. This is a life-threatening situation which must be taken very seriously. There are too many gaps in communication to simply move forward and open the schools on August 4th, which is only 15 days away. School administrators, teachers, staff and the the Hawaii State Dept of Health all need to be on-board with a viable action plan and they must provide this information in a uniform and transparent manner to all parents of school children!

The Hawaii Public School system must NOT be used as a "test-case" model when all of the health care protocols have not been incorporated into a safe and thoughtful plan. Please do NOT put our keiki, teachers, staff, parents and other family members at risk by rushing to open the school year on August 4th. This is morally wrong and our keiki and their 'ohana deserve better from our leaders.

Sincerely,
Yolanda M. Keehne

--

Yolanda M. Keehne, MSW
Secretary II, College of Natural & Health Sciences

University of Hawai'i - Hilo

200 W. Kawili Street, College Hall A, Room #1
Hilo Hawaii 96720-4091

Phone: (808) 932-7507

FAX: (808) 932-7295



"We are our best professional selves when we are our best human selves."

~Marcia Lattanzi Licht~

Testimony BOE

From: Carl Soares <cmrhsoares@yahoo.com> on behalf of Carl Soares
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H (Board Action on MOU...). I am asking to delay the opening of school campuses to students – not to open schools on August 4 as currently scheduled.

I am an 8th grade teacher at Kea'au Middle School – this year's 8th grade class is very large. According to my current roster (7/22/20) on Infinite Campus my largest class is 27 students (another class has 26 and another 25 students). With our A/B model that means theoretically one day I will 14 students and 13 on the other day. I only have 14 2-student tables – and when they are set up in rows they would not meet the 6 foot distance requirements. From what I remember about my room there is not much room for rearranging to meet that requirement. But I won't know for sure until I go back – definitely something that will take time to figure out.

That is one major issue of concern for me but I know there are going to be so many other things like these that we would not “normally” be dealing with in our two-day allotted teacher work days, including bathroom/water fountain usage, what if students don't comply with wearing masks, what is the procedure and what would it look like for students or adults who may not be feeling well while on campus, and on and on. Plus I anticipate much discussion on these many little topics that will occur during the two-day allotted administration days that we would not “normally” be discussing. I'm sure that will be the case for many other teachers and schools across the state, especially since most teachers will be reporting back to school for the first time since summer break on Wednesday 7/29.

I'm also concerned about our school being ready for 100% distance learning – both as an option for students at the beginning of the year as well as when schools are shut down again. I'm fortunate to be participating in training on a learning management system. At first this training appeared to require time for a few hours of webinars (7.5 hours) but it turned out to be a full course that requires about 28 hours of time (training is currently in progress). And those of us at our school participating in this training are expected to spend about 4 hours of PD time before students arrive at school (i.e. August 4) to train teachers on a system that requires 28 hours of time. A majority of teachers will not be ready for 100% distance learning at the beginning of the year. More time will be needed to prepare for this – again something we would not be “normally” doing during the beginning of the year.

Again I ask you to delay the opening of the school year to students. Thank you!

Carl Soares

Testimony BOE

From: Marianne Wheeler (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-noreply@google.com> on behalf of Marianne Wheeler (via Google Docs)
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: mwheeler@mwis.k12.hi.us
Subject: MWIS Concerns for BOE - Invitation to view

[10001945@k12.hi.us](#) has invited you to **view** the following document:



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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Maui Waena Intermediate School Administration**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

We submit this testimony to the BOE for consideration as administrators who have made every good faith effort to reopen our school. We collectively agree that it would be a critical error to move forward without voicing our concerns regarding reopening our schools. The health and safety of our students, staff and community is at risk and failure to address these concerns may result in grave consequences.

As Maui Waena Intermediate Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHAs, Cafe, Office have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Still no guidance documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides)
- Maui Department of Health gave us different guidelines than the CDC.
- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- We are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc.
- Parents not immediately available to pick up sick students.
- When can a sick student return to school? Is a COVID test required?
- We are not able to limit the points of entry to campus leading to an inability to monitor or screen for student illness upon entry to campus.
- DOE continues to provide all training and meetings virtually yet claims that it is “safe” for students to be present in large groups on school campuses.
 - Educational Leadership Institute was held completely virtually on 7/21/20.
 - District Education Leadership Institute was held completely virtually on 7/20/20.

Preparation for On Campus Instruction:

- Social distancing during non-instructional times.
- Mandatory Mask wearing.

- Middle school teachers are only licensed in one subject, therefore students will have to rotate to other classrooms, not giving enough time to clean in between classes.
- Cafeteria can only hold 78 students, enrollment is 1086.
- Elective classes - no training on band and hands on type classes.
- Campus layout is non conducive to one way traffic based on locations of buildings and stairwells.
- Transportation- how will the bus social distance?
- No air-conditioned classroom, rooms are over 100 degrees, that is why air conditioned was installed in the first place.
- Rotating schedule, what to do if a student shows up on the wrong day.

Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns:

- Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online.
- Teachers have not been provided adequate time to plan and prepare for online delivery of instruction.
- Inadequate time has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.
- No training or funding has been offered for classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.
- Substitute teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online or in the classroom.
- Inadequate number of devices available to ensure all students have both internet access and a device to access online instruction.
- Inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding online delivery of instruction.

Personnel Concerns:

- Lack of qualified teachers - health and safety concerns have resulted in “at risk” teachers choosing to take leave.
 - When teachers, administrators and other staff members become ill we will not have the workforce to function
- Lack of substitute teachers.
- Lack of substitute paraprofessionals.
- Lack of substitute custodians/room cleaners.
- Family members are sick, protocol for staff to work.

Food Service Concerns:

- Inadequate space to allow students to eat in the cafeteria with appropriate distancing.
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- Inability to provide “offer vs. serve” to students.
- Students who receive free and reduced lunch who are receiving instruction online will likely not be able to eat.

Student Transportation Concerns:

- Online system has just opened and many students have not been able to apply.

- There isn't a process for tracing which students ride the bus on a given day and route.
- The transportation guidelines allowing two (2) students per seat defeats the purpose of all efforts to maintain social distancing.
- Bus drivers can offer a mask to students but they are not required to wear the mask.

Guidance is Requested Regarding:

- Liability concerns
 - Student safety and wellbeing in the home while receiving online instruction.
 - Online activity while "in class".
 - Offline activity while "in class".
 - Student injury while completing learning activities "unsupervised".
- Chapter 19 reporting/enforcement
 - How to verify if students are "in class" when violations occur.
 - No training has been provided to adhere to Chapter 19 guidelines via distance learning.
- Special Education Services
 - What is considered direct instruction online for service minutes?
 - If parents choose distance learning is it considered a declination of FAPE?
 - How are students "included" if they are attending class live while the general education population is receiving instruction online?
 - How is compensatory education need determined?
 - How is compensatory education delivered?
 - How is compensatory education documented?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- Attendance - how to track students if and when online delivery
- Infinite Campus - Schedule Wizard shuts down on 7/24/20 - no more mass schedule changes can be made.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that we are being forced to reopen schools on August 4, 2020 with minimal support and without answers. At this point there is not enough information to guarantee that anyone who gets infected with COVID-19, will not have long term health issues, is really worth risking anyone's quality of life?

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. We respectfully request that the reopening of schools be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maui Waena Intermediate School
Administrators
Jacquelyn McCandless (Principal)

Marianne Wheeler (Vice Principal)
Courtnee Sakamoto Ribao (Vice Principal)
Elizabeth Ayotte (Vice Principal)

Testimony BOE

From: Carmen Yung <x_carmenyung@yahoo.com> on behalf of Carmen Yung
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Mahalo,
Carmen Yung
My child attends Koko Head Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Rayna Nitta <rayna.nitta@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> on behalf of Rayna Nitta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education,

Thank you for your service and continued commitment to our keiki, our future. I am a second grade teacher at my alma mater, Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School in Honolulu. Returning to school for the start of SY 2020-2021 is daunting, but thank you for hearing the voices of the teachers and community members about the importance of maintaining six feet of physical distance and wearing face coverings to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. I write to you today in regard to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am committed to returning to work on July 29, but I am gravely concerned about students returning to campus on August 4. As you are aware, numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in Hawai'i continue to average higher than what we saw in April and May when schools were closed. The [COVID-19 Epidemic Curve, Hawaii 2020](#) shows the higher incidences of community transmission during these summer months as compared to the spring. There are also more "pending/unknown" cases, which speaks to issues that come with community spread, the complications associated with asymptomatic transmission, and difficulties with contact tracing. The data is very troubling, especially with the thousands of public school students scheduled to be back on campuses in less than two weeks. School is to be a place where we nurture the academic, social, and emotional well-being of our keiki. But above all, we fight for and protect their health and safety because those are precursors to any learning and growing that they will do. We are not ready to safely welcome them back to school on August 4 due to lack of preparation and training in the areas of physical distancing, distance learning, and protocols to do with health checks and incidence of COVID-19. Furthermore, I do not believe the idea of a classroom "ohana bubble" being promoted by the Department of Education can exist at my school, or any school for that matter.

My school has been proactive in finding ways to implement six feet of physical distancing in classrooms. We are employing a hybrid model so that our lower elementary classrooms can use the individual desks that will not be needed in the upper elementary classrooms. Three specialty class teachers have been taken out of their lines of teaching in order to create an additional kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 class in order to reduce class size. Even with all of this, our lower elementary teachers are having difficulty fitting in the amount of desks needed with the appropriate amount of spacing. In my own classroom, I have five rows of student desks spaced six feet apart, but that does not come without issues. With my first row of desks as close to the front of the room as possible, my last row of three desks are just 18 inches from the metal tray that sticks out of the whiteboard on the back wall. I am forced to have student desks near high-traffic areas; one desk is near the sink, and another desk is near the door. I emailed my principal this past week to address safety concerns surrounding lack of space and the increased safety risk that the six-foot policy has created for about one-third of the students in my class.

In regard to distance learning, I heard Superintendent Kishimoto say on the news that teachers have been trained to provide distance learning and that schools will accommodate families who choose not to physically send their children to school. I am wondering what training to which Dr. Kishimoto is referring. Any distance learning training that has been provided at my school this summer has been voluntary; no training has been mandatory or extensive. I have also not received any information about providing distance learning to students who will not physically attend school. Am I to be responsible for effectively providing full-time in-person instruction while also providing full-time distance learning? How? The bottom line is that teachers have not been prepared to manage this "different look" of school that is slated to begin in less than two weeks, and it is the responsibility of the Hawai'i Department of Education to get us

there. I believe it *is* possible for teachers to effectively support our students' academic, social, and emotional development from a distance, but we need to know how to do so. Especially with a real possibility of another school closure this school year, teachers need more time to prepare for an online learning environment.

At the point when students do return to campus, what will happen in the event that someone tests positive for COVID-19? What if the positive case is a family member or with someone else who a student, teacher, or school employee has come into contact? How will we know if the individual classroom needs to be quarantined, as opposed to the entire grade level or school? For how long will this quarantine or shut-down take place? "Visual health checks" will miss the asymptomatic positive cases, so will regular testing be available to students and school staff to mitigate the spread of this highly contagious respiratory virus? Though it may sound inviting, there is no such thing as a classroom "ohana bubble." At Wilson, we have specialty class teachers who will be visiting each of our 27 regular classrooms on a daily rotation schedule. Using specialty class teachers to reduce class size has created two situations where another general education teacher and myself must teach the core subjects of reading, writing, and math to two groups of students every day. At the end of the school day, students go home to interact with members of their families, who have each come into contact with various people outside of the "bubble." With the interactions of so many people bursting the "bubble" for our hundreds of classrooms and thousands of students, teachers, and staff, there must be specific and thorough protocols in place to protect, regularly test, and further reduce the spread through sanitization and contact tracing. There are so many unanswered questions for these highly-probable situations, and to my knowledge to this point in time, there has been no written guidance on the reopening of school buildings from the State of Hawai'i Department of Health.

This lack of preparation will have dire consequences and lives are literally depending on the safe reopening of schools. We are not equipped to open school campuses safely to students on August 4. To mitigate the spread in our local communities, the Hawai'i Department of Education must prepare and disseminate information about specific and thorough protocols in regard to physical distancing, testing, and incidence of COVID-19. All teachers must receive training that is pertinent to the educational model that their school has selected, including training specific to the provision of distance learning. If you stand by your guiding principles of Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working toward Togetherness, a delay to the start of school for students must be adopted by the Board of Education. We are in a pandemic, so even if it means delaying our Return to Learn, the health and safety of students and staff must be the highest priority. If not, our future will not be as bright with keiki, makua, and kupuna lives lost.

Sincerely,
Rayna J.S. Nitta
Second Grade Teacher
Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School
rayna.nitta@wilsonschoolhawaii.org

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Rayna J.S. Nitta
Second Grade Teacher
Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School
rayna.nitta@wilsonschoolhawaii.org
(808) 733-4740

Testimony BOE

From: Tyla Woods <tylahawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Tyla Woods
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

I am a parent and my child attends Haleiwa Elementary. I love the school and staff and I know they are doing their absolute best they can to prepare for this upcoming school year. We were given a distance learning online survey and I chose the option of “not sure and want more information on distance learning” and then yesterday I got a telephone call. In our pamphlet received from our school there were general guidelines for distance learning (self guided, check in once or twice a week on teacher assigned time, and an example of a similar program/platform that might be used for distance learning). I asked the if there was more information on what program/platform might be used so that I can prepare or look into to confirm that I (and my child) can handle “the distance learning model” to support my child’s learning. She said she would email and I followed up with an email saying I didn’t get an email with the information. I am relieved that distance learning is being offered as an option but I don’t feel the school district is prepared in many ways. I understand things are constantly “changing” however we are at a little over a week until “showtime” and I don’t know how to prepare my child for distance learning even though it is offered and I don’t feel like our schools, teachers, and staff are supported with a solid plan on starting the school year safely. I don’t feel like we as a community are ready to begin a school year without any solid plans in place. There has been a change of 3 feet versus six feet for safety and required mask wearing and non required mask wearing-why is this just for school? If anything we should be more careful in this close contact school setting rather than more lenient. I don’t feel it’s fair to keep the 6 feet and mask mandatory rule for everyone except at schools.

Mahalo

--

Tyla Woods
67-003 Kahaone Place
Waiialua, HI 96791
(
808) 551-6216

Testimony BOE

From: Clinton Soo <sooc001@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Clinton Soo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees](#)

My name is Clinton Soo and I have a child that attends Kalani High School. A delay in school reopening provides better health & safety measures for students, teachers, school staff & their families. There needs to be detailed guidelines so that everyone feels safe & comfortable in the school setting. As a parent, I want to read, learn & provide input on what I can do to make sure we follow safe protocols.

Clinton Soo
Parent of a Kalani High School student
Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Kelly Gorniak <kgorniak@waialae.edu> on behalf of Kelly Gorniak
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until proper safety protocols have been communicated to families and teachers, and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

I am a Special Education teacher at Wai'alaie Elementary Public Charter School.

Our schools are not ready to open for face to face instruction. We are basically scrambling to piece together pieces of a vague puzzle.

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided.

A few days ago health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him only recently to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It's unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. It has been left up to each individual school to navigate and figure out. I opted for a 100% distance learning for my own children even though I have no idea what the program will be like. I did it to keep my at risk family member at home safe and for the safety of my beloved colleagues. On top of that, we teachers need to figure out how to do balance 100% distance learning and hybrid teaching. That is literally a job of 3 teachers. We have literally less than a week to figure this all out. It would be best to focus on one thing, which is the safest method to instruct our children with limited possibilities of spreading the virus. That is 100% distance learning. I have friends who teach in LA and Chicago. Their districts are opting to start the year off with 100% distance learning. Why can't we? Why are we rushing to be the first?

I have other very important questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address immediately:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 what exactly will happen? How will we get tested? Shouldn't we get tested like how we get a TB test upon initial employment?
- Teachers are literally leaving by the droves. Everyday, educators are applying for leave, retiring, or simply quitting. Schools are scrambling to fill positions. How is it possible to operate safely this way? Teachers are scared and rightfully so.
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay? Who will train substitutes for the hybrid style of teaching?

- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that? What if subs choose not to get tested and are asymptomatic?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? There is a lot riding on the concept of the 'ohana bubble but not enough awareness by the DOE has been spread to the public. How are we going to educate our parents and families before school starts? If the 'ohana bubble is so important, why are we allowing afterschool extracurricular activities like band practice? Doesn't that go against the whole concept? How is that safe?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? I know I am stressed out. I have had many sleepless nights, a tight feeling in my chest at times. I also worry how the stress of making sure my students stay 6ft apart at all times will impact my teaching.
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission? I know many teachers are so fearful of the possibility and guilt if a student should come down with COVID in their class. That is a burden no one wants to carry on their shoulders. This has compounded the intense anxiety we are experiencing. We love and care for our students.

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Our own DOE Superintendent compared school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business. These are different situations. I see stores outfitted with things like plexiglass sneezeguards when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms. I purchased one for my own class on my own. It was very expensive and even then, I feel that is not enough. Businesses and stores have limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes. Coworkers in the same area are less than 10 people like the CDC guidelines. Teachers will be with the same large group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day. Some of our classes will be running at full capacity of 20 plus kids. That in itself is not following CDC guidelines. Studies are now showing how children over the age of 10 spread the virus easier than younger children.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and now the community. That is an outright wrong choice to have to make. I do not appreciate this. I understand people need to return to work, and children need to return to school, but at the cost of our children's and loved one's safety? I think this is a horrible decision.

We want schools to open, but please wait to do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers. Our student's parents deserve a clear and specific plan on all ends. Until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Let's slow down and start with a 100% distance learning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Kelly Gorniak

Testimony BOE

From: Kathryn Martin <kathryn.martin@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kathryn Martin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to delay the opening of school campus

My name is Kathryn Martin. I am a third grade teacher at Maunawili Elementary School.

I am deeply concerned about welcoming students and staff back on campus in August for many reasons. Throughout this summer, we have been told multiple times that we are "building the plane as we fly it". This analogy is extremely unsettling in any situation, but especially in the face of a global pandemic. Essentially, we are being asked to go into a situation where we are risking our lives as well as the lives of our families without being given any clear direction or time to help plan the safe reopening of our schools.

In a time when teacher input should be valued most (after all, we are the ones who know what really happens in the classroom) we have been given little to no opportunity to help create the new normal of our schools. Our principals have been trying their best to comply with what the DOE is requesting, but the reality is, they are asking every school to come up with their own plan, but not giving us any time to do it! Teachers are not contractually obligated (nor are they paid) to work until July 28, which means we have 4 days as a faculty to completely redesign the traditional education system before students come back on campus.

First, how can we be expected to open safely without having received any clear direction from the Department of Health? As it is right now, each school is interpreting the information in their own way, so the safety of operations vary greatly from one school's plan to another's. How can we ensure safety in our own school when our students have siblings and/or parents who are following different safety protocols when they are on another campus? There are no clear protocols for what to do when we have an active case within the students or faculty. There is no guidance for how we will even get a sub to come in if we feel we need to stay home because we may have contracted the virus.

I understand that we need to find a way to safely educate our keiki. However, asking us to "build the plane as we fly" is not a reassuring approach to teaching during a global pandemic.

Sincerely concerned,

Kathryn Martin

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Testimony BOE

From: Maricar Amuro <maricar@kailuacreations.com> on behalf of Maricar Amuro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony about school starting

Aloha BOE,

My name is Maricar Amuro, and I am a substitute teacher for the DOE on Oahu. I am very concerned about the start of the school year in the fall of 2020 without getting proper training, or understanding about how we are supposed to be substitute teaching during this new school season with COVID-19. I feel we have not been involved with any communication, let alone any training, to understand how we are supposed to navigate safely as teachers, subbing for various classrooms in various grades. We have not received any training on safety or how to do virtual lessons as subs.

I would like to request delaying the start of the school year until there is clear understanding and training for all teachers, substitutes included, for the safety of not just us teachers, but our students as well.

Sincerely,
Maricar Amuro

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Schultz <sarahleanne77@gmail.com> on behalf of Sarah Schultz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Sarah Schultz and I have been teaching in the state of Hawaii for the last three years as a special education teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate School. During that time, I considered leaving special education on multiple occasions. When I was hired at the school the special education department went through a 90% turnover, with the head of the department the only remaining member. This year, there is only a 20% turnover in my department despite the COVID19 pandemic; as a result of the differential pay. I made the decision to transfer to Kohala High School (also a hard to staff school) this year and chose to remain in special education largely due to the incentive from the differential pay.

As a single mother, I continue to contemplate how I can remain in Hawaii with the extremely high cost of living. The differential pay has provided me with hope that I may be able to stay and remain in my field. Without it, I will continue to look for work outside of the state. Living paycheck to paycheck and often having to borrow from creditors to keep my bills paid...is not the way I want to continue to live.

Special education teachers are undervalued and underpaid. I completed a post graduate program in special education, but most of my department took the job without any training and were not prepared for the amount of stress and responsibility that the job entails. Each time I write an IEP I put my name on a legal document that the school needs to support for the students I serve and risk being taken to court; if that individual's parents/guardians find cause. I am writing today in hopes that the BOE will consider the positive impacts that the differential pay has made for Hawaii state teachers.

I hope that the BOE considers the positive impacts that this pay has made to provide incentive for teachers to remain in the field and also for students to have trained professionals working in the field. We need to support our teachers and our students and create a living wage that keeps teachers in the state of Hawaii. Especially in our hard to serve areas and within the field of special education. I ask for your consideration on this matter today!

Mahalo, Sarah Schultz

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Rickard <ashley.rickard.808@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Rickard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Discussion Item (H): Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha! I have been a dedicated educator for over 11 years at Pauoa Elementary School with a Master's Degree in Education. My mother is also a retired teacher and principal with over 30 years of work experience in the public education system in various sectors - elementary, middle, high school, and special education at the district level - so combined we have expertise in a wide array of the varying levels of the public education system. It has been a lifelong passion of ours to serve the children and families of Hawai'i.

I strongly urge you to please **POSTPONE** the opening date of schools **UNTIL ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET** because it is **NOT SAFE** for everyone - teachers, staff, students, families, and the community - until we do so:

1. **ALL teachers and staff** members are adequately and **PROPERLY TRAINED** and have received clear, **WRITTEN PROTOCOLS** and guidance on the reopening of schools. The Department of Health (DOH) and state agreed in the contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet none has been provided.

Superintendent Kishimoto claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. However, this statement is very misleading! A small fraction of teachers might have participated in voluntary professional development regarding virtual learning over the summer. However, many teachers were not even aware that those trainings took place. Furthermore, none of those trainings focused on the actual health and safety protocols - How to safely reopen schools in a classroom setting with up to 15-20 students total? What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for exceptions to wearing face coverings at school? What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, employee, or family/household member tests positive for COVID-19? When a school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection, how will schools move to a 100% distance learning environment and when will teachers be trained?

No one explained to teachers how we are to keep the students in supposed "bubbles" in the schools, how to ensure students - especially the youngest grade levels - are wearing PPE such as face coverings properly for extended amounts of time, how to safely conduct gatherings when "bubbles" and physical distancing are difficult to maintain such as during recess, lunch, and physical/sports activities.

2. Teachers and schools need **AMPLE TIME** to prepare/plan for safe reopenings. We were just notified at the eleventh-hour on July 21 that parents now have the option to have their child receive 100% distance learning. However, to date, nothing has been published in writing by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. E-School is supposedly the official platform for grades 6-12, however it is only a supplementary program and is not designed or approved to replace the state curriculum. Also, the department has provided no guidance for students in grades K-5 to access 100% distance learning opportunities.

So schools are now left scrambling to figure out how to meet the demands of the distinctly differing needs of two separate student learning groups: 1) students who will be receiving BLENDED learning (half distance + half face-to-face) in addition to 2) students who will be receiving 100% DISTANCE learning. That is an IMMENSE responsibility to place upon teachers' already full plates, literally only a couple weeks before students are expected to arrive on campus.

Teachers officially report to work on July 29. We usually have about 2 days to set up our classrooms, and 2 days for beginning of the year meetings. How can we effectively learn all of these new additional health and safety protocols with just 2 days of training? Also, are these so-called "trainings" being put on by official experts from the State Department of Health or just by the Principals and Leadership of the schools who have to try to figure out what could maybe work best for each individual school? Then teachers are expected to somehow figure out how to safely open our classrooms with the students starting just 2 days after that?

Please don't assume "teachers had all summer" to prepare because educators are NOT paid during the summer and have NOT been receiving any training since educators receive a set 10-month salary which is prorated throughout the entire year - nor have we been compensated (financially or professionally) at all for the amount of endless extra hours we already pour into our work and students daily above and beyond the 8-hour workday.

3. The number of new COVID-19 cases are still in the double-digits with many new cases and community spread each day. We are currently averaging about 20 or more new cases daily with 25 deaths. Even though Hawaii has one of the lowest statistics in the nation, we need to treat each case and death AS A PERSON, NOT just A NUMBER/STATISTIC. What if that was YOU or YOUR LOVED ONE?

We also remember Superintendent Kishimoto saying schools will not reopen until there are no new COVID-19 cases for at least four weeks. Why the sudden switch from being overly-cautious to all of a sudden now rushing to reopen schools without safe plans and protocols in place first?

The leaders of Hawaii's education system are making these decisions without the knowledge and wisdom from actual teachers/educators who have years of expertise IN THE CLASSROOM WITH STUDENTS. If this is so easy to execute, then why doesn't the Governor, State Director of Health, State Epidemiologist, Superintendent, HIDOE leaders, etc. please volunteer in the classrooms - especially in an elementary kindergarten setting - and let us know how easy these demands are to implement and execute?

4. It is disheartening that teachers and educators are continuously looked upon as "guinea pigs" to have to figure things out as we go along and test out the waters for when the state decides to reopen to reopen to tourism. Educators are constantly faced with a double-edged sword - Should we risk our lives, our family's lives, and our students' lives to rush and reopen schools so the public has "free daycare" and can go back to work? Or should we stand up for what is safe, but face criticism from the public/parents/state leaders who want to rush to reopen for the sake of the economy?

While we appreciate the HIDOE's decision to agree to the 6 feet minimum social distancing requirements, why are the lives of teachers, staff, and students constantly being put in danger?

I understand that many parents and families are eager to get back to work, Hawaii's economy needs to reopen to tourism, and people are depending on public schools to open since they are often viewed as "free daycare" for children. However, I beg you to realize that TEACHERS ARE ALSO PARENTS. TEACHERS ALSO HAVE FAMILIES. TEACHERS ARE PEOPLE TOO!

I humbly ask that you please make the decisions that are RIGHT and SAFE for everyone's health by postponing the opening date of schools until all teachers and staff members are properly trained, educators have ample planning time to prepare for the demands of blended learning and distance learning, and the number of new cases in Hawai'i decreases. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Ashley Rickard

Pauoa Elementary School

Second Grade Teacher

Email: ashley.rickard.808@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Dr. Marcia Howard <mdhoward.phd@gmail.com> on behalf of Dr. Marcia Howard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Dr. Howard and I am a Special Education Teacher at Waianae High School for 11th and 12th grade English Resource. I have been teaching special education for 26 years, 20 years in Hawaii and 6 years in Brooklyn NY.

These are scary and uncertain times. We have been sitting on edge for the past four months in hopes to see a remedy to this pandemic that has taken over the world. Millions have been affected, hundreds of thousands have even died. Sadly babies, children, young adults, middle-aged and elderly have been infected and many have died because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Doctors and specialists have been on the front line trying to combat this virus and yet to no end. Now here we are two weeks before students are to come back to school and we are being asked to don masks and have ample supplies of hand sanitizers and personal protective gear to teach our keiki.

I personally do not feel that we are ready as a school system to enter the 2020- 2021 school year. There are many uncertain factors that have yet to be answered by the DOE which leaves many teachers especially those, such as myself, with pre-existing health conditions. It is unconscionable to ask teachers, many who are of the ages of 50 and over to gear up and get ready for a new school year with a pandemic that has the potential to kill (and has killed many thus far), to now go into the schools to teach in what can be considered as an unsafe environment.

Governor Ige expressed his proud sentiments of how Hawaii was leading the nation in law cases of coronavirus and that is because we here in the Islands complied with the directives of socially distancing ourselves, refraining from large gatherings, wearing our mask, washing our hands, and being mindful of our kapuna and our fragile communities. The state of Hawaii has been closed to tourism and is slowly beginning to open in order to stimulate the economy. But now that cases of coronavirus are beginning to spike across the United States as well as here in the Islands and teachers are being asked to now get ready to teach as if this were a normal school year and it is not. There are over 180,000 keiki and 13,500 teachers not to mention support staff faculty and others that are part of school communities. That is nearly close to 200,000 plus adults and children coming together which is equivalent to a small city or town. This is unfathomable!

Teachers have been asked to deal with a lot of things over the years and in my 26 years of teaching I have never had to decide either to teach or face the possibility of contracting an ever changing virus with the possibility of dying. Hawaii already has a high teacher shortage due to the geographical location of the island, due to the difficulty of obtaining and maintaining qualified, certified, licensed teachers, due to the high cost of living, and now we are being asked to teach in what can be considered an unsafe environment. This is unconscionable!

Instead of forcing us to go back to school right now the DOE should take the first quarter to train teachers how to do effective distance learning so in case we have to shut down just as other school districts have when they opened in the midst of this pandemic. We will be more skilled and ready to handle the issues of distance education and be well prepared should we have to close again.

I urge you to be on the right side of history and make a decision that could save the keiki, your teachers, and your staff. I urge you to save your condolences and your prayers for the possible death that could occur should you prematurely open the schools and cause an outbreak amongst the 200,000+ children and teachers. We teachers are and have been on the front lines of education, many of us for decades, and just as much as we know you love the keiki of Hawaii and want the best for them, please show the same love (or even more love) for the ones who educate our keiki.

Please push back reopening schools. Thank you for considering my testimony in this important decision.

Marcia D Howard, PhD
Waianae High School
11th and 12th grade Resource
English Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: shawнна lani <shawnnamalia@gmail.com> on behalf of shawнна lani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha!

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): "Presentation on Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year."

My name is Shawнна Santos and my daughter attends Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'O Ānuenue.

I am requesting that the DOE put a hold on continuing education on campus with the current COVID 19 pandemic. At this time it is recommended that everyone keep a 6 foot social distance. Students should return when the social distancing has been dropped.

Please keep the keiki and teachers safe at this time even if it means staying home longer with distance learning.

Mahalo,
Shawнна Santos

Testimony BOE

From: Diane Arakawa <diane.arakawa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Diane Arakawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to delay students return to schools on August 4

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Diane Arakawa and I am a teacher who teaches at Ala Wai Elementary School. I am writing because I am extremely concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on August 4th. The current state plan does not ensure the safe return of our students to school and does not give schools adequate time to plan for the challenges ahead. This plan jeopardizes the lives of our students and their families, teachers, and members of our community. Many of us in Hawaii live in multi-generational households and this plan does not consider the probability of infection of these members. Your talks mention keeping our kupuna safe but opening schools will expose these vulnerable community members to infection and possibly death. The measures announced by Hawaii DOE do not meet CDC recommendations, and do not consider the health risk to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with their current plan. Drs. Anderson and Park have stated that opening schools will increase the number of positive infections similar to the spikes that we have seen after holiday weekends. This poses a health and safety risk to our students, families, teachers, and school staff. It has also been documented that this virus causes lingering, life-long detrimental effects on people who have caught the virus and "recovered."

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces. This perfectly describes many of our classrooms. Currently, there are 2 fans in my classroom that the school has provided and is woefully inadequate for ventilation and/or cooling. I have bought additional fans to help ventilate and cool the room but it is still not enough especially when the tradewinds subside (which may happen when a storm is approaching). I have requested additional fans (beginning of last school year) but have not received any so far. My principal simply says that it has been ordered. This situation risks the health and safety of everyone in the classroom.

While I am thankful that the state and HSTA reached an agreement to maintain six-foot distance between students in the classroom, this is just one protocol to protect the health and safety of our community. Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students. This also creates a conundrum when parents request that their child not wear a mask and/or a child does not wear a mask. This policy should not be negotiable! The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

The wearing of face shields have been suggested and I would gladly use them but no money was provided to the schools to purchase any. Monies may have been allocated for the purchase of adequate sanitizing supplies and PPEs but they are currently in short supply and difficult to procure. Some schools are also able to access parent and community assistance in this regard but this does not happen in all communities. So, there really is no equity for our students. Lack of these items really serve to increase the "academic gap" that we are all working so hard to decrease.

2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which, in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe. A high percentage of our families work in entry level jobs that are at high risk for transmission of the virus and do not understand English well. It is also not safe to assume that a safety checklist will provide adequate protection from this virus.

3. Our school is located near Waikiki and our population is highly transient. Currently, there are no protocols or guidelines when we receive new or transferring students regarding COVID-19. There should be a minimum 14 day delay when these students are entering school to ensure the health and safety of our school population and "ohana bubble".

4. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.

5. Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan there is no possibility that I feel comfortable teaching under the current state guidelines.

Therefore, I am asking that you to announce and implement the following measures:

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;

2. Delaying the re-opening of all public schools for at least two weeks in order to allow schools more time to prepare online learning systems and prepare for the opening of schools. Teachers' assignments have had to be revised to accommodate the new opening school options (choice A, B, or C) and teachers are just beginning to be notified of these changes. This means that he/she will possibly be teaching in a different classroom or grade level. I normally come in at least 2 weeks prior to school opening to set up my classroom. It takes time to configure space and plan for smooth delivery of instruction so I willingly do this in preparation for each school year. This year requires everyone to re-configure their classrooms and modify their teaching plans so additional time to prepare would be helpful. In addition, if your teaching assignment has changed, additional time will also be necessary to plan for a new curriculum. Teachers are currently on a well-deserved break and there has not been any mandatory or voluntary training to prepare for the challenges that opening schools will bring.

3. A statewide mandate to require the use of masks at all times when on public school premises. (With reasonable exceptions only in the case of teachers and administrators who are alone in their classrooms and offices.)

4. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule. I appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of Covid in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. Failure to improve the current reopening plan by adding the above additional measures would constitute a severe dereliction of your duty as a public servant to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns I have expressed.

Best regards,

Diane Arakawa

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: Funtanilla Sabas Family <funtanillasabas@gmail.com> on behalf of Funtanilla Sabas Family
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha to the members of the Board of Education,

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Students are set to return to school on August 4th. With the COVID-19 pandemic and cases rising in our state and especially on Oahu, we are asking to push back the reopening of schools to students. Schools, teachers, and staff members need more time and training to prepare for the influx of students.

To help you get a better understanding of why this request is of utmost importance, I'd like to share some of my background. I am a teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School, my husband is a teacher at Kalihi Uka Elementary School. We have both been teaching 15+ years each. In 2018, I was diagnosed with a rare disease that makes me immune-compromised. Our sons will be attending Salt Lake Elementary and Moanalua Middle School this year.

I would also like to note that I have two siblings. My sister is a teacher at Makakilo Elementary and her husband is a teacher at Maukalani Elementary. They have three young children ages 5, 3 and an infant. Their 5 year old will be starting kindergarten at his father's school in August. My brother is a firefighter and his wife is a teacher at Waipahu High School. They have a 1 year old son. Our parents are now retired and have helped our families by watching all six of their grandchildren and will also be doing so when schools go back to session so parents can work.

My family is truly my "ohana bubble". At the start of the stay at home orders in March we social distanced and stayed away from one another in hopes of keeping everyone safe and alive. We waited several months to finally be able to see one another and meet the newest member of our family born during the stay at home orders as we widened our circle to only a few of us. We only went out of the home to do necessary errands and stayed away from large crowds. With the start of school coming, we will no longer be able to keep this bubble of ours as safe as we'd like to. So all of us siblings can get back to work, our parents will be helping to watch our children as some of them will have to distance learn and some are not even of age yet to be in school. This "ohana bubble" of ours will now grow and will be interwoven between 6 schools, 8 classrooms, a fire station and a set of kupuna at home. This poses our family with a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty, as this "ohana bubble" has now certainly been exposed to so many new faces. Here are some of the questions I have that have not been answered and worries me and my family as we get closer and closer to bringing students back to the classroom.

One of the most important questions that has not been answered in any of the schools our family members and I have worked at is what will happen if a student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? As you can see, with our family it becomes a lot more complicated. If I become infected, my family of four will now need to quarantine and so will my parents. Will that also include my siblings and their families as we are all interconnected? What about their classrooms and places of work? Collectively, we realized that the teachers in our family see about 250+ students, but that doesn't even include the classes of three school aged children. If we all had to quarantine, who takes over the teaching for these classrooms? Will we need substitutes? Do we teach from home? Who will inform the parents and will they be notified quickly of exposure? The list of questions from one infection goes on and on and on.

Another question we have is what are the safety protocols that will be in place? Just because half of my students will show up to school on any given day, and we will be spaced 6 feet apart isn't enough of a safety protocol. As businesses opened up around the island, their protocols were set in place. I have gone to the eye doctor, dentist and hair salon during this time. All of them had checklists we had to answer and temperature was taken at the door. My eye doctor even explained that she had a colleague who was denied entrance into the building of his own practice because of an elevated temperature. Teachers do not know and have not been trained about things like this. Should we be doing temperature checks? What happens if a child shows up to school with a fever? What happens a student appears to be ill in the middle of the school day? To open up school on August 4 is too late, as trainings will take place after students have already been in school.

Why is it up to teachers to decide how they want to enforce the wearing of masks? Shouldn't it all be consistent? Personally, I would not be ok with my sons being in a classroom where mask wearing was taken lightly by their teacher.

I am also concerned about how decisions are being made without consulting teachers first. One example is that DOE have already publicly stated extracurricular activities will be allowed to resume in the middle of August. Why is that decision being made so soon, as we have not yet even had students back in class? This kind of decision making worries me because it is too fast and too soon without even consulting others what it really looks like in school. This means the exposures of each staff member, teacher and student will increase even more without giving us time to settle into this new normal.

During the 4th quarter of last school year, I scrambled to put together lessons and WebEx meetings to present to my first grade students. I attended a few webinars on my own to learn how to implement this with my classroom. While our school did receive some training from our tech coordinator, it was up to the teacher to decide if they wanted to get the training and how they were going to deliver their lessons. Many teachers found it hard to be comfortable teaching through WebEx and it takes time and training for us to gain our confidence. We need more time to train and the DOE to provide us more resources in terms of distance learning. Teachers cannot be expected again to learn and do this on our own.

I would like to conclude that teachers want to go back to work. We want our students to learn. We want our students and families to be safe. We cannot let students into our classrooms with so much uncertainty around very important points in the middle of a pandemic. As a teacher and a parent, I humbly ask that you consider pushing back the reopening of schools to students this year to allow for proper training and safety measures to be put into place.

Thank you,

Jamielyn Sabas

1st Grade Teacher

Salt Lake Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Kaapana <missykaapana@yahoo.com> on behalf of Melissa Kaapana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: melissa kaapana
Subject: Should be delayed

I am concerned for our students and our teachers are going back too soon to school in person, and that it is not only unsafe but also irresponsible to send our students back to school in person so soon for just the “economy” and “socializing our students”.

First of all, our students already socialize outside of the school and can continue doing so, so that’s not a good excuse.

Second of all, how do you plan on enforcing social distancing for small children and hormonal teenagers who already don’t have Good hygiene habits and are all about touching, hugging, and sharing with each other?? Our teachers are already overworked, understaffed, and under paid, so if you’re planning on putting the responsibility on them to enforce this that is just unreasonable. ESPECIALLY when you plan on cutting teacher pay AGAIN when teachers are already paid so low, to begin with!

Third of all, Over half of our teachers are older and at risk people to begin with. The Fact you are so willing to put our teachers at risk again, is a little disheartening.

We already have a teacher shortage and at this rate it will only get worse...

So these are mine and my families concerns about going back to school on the 4th.

Thank you for your time

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Emily Cheung <echeung08@gmail.com> on behalf of Emily Cheung
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of schools

To whom it may concern,

Hope all is well with you and your family. I am writing this testimony because it comes from a place of concern not only for colleagues who I consider my family but my future students and my own family. Last year we changed to distance learning to protect our keiki. They are like my own I care for them deeply. If we as teachers do not feel safe in our own classroom how can we ask our families to have their own keiki come to school and take that risk?! As of right now I am expected to see 15 students for my A group and 13 for my B group that's not including my vulnerable students, ELL and SPED students who will be attending everyday. There are a lot of unanswered questions that aren't being answered. When I am not teaching I help my in-laws or my parents. My mom is currently caring for my grandma who needs help. This puts both of my families at risk once I start teaching. Which would mean I would not be able to support my families. My husband is also high risk with his asthma, which puts him at serious danger if I contract COVID-19. I think we all need to seriously reconsider when we reopen schools to not only prepare teachers but families too. We owe it to them to provide the safest possible environment for their kids. I will state this now if was said that we would receive training for this school year to help us adapt to this new environment. I didn't hear about it nor did I receive any. I am not prepared at all for this coming school year nor do I feel same coming to school. My anxiety is up the roof. I seriously hope we can reconsider opening schools on the 4th.

Mahalo,
Emily Cheung

Testimony BOE

From: Pana Kia <mrpanakia@gmail.com> on behalf of Pana Kia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item G and H for the meeting scheduled for 7/23/2020.

The pay differentials are important to retain quality SPED teachers and to help other qualified teachers to share their expertise at schools that need it.

In relation to the re-opening. All schools should have guidance to put plans in to place and the DOE should have hard numbers of who is prepared and who isn't so we can keep the whole community safe. Please continue to press the superintendent and state to make sure that everything is in place for a truly safe start. I suggest starting 100% online.

Mahalo,
Pana Kia

Testimony BOE

From: Carona Ohana <caronad001@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Carona Ohana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DIFFERENTIAL TESTIMONY

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to state the importance of differential support for our Hawaii state teachers. Removing such differential payments place undue burdens on our already minimal teaching staff state wide. Cost of living and other factors deter educators from wanting to teach in Hawaii. Any and all advantages that is need to keep our teachers teaching in Hawaii is crucial for our youngsters as they grow.

My Name: David Carona (community member)
Meeting: General Business
Agenda: Differential removal
Position: Oppose removal of differential

Mr. David Carona
87-228 Halemaluhia Place
Waianae, HI 96792
(808)232-7521
Caronad001@hawaii.rr.com

Testimony BOE

From: Nohealani Paleka <kumu.nohea@kalama.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nohealani Paleka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Uphold BOE Policy 10-8 Goal #4 Kumu Kaiapuni Compensation

Board of Education, General Business Meeting

VI. G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha to the Board of Education,

My name is Nohealani Paleka, and I am a first year kumu at ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kalama. I **oppose** the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and urge the BOE to **reject** the proposal. Please continue to **uphold BOE Policy 105-8 Goal #4**.

Hawaiian Immersion teachers must be appropriately compensated for their qualifications. The program depends on these qualified teachers. Our program is continuing to grow.

Please continue to compensate our Kumu and support the growth of our immersion schools.

Mahalo nui,

Nohealani Paleka
Makawao, Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Leslie Okoji <leslie.omura@gmail.com> on behalf of Leslie Okoji
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board Members,

I am a parent of two children, both attend public schools. One school is offering distance learning and the other is not. I am furious of having my teenager have to make a decision of no credits through homeschooling or possibly getting Covid at school. It is obvious schools are not ready to open when they cannot even offer distance learning to all students. Do not reopen schools until they are ready to offer 100% distance learning.

Thank you,
Leslie Okoji

Testimony BOE

From: Wendy Espaniola <wendy.espaniola@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Wendy Espaniola
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in support of shortage differentials and delaying start date
Attachments: BOE Testimony.docx

Attached is my testimony...Mahalo!

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

July 22, 2020

BOE Testimony

TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Our Board of Education;

Aloha Kakou! My name is Wendy Espaniola and I have been a teacher at Maunaloa Elementary School for the past 15 years and an educational assistant prior to that for 8 years. My husband and his six siblings were born and raised in Maunaloa on the island of Molokai – his only sister and husband are teachers at Molokai High, his youngest brother a principal at one of the elementary schools on our island and an older brother a special education teacher on the island of Hawai'i.

We LOVE what we do as teachers and have dedicated our lives to not only raising our own children but also those from our own communities. As the saying goes “it takes a village to raise a child” well we literally do that throughout the day, in and out of school especially on a rural island like Molokai, Lana'i, parts of Hawai'i island, Maui and even Oahu.

These are difficult times as we know that we ALL are going through and more so in our rural areas especially for those who have to spend way more for daily living expenses (i.e., gas, food, utilities, supplies, etc.) including travel expenses for medical purposes and emergencies that are not available on island or in the rural community.

As a dedicated educator who LOVES what I do for our children and being a part of a system that provides the best foundation on their journey to not only being career and college ready but to also be a positive contributing citizen where ever they go in the world. One of my former students that graduated this year said in her speech at our 6th grade promotion, “You don't have to be the best to impact the world, but do your best for the world”! She was the first graduating senior on Molokai to graduate with an Associates Degree and her high school diploma.

With this I pray that you will not make cuts to the shortage differentials and respect our concerns as teachers on the front line of our children's education to provide us more time to prepare and make sure that everything is in place to provide a safe environment for our children and our teachers so that we can provide our students with our best!

Mahalo nui loa,

Wendy Espaniola
5th/6th Grade Teacher
Maunaloa Elementary, Molokai

Testimony BOE

From: Melanie Chan-Vinoray <melachan21@gmail.com> on behalf of Melanie Chan-Vinoray
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony BOE meeting July 23, 2020

Aloha Esteemed Members of the Board of Education,

I am a parent of preschoolers and have been an educator for over fifteen (15) years. I have worked in Hawai'i for the Department of Education for over eleven (11) years. I am excited to begin working at Lokelani Intermediate School in the 2020-21 school year and serving the educational community of Kihei, Hawai'i. I am writing to express my concern with the lack of protocol preparation and planning by the State of Hawaii, Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Education (DOE) for the return to school. August 4 is an arbitrary date and our Keiki deserve better. Keiki and the adults who are in charge of caring/educating them should be protected from unnecessary exposure to the Coronavirus during this worldwide pandemic. Moving forward without a solid plan is an egregious misstep that can have fatal results. Look at the examples of private organizations like the National Basketball League (NBA) or Major League Baseball (MLB), who have developed protocols for resuming or starting their seasons in a "bubble": they have plans! Albeit there is a ton more money behind these private organizations than what is in funding for public education, but the point I make is these organizations realized that "business as usual" is not healthy or safe for anyone during a pandemic. Even these plans to play in a "bubble" are not foolproof, and transmission of the virus has happened to some of the NBA players in Florida. Now, by moving forward with school opening on August 4, we are talking about exposing our children, faculty, staff and the greater community to a virus that can have deadly and unknown long-term consequences in order to start school on an arbitrary date of August 4 with NO PLAN on how, exactly to roll out a safe, effective start and continuation of school.

Since the DHS and the DOE have not yet developed a comprehensive plan that can answer the numerous questions of parents and educators, both affiliated and not affiliated with the HSTA, here is a proposal: phase out the opening of the school year in order to ensure the health and safety of our educators, support staff, and especially our children. Please note, this is loosely based on a proposal created by the teacher's unions of the state of Massachusetts (MTA, AFT-M, BTU).

Phase 1: Provide school sites more time to develop a comprehensive school plan for the return to face to face learning. We need time to learn about new health and safety protocols, establish protocols that will work for our own school communities, conduct professional development on distance learning best practices, and planning for distance, blended and face to face learning scenarios so that we are better prepared for any surges in our community.

Phase 2: Time for educators and school communities to meet and reconnect with families and students (virtually or in-person) for social-emotional wellness checks, basic needs assessment including evaluation of technology needs for each student.

Phase 3: Instruction begins in the models proposed by the DOE, and decided upon by parents and educators in the classrooms for what is best for students' needs.

Phase 4: 6- 8 week assessment of the educational plan's progress and the public health of the island communities. This should be done in order to determine to continue the educational plan or to make adjustments based on the public health status of our community.

The DOE can also take the time to upgrade/repair facilities, focus on creating outdoor shade areas to promote outdoor, open air learning. Standing questions about the health and safety of substitute teachers, cleaning protocol and upkeep

of facilities, and the supply and distribution of personal protective equipment for vulnerable student populations as well as staff and faculty who are at high-risk for contracting the virus should be discussed by the employer and the BOE.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. We have the opportunity to help stop the spread of the Coronavirus in our community, and to provide public health education to our greater community based on recommendations by epidemiology studies and medical professionals. However, we need to rescind the commitment to an arbitrary return to school date of August 4, 2020. The health and safety of our community should be worth it. I believe the lives of all community members are worth it, especially since many of us in Hawai'i live in multigenerational homes. Don't you?

Sincerely,

Melanie Chan-Vinoray

Testimony BOE

From: Angelita Iaea <a.iaea@mililaniwaena.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Angelita Iaea
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reject proposal to open school August 4th and no funding cuts to shortage differentials

To Whom It May Concern,

As a school counselor for 23 years, I highly recommend that the proposal to open school on August 4th is rejected and no funding cuts are made to shortage differentials.

Sincerely,

Angie Iaea

School Counselor, Mililani Waena Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Autumn Goerts <autumngoerts@gmail.com> on behalf of Autumn Goerts
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

For our family we are not able to safely attend school if it reopens the way it is August 4th. Online-only is the only way we can work with the public school requirements given our specific situation. Children shouldn't have to be "on edge" at school away from family about whether or not they are well or if they can make someone sick- for that will be more detrimental to their emotional well being. My child is in middle school and that is what is what you are asking a child to have to carry the weight of.

Thank you,
Autumn

Submitting this testimony for the BOE General Meeting (July 23, 2020) re: H. [Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees](#)

My name is Dianne Lim-Tam and I am a parent of two students enrolled in the HIDOE system.

1. **Please make it mandatory for the HIDOE schools to provide students a quality platform for 100% Distance Learning (DL) with “live” HIDOE teachers who are teaching the content—not just a canned curriculum that they bought off the shelf.**

According to the HSTA/DOE agreement (on page 8, lines 173-175):

“The Department must meet the BOE directive “to provide instructional models and clear guidance to families that allow parents or guardians who do not feel comfortable sending their children to a school campus to keep their children at home.”

However, parents are getting mixed messages from schools. **Some schools are punishing families for choosing the Distance Learning (DL) option**—threatening that if DL is chosen, “no direct instruction from teachers will take place” (Kaimuki Middle School) and “Students will be enrolled in an online learning platform and will not be receiving any personalized teacher support” and no access to electives (Leilehua High School). **The HIDOE must have a state-wide policy to provide equal educational opportunities to Hawaii public students**—even those who choose the Distance Learning option.

Further, the **schools are requiring a face-to-face meeting** with their child’s counselor and Vice Principal to “discuss the distance learning options.” Isn’t Distance Learning one of THE options? Why is it necessary for a parent (who may have underlying health issues) to take their child (who may have underlying health issues) physically into the school’s admin office during a pandemic to discuss their options? We were told, “Oh, it’s so we can hear what the reason is...why you’re choosing Distance Learning.” I do not believe that the decision to do what a parent feels is in the best interest of their child is something that we need to justify to an administrator. This is merely an intimidation tactic intended to inconvenience families and convince them to NOT choose DL. **Would they prefer we choose Homeschooling and risk losing \$7000-\$13,000 of funding per child for that school?** Many parents are confused and making decisions without knowing the differences between Distance Learning, Virtual Learning, and Homeschooling.

2. **Push back the return date for the students who need to be in the classroom to allow for the teachers to receive the training that they need to ensure a safe return.**

Overwhelmingly, **teachers are anxious and saying that they are not prepared** to return to the classrooms due to a lack of written protocols and a lack of training on how to safely teach during a pandemic. In fact, the majority of teachers participating in online groups state that they have not received any additional training during the summer and were shocked to hear the Superintendent claim that they did.

Rather than insinuating that teachers lack the courage to do their jobs and threatening to take away their compensation for teaching in difficult-to-fill positions, the Superintendent should be providing the teachers and administrators with adequate time and resources to ensure the safe and successful return to the classroom. I would not want my child to return to a classroom setting with an unprepared and anxiety-ridden teacher who feels unsupported and undervalued.

How does the BOE Chair expect “good relationships” between students and teachers to be formed in that kind of context?

Additionally, teachers who are not tech savvy will need the additional time and training to get up -to-speed on the online platforms--as it will only be a matter of time before we are ALL required to go back to the Distance Learning platform.

Mahalo,

Dianne Lim-Tam
Parent/Formal educator

Testimony BOE

From: MELISSA KAAPANA <mkaapana@sterlingjewelers.com> on behalf of MELISSA KAAPANA
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns about going back on the 4th

I am concerned for our students and our teachers are going back too soon to school in person, and that it is not only unsafe but also irresponsible to send our students back to school in person so soon for just the "economy" and "socializing our students".

First of all, our students already socialize outside of the school and can continue doing so, so that's not a good excuse.

Second of all, how do you plan on enforcing social distancing for small children and hormonal teenagers who already don't have Good hygiene habits and are all about touching, hugging, and sharing with each other?? Our teachers are already overworked, understaffed, and under paid, so if you're planning on putting the responsibility on them to enforce this that is just unreasonable. ESPECIALLY when you plan on cutting teacher pay AGAIN when teachers are already paid so low, to begin with!

Third of all, Over half of our teachers are older and at risk people to begin with. The Fact you are so willing to put our teachers at risk again, is a little disheartening.

We already have a teacher shortage and at this rate it will only get worse...

So these are mine and my families concerns about going back to school on the 4th.

Thank you for your time

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Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Masutani <jm202@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jennifer Masutani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for General BOE Meeting

Aloha,

This is testimony for the General BOE Meeting. We are providing comments regarding Agenda Item VI. D. "Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress."

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

As the Board of Education looks at how HIDOE can monitor and evaluate schools reopening, we urge you to consider the following as it pertains to the BOE's priorities and our students' overall wellbeing and success.

Regarding health and safety, how are we ensuring that students will have access to school meals, especially those doing distance learning at home? Many students rely on school for healthy and nutritious meals during the school year. Schools should continue to provide breakfast and lunch to all students, allowing them to take meals home for the days that they are not in school for those doing rotation learning and full distance learning. When we talk about student health and safety, addressing child hunger should be a key metric for schools in addition to taking preventative measures regarding COVID-19.

Another safety issue that also ties into the second BOE priority, Students Most Vulnerable, is who will be taking care of students doing distance learning while their parents are at work? Who in the HIDOE is coordinating these efforts on a statewide level to ensure all students who are not receiving face-to-face instruction daily are being supported equitably?

According to a recent parent survey, 65% of parents said that it is unlikely someone in their family/household would be able to provide learning and technological support to their child if a form of distance learning continues in the fall.* The majority of parents also said it was unlikely that someone in their household will be able to telework if there are school closures, and that their employer would not offer flexible hours that match with families' access to school and child care. Many students who have to do distance learning will not have a safe space with an adult to support their academics and wellbeing. This is not just for elementary students, but for middle and high school students too who still need caring adults in their lives to ensure their safety, social-emotional development, and academic success.

Students need a safe place to go during their distance learning days where they can receive tutoring, homework help, and social-emotional support. Tracking where students are on their distance learning days, especially for the most vulnerable students who aren't receiving face-to-face instruction every day and whose parents are at work, is a key metric to ensuring all students are safe, and receiving the necessary support to catch up and keep up academically. We know that families with resources will hire tutors or private teachers to help their children continue to learn on distance learning days. We are asking that the students without those resources be supported equitably so they don't fall behind their wealthier peers.

Afterschool programs are eager to be a resource to schools and teachers to help supplement the learning process and provide a safe environment for kids. See excerpts below from other states' guidance on how they're leveraging afterschool programs as resources to support remote learning in schools.

Connecticut: “[Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#),” page 40.

“After-school programs can play an important role in providing support for students during traditional after-school hours, including days in which students are engaged in remote learning and not scheduled to be in class. Traditional after-school programs do not need to operate only after school dismissal and can support families on days when students are not scheduled for classroom instruction. As schools reopen and parents return to working outside the home, after-school programs can assist in providing safe places to provide care for students while simultaneously providing support and assistance to enhance remote learning.”

California: “[Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California’s Public Schools](#),” pages 27-29.

“There are multiple models being considered for a redesigned school structure to comply with health standards and physical distancing requirements. After-school programs can help in each model. Across all of the following configurations, expanded learning providers can ensure that students are having positive social interactions with adults and peers in safe and supportive environments that value youth engagement and learning.

“Staggered Times.... In either case, expanded learning staff could be

- working with the group that is not currently in class,
- doing innovative and engaging activities that build on the lessons taught in class,
- supporting students in completing projects assigned in class, or
- doing computer science activities, theatre, visual arts, or science to enrich students’ learning experiences.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Paula Adams, Executive Director
Jennifer Masutani, Program Director
Hawai’i Afterschool Alliance

*Parent survey was conducted by the Hawai’i Afterschool Alliance and the Hawai’i Children’s Action Network received 721 responses across the state from July 8-17, 2020.

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Owens-Delucchi <owensdelucchisusan0@gmail.com> on behalf of Susan Owens-Delucchi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20MOU%20Between%20BOE%20and%20HSTA.pdf?mc_cid=61bae23b94&mc_eid=7601ed85d7

I am an elementary teacher with 20 years in the DOE. We all want our students back in school where we'll build strong relationships to encourage learning. Yet, schools are being left on their own (with administrators presenting solutions in varied ways & outcomes for reopening) to decide whether to open to students without clear, objective criteria. So if we don't open to students, we are presumed guilty of not caring. I can assure you that teachers CARE deeply about social emotional and academic learning for their students. We also don't want to be left figuring out how to inform our school community about positive cases and/or deaths. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Testimony BOE

From: Denim Cretton <denimcretton@gmail.com> on behalf of Denim Cretton
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Action Item H

I am a teacher at a charter school, HAAS. Please consider not opening schools on Aug 4. My classroom in particular is located in a strip mall. It doesn't have outdoor areas for learning. It is a small room with one ac unit, and no windows. This is the worst kind of place to be for Covid-19. My school doesn't seem prepared to handle this situation. We don't have a health aid to wellness check kids. The filter in my ac unit is not adequate to make it safe.

Please allow more time to make it right for kids. Or let's go virtual.

Also, will there be a medical plan for Covid-19 so it won't come out of our sick leave when we are forced to quarantine. What about hazard pay? We are taking on the front lines, we need to be compensated for that service.

Mahalo,

Denim Cretton
6th grade teacher
HAAS

Testimony BOE

From: Marie Shirlyn Domingo <shirlynmarie@gmail.com> on behalf of Marie Shirlyn Domingo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

Aloha,

My name is Marie Domingo and I am a teacher at Kalakaua Middle School in Kalihi. I am asking the BOE to please consider delaying the opening of public schools for students as we are not ready. There was not any two week training for ALL public school teachers for reopening preparations to address covid19. We were told there will be half days to accommodate for testing, so teachers will be accountable for student growth. I find this to be secondary to preserving the health of the community I serve which already has many positive covid cases. Reopening schools too early will almost guarantee a rise in community spread of covid19, as a majority of the students have not socialized with their friends since March. Schools will not be able to monitor what middle and high school students do before and after school hours.

The clause in the MOU about face masks is a concern as well. The mayor had said a few weeks ago that masks are required indoors as well as outdoors. In my school, students will be stationary and teachers will move between classes. If an individual teacher decides NOT to require masks in a classroom that I am scheduled to be in the period after, there will be aerosols in the air because each class is about 75 minutes long. I have severe asthma and will require students to be masked for duration of the class period.

There is also an issue about the supplies needed to properly sanitize our areas. There is difficulty in attaining cleaning items for a regular household, much less my classroom. I do not know if I will have an AMPLE supply of items needed to keep my students, the classroom(s) and myself safe. I have already been purchasing items from my own personal funds to supply my classroom as I work in an area where students will not have hand sanitizer etc...

There are SO MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS. During the BOE meeting last week as well as the newscast this week questions that were asked of Dr. Kishimoto and Dr. Park were not answered. "There is a plan in place," seems to be the go-to phrase and teachers have no idea what the plan is.

If students contract the virus via school, will the the student and their class as well as ALL teachers who taught in that class as well as ALL students (in other classrooms) who saw all these teachers be quarantined? THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN OHANA BUBBLE IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL. Teachers will see different students every period, every day. At our school ONLY SpEd and newcomer (EL) teachers will stay with their ONE class all day. If the state/city is requiring that a business be shut down and deep cleaned and all employees tested/quarantined, WHY is this not required for public schools?

It seems that businesses are more important than public school students and teachers/staff. Our students, if exposed to covid19 can spread this virus to their family members as a majority live in multigenerational homes. Will the DOE take responsibility if a child or educator/school staff member contracts covid via the school? Will the teacher/staff have to pay for covid testing out of their own pocket? Will the teacher/staff be required to use our sick leave during quarantine for 14 days or more if they get ill? There are no answers to these questions, therefore, WHY would the DOE reopen schools with so many unknowns?

Hawaii public schools are supposed to be the first to open in the nation and all eyes will be on us. Students and teachers are not guinea pigs and schools are not "labs." Do not make us the test subject for the nation to watch with bated breath to see if this 'experiment' will work.

Testimony BOE

From: Jacie Miyashiro <jacienmm@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jacie Miyashiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To whom it may concern,

I am a teacher at 'Aiea High School, and I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please see my attached testimony.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jacie Miyashiro

 TESTIMONY 7/22/2020

To whom it may concern,

I am a teacher at 'Aiea High School, and I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

First, I want to reiterate the message I wrote to you in regards to the (now updated) three-foot exception because my point about being a young educator wondering if should stay in this career for the next 30 or so working years of my life is still very relevant:

I am pleading with you to reevaluate your current plan to reopen schools. You are gambling with our lives. Please ask yourselves if even one student, one staff member, or one of their family members dies due to the virus spreading in schools, will reopening in this manner have been worth it?

I have wanted to be a teacher for most of my life. Throughout high school and my first two years of college, I worked hard to make that goal a reality. As a high school student, I witnessed my teachers' anxiety over furlough Fridays. As a college student, I read stories about educators who worked multiple jobs and still couldn't make ends meet. The story of a single mom who wound up living out of her car even though she worked at least 2 other jobs in addition to teaching full time in order to support her son has haunted me since it was published around 2012 or 2013. It was that story that would eventually push me to quit my intended education major for something that I thought would be more practical: economics.

I worked in accounting and auditing for a couple of years, but continued to follow education policy until the 2016 election shook me to my core and convinced me to go back to teaching in an attempt to create a better future for us all. I finally earned my teaching certification last spring, but now I am again faced with the difficult decision of whether to remain a teacher. I love being a teacher, and finally feel passionate about my career. I finally feel settled at my school and feel like I'm at a good place in my life. However, none of that is as important as my health and the health of my loved ones. I have seen time and again that our employers do not care about us teachers, even as we spend 50-60 hours a week at work with no overtime! **If this is how I'm going to be treated for the next 30 or so years of my career, just tell me now so I can get out before I've invested too much of my time in a system that doesn't care about whether I live or die.**

Or, preferably, spend some time creating a real plan for returning to school. Don't cut corners by allowing people to be on campus without a mask (with the exception of those with documented medical conditions preventing them from wearing a mask). Don't allow

school administrators to unilaterally assign bell schedules without input from teachers (as mine have). Don't allow schools to return with bell schedules that do nothing to limit weekly interactions between students and teachers. (What ever happened to the guidance about not having gatherings larger than 10 and keeping your social circle as small as possible? I will be seeing approximately 120 students every week, any one of whom could be infecting myself or their peers while they are asymptomatic. Also, what ever happened to us not returning to school unless we had 4 weeks with no new cases?) [...] Now is the time to be innovative! Use your creativity to come up with solutions to this problem that might fix other problems we have had in the past! Instead of arrogantly trying to return to "normal," let's work together to create a better path forward and use this as an opportunity to address some of the problems in education that have been plaguing us for years.

Since I wrote that testimony two weeks ago, I have visited my classroom and found it nearly impossible to fit my largest class while maintaining six-feet social distancing. Someone from my school went to the classrooms and rearranged our classrooms to supposedly maintain social distancing. Here is what my classroom looks like:



*In this first picture, the items on the left and the rolling chair in the center can be ignored because I took this as I was moving my things in. The rest of the furniture is where it normally is. Only the white computer cart and TV behind it are easily moved.



Now, I have pretty minimal furniture in my classroom compared to a lot of other teachers, but even with the desks spaced less than six feet apart (see the second picture), the desks are still dangerously close to the doors (i.e. fire exits) and students are pushed so far up to the front wall that they won't be able to see the board or TV screen while I teach. There is also no social distancing from my teacher desk (see third picture). You can see that four desks including my own are not maintaining social distancing. This is with only 15 student desks in my classroom,

which is exactly the size of my largest in-person class (*after* taking into account my school's A/B rotation), yet other teachers who have classrooms about the same size as mine (approximately 28.5 feet in length and width) have 16 or 17 students in their largest classes. We do not know where those extra students will go.

Also, the way we currently are planning to deliver this “blended learning” approach is going to be way less effective than if we just committed to 100% remote learning. As it stands, almost 100% of my contractual time is accounted for. I spend almost as many hours with a class as I did in previous years while getting less than half the amount of face time with each student as I did in previous years. And yet, with nearly all of my time accounted for, I am expected to prepare remote learning lessons (in both digital and print formats) for the other two days a week when I will not be seeing my students. I could deliver more quality instruction if I actually had time to plan three great online lessons a week instead of just seeing students face-to-face about once a week and assigning extra homework. In her video message to teachers yesterday, Superintendent Kishimoto said we need to concentrate on our jobs of educating students; however, this current plan seems to only be looking after the state's child-care needs, not it's educational needs. Why are teachers bearing the brunt of this responsibility? Why are we not putting more pressure on businesses to adapt and help working parents if they so badly want to reopen? Or perhaps some of that CARES funding could be spent on subsidizing the cost of child care for working parents so that they do not have to choose between their paychecks and risking their children's lives at school.

I will again say that we need to move forward in a way that values everyone's input. Now is the time to be creative and fix systemic problems that we had even before the pandemic to come out of this time even stronger than before. Sure, I'm only 25 years old, so I probably will survive if I were to get COVID-19, but I do have asthma, which puts me at greater risk, and I have a lot of my life ahead of me. I don't want to survive this difficult period only to be affected for the next 70 or so years of my life by additional long-term health problems caused by this novel virus, the long-term effects of which are still being discovered. Also, think of what you are putting families through. I have already told my family that I will not be seeing my 97 year old grandparents once school starts because I am going to be exposed to the germs of about 120 students every week. I may not feel safe to visit them until next summer or until I can get vaccinated against COVID-19. This is a very difficult decision for me because I do not know how much time I have left with them, and this situation is causing me to squander the little time we do have left. Please put yourselves in our shoes as you weigh the value of our lives and the lives of our loved ones in the decision to reopen schools.

Sincerely,

Jacie Miyashiro

Testimony BOE

From: Denise Roberts <topazcayenne@gmail.com> on behalf of Denise Roberts
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response); 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I urge you to delay the return of students to campus on August 4. Educators need more time to plan and more guidance. Many of us have been unable to volunteer our time for distance learning training. Although I am a passionate and exceptional educator, I am in the high risk category due to age and asthma.

Additionally, you must continue funding for teacher shortage differentials. I have been a secondary general ed and special ed teacher for many years in WA and NM. Hawaii should not lose more teachers due to broken promises made by the BOE and DOE.

Respectfully,

Ms. Denise C. Roberts
Special Ed Teacher
Kihei Elementary, Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Keenan <kiati84@msn.com> on behalf of Katie Keenan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Differential Testimony

Aloha, I am writing in regards to the differential teachers in Lahaina and other hard to staff complexes are receiving. I am a SPED teacher here in Lahaina and have been able to remain serving the Lahaina community because of this differential. Unfortunately, without my second job, this differential is necessary to keep me financially stable in Hawaii. I absolutely love my career in Hawaii and counting on the BOE to enable me to continue it here in Lahaina.

Mahalo,
Kathleen Keenan

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Ramos <melissa.ramos@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melissa Ramos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:06 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Melissa Ramos and I am first year HICISL Vice Principal at Kahului Elementary School on the island of Maui. I would like to comment on the reopening of schools that is scheduled for August 4th, which is nine business days away.

Being a first year HICISL Vice Principal in a new school, I am having to learn a whole new school campus, build connections with staff, and assist with planning how we will reopen schools safely.

We have met with our teachers through Webex meetings to gather their input, we have developed plans, and we have needed to change plans as we are hearing from parents through our survey that they wish to keep their child home and do 100% virtual learning.

We have teachers who are filled with anxiety about returning to campus. Their concerns range from having the appropriate PPE to protect themselves, the manpower and available supplies to disinfect their classrooms, and training to implement distance learning effectively. I am concerned that many teachers will choose to take leave this year resulting in students not having a teacher.

Our administration, office staff, custodians, and cafe team are working countless hours to make sure we have everything set in place for students to return, it looks good on paper, but when it comes down to reality, we are very concerned about how it will all play out on August 4th.

HSTA has been in communication with HIDOE/BOE and an MOU has been written, however; our union, HGEA has not been addressed throughout these discussions on reopening schools. Our HGEA members are just as concerned about reopening and would like to know they are supported as well.

Please put yourself in the position of a Kindergarten Teacher opening up a classroom on August 4th, a parent with a medically fragile child who will have individuals closer than six feet, or the school health aide who needs to inform the administrators that a student has covid-19 symptoms.

Sincerely,

Melissa Ramos

Vice Principal
Kahului Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Ernest Dela Cruz <delacruz005@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Ernest Dela Cruz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Ernest Dela Cruz and my grandson will be attending Kekaha Elementary School in the First Grade.

I am extremely concerned about the rush to open school while the school personnel is in training to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic. Student are asked to attend school while school personnel are being trained in the procedures and protocol to be followed to ensure the health and safety of the students. All of the school staff are not trained is akin to sending troops to war while training is being conducted as they are in the war zone. My concern is that without the proper training in place the students and staff are asked to be in the line of fire while people are still being trained to deal with the new normal. *I am certainly aware of the efforts of the staff and their need to be confident in the ever changing requirements for starting the school. According to my research many of the school personnel have yet receive the proper training for health and safety as well as preparation required to adjust to the new approach to the opening of school.*

I am requesting that the opening date of the school year be delayed until training is complete and the school staff be allowed the time to be properly prepared for the new scheduling of instruction with the direct instruction and distance learning model. The extra time required to achieve this will be a major factor in instilling the confidence of the parents and community that the schools are indeed ready to operate with maximum efficiency.

I am confident that you will make the appropriate decision that will benefit the school system and assure the confidence of the parents and public that the schools will open confidently to greet their students and provide the best educational experience while ensuring their health and safety.

Thank you for kind consideration in your decision making.

Ernest Dela Cruz

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Veronica Victor <veronica.victor@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Veronica Victor
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:06 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Roosevelt Principals testimony
Attachments: Final Testimony.docx

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Ronnie Victor, Proud Principal
Prince David Kawanānakoā Middle School
Home of the proud "Ali'i Warriors"
(808)307-0300
email: veronica.victor@k12.hi.us

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education
Testimony by Roosevelt Complex Principals
July 22, 2020**

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for School Year 2020-2021

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

As principals of the Roosevelt Complex, we would like to submit our testimony to the Board of Education for your consideration. As we prepare for the reopening of the 2020-2021 school year, our #1 priority is the safety and well-being of our Roosevelt Learning Community.

The principals of the Roosevelt Complex, would like to collectively submit our testimony relating to the following areas of concern:

Planning Time Concerns:

- To fully prepare for the 100% distance learning option for our students, additional time is needed to provide Professional Development for our teachers and staff to ensure effective instructional strategies and procedures are in place to best meet the needs of ALL students.
- More parents are opting for 100% distance learning, so there is a greater need to reexamine and modify our class rosters, allow for better guidance to our teachers with digital tools to support synchronous/asynchronous face-to-face and distance learning, and provide for the necessary planning time that our teachers greatly need to design effective lesson plans and delivery. We believe that good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and learning.
- To better serve our community, in these unprecedented times, additional resources and time is needed so we can ensure equity of access for all of our students and parents.
- To better prepare our schools to enhance communication, additional time is necessary for all stakeholders.
- Some principals just received their exception approvals, therefore it is very important that we are allowed more time to inform and prepare our faculty, staff, students, and parents to assure we are providing the best and safest educational environment possible.

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Additional guidance and support is needed for our Custodians, School Health Aides, Cafeteria Staff, and Office Personnel. Our support staff need more appropriate guidance from DOE and/or DOH for the handling of any possible suspected COVID-19 case(s) on school campuses.

Respectfully submitted,
Roosevelt Complex Principals

Testimony BOE

From: bonnie blake <bon2blake@yahoo.com> on behalf of bonnie blake
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am writing this letter to testify on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teacher in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I have been working as a special education teacher for 17 years for the Hawaii Department of Education. Although it has been overwhelming and stressful, student needs and federal Individualized Education Program forms need to be completed by due dates.

I have continued to work as a special education teacher improving my skills and learning more about the responsibilities of the federally mandated special education services. I was disappointed when our union seemed to be forced to accept the furlough agreement which was a very bad time for me as I had completed my master's degree and really needed my pay check to help pay off my student loan. It had set me back in a very bad position and it has been difficult to keep up with the payments.

Also as special education teacher, we provide more materials and supplies for students for everyday school supplies as well as other needs with lessons for functional living skills such as cooking items, laundry soap, dish soap, hand soap, hand sanitizer, etc.

The announcement of the differential pay at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year was exciting news to hear and receive. I was very thankful for the increase in pay as it helped to have an income in during the COVID 19 pandemic. Although I felt I had worked harder from home than face to face at school. It felt as if our increase in pay was a reason to provide more work from special education teachers. However, it was a huge disappointment to hear that it will be taken away due to the impact of COVID 19 and the state budget.

I know with the cut in differential pay for special education teachers it will be very difficult to have certified teachers to stay in these positions. We continue to hire long term substitute teacher who do not have the proper training to understand the IEP process or knowledge to write an IEP document for students with special needs. We are seeing too many students who are not getting the best teachers and they are falling behind from their grade level peers.

Please think about the students who will be greatly impacted by the cut in differential pay for special education teachers who are needed in our Hawaii public school system.

Mahalo,

Bonnie Blake

Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kalei Kagawa <kalei.kagawa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kalei Kagawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this email in testifying that we push the school start date back. This is my third year teaching and first year back teaching on Kauai after teaching on Oahu. I have never felt so underprepared and overwhelmed. I taught a summer hub over the summer, however even that did not help me prepare for what is yet to come. I am filled with anxiety while having a newborn at home. I feel like we are not ready to open up the school without a clean and concise plan. I can not confidently do my job as a teacher or a mom with these uncertainties. I have given up a lot of summer for meetings and professional development, but even in doing that I do not feel like it has been enough. We as teachers are constantly trying to do what is right for our students, and I believe that pushing out the start date is what is best for the entire community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kalei Kagawa
Koloa Elementary School
Grade 4

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Testimony BOE

From: Brenda Kikuyama <bkikuyama@mac.com> on behalf of Brenda Kikuyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

Thank you Lieutenant Governor Josh Green. Teachers appreciate the cautions & safety concerns you recently brought up:

Having “many” testing kits available & ready for school communities (students, teachers, school personnel). We asked about this and still do not know where or if it’s available. What is procedure if someone feels ill.

What are guidelines & procedures should someone on campus test positive? It is very stressful for our administration, teachers, & staff to design independently. Every school will have their own plan? Elementary students are different from high school.

Some schools will have students eating lunch in the classrooms; who will clean up each day; probably teachers or custodians, are there enough wipes or sanitizing materials. Will our custodians be given enough sanitizing equipment & supplies. They are always working so hard. Just like our cafeteria staff.

Many of our classrooms are still in single walled portables; some with AC, fans... it gets very hot even if AC, fans, and windows are open. Can you imagine learning in portables without? Superintendent Kishimoto, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Park & BOE have you ever learned in an old public school portable for a whole year breathing through a mask?

All of these testimonies can go on and on, listing this and that reason against opening. But truly, teachers always sacrifice and believe we need to “return to learn” but we fear sacrificing “lives”. (Our students, families, community and our own)

Please make sure each public school campus is prepared, equipped with enough sanitizing supplies before we open. 🙏

Brenda Kikuyama
August Ahrens

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Nancy Usher <jinglesusher@gmail.com> on behalf of Nancy Usher
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:07 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I am testifying regarding H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii Teachers Association (SY2020-2021 Covid-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to Covid-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am writing due to grave concerns that I have about schools reopening to students on August 4th. I do not think that my school is properly prepared to welcome students. I was alarmed when I saw that my school is informing parents that their child may make use of laptops on campus that will be shared with other students. Clearly, whoever is forming these policies does not understand the inherent dangers associated with sharing objects during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Teachers have not received training as of yet for new distance format instruction. We need time to learn how to use these new online platforms before students return.

I work at Hilo High School as a teacher and am in a high risk category for serious effects if I contract Covid-19. I also live with a family member who also is a DOE teacher. By returning to campus with students I risk exposure from an infected student or staff member, plus I have to worry if my family member gets infected from their campus also. So I am very worried that if a student comes to school infected with Covid-19, it will spread throughout the school. People in the age group of 11-19 spread this virus just the same as adults do. I am alarmed that the Department of Health and the DOE think that the adults, teachers and other school staff and support personnel don't matter in these circumstances. They seem to take a cavalier attitude that having students return to campus is more important than the health and welfare of teachers, student's families, and others on campus as well as the community.

They like to promote their "bubble concept", which supposedly limits the possible scope of infection to a limited number of people. In theory it is comforting, but in reality it is a falsehood. Young people do not behave in the ways the health department imagines. They turn around in their seats to talk to the people behind them. They are very physical with each other. They share objects, food, drinks, etc. They congregate with their friends, etc. Many will not wear the mask whenever they can get away with it. The Health Department administrators and the DOE administrators are the only ones in a "bubble", and it may well spell disaster for the teachers and families of students.

Please hold off on having students return to campus until a later date. Allow schools the option of doing all or most distance instruction until the pandemic is over. Our schools are not ready to reopen as we need more time to train and make procedural safety adjustments for the wellbeing of students and staff.

Thank you,

Nancy Usher

Testimony BOE

From: Lena Miyamoto <nakatallm@gmail.com> on behalf of Lena Miyamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on action item H. Board action on memorandum of understanding between state of Hawaii Board of education and Hawaii State teacher association (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Lena Miyamoto and I currently teach math at Leilehua High School. I feel that it would be best to put the school year back 1 month. I feel that we are not well prepared for the school year. I have 5 kids of my own (2 in high school, 2 in middle school, 1 in elementary school) with that said, i have found out my last kids schedule for school this past friday. So with all of the schedules it will be a crazy year for my own kids. I have still not found a babysitter for them when I am at work and I would not like them to stay home without being monitored. My parents could watch them but I worry that my kids could bring it home to them. But it is crazy to know that we only know the school schedules now. How am I suppose to figure out a babysitter so last minute.

Second, I have not been trained. Only a small amount of teachers have been. I am not trained and feel very nervous starting the school year. As a math LT we have met a few times this summer but because information has been constantly changing, everytime we meet we are starting from scratch again. Things are constantly changing. We stopped meeting and decided to start again when the school year starts because it is not clear. And at the start of the school year I will feel so overwhelmed with the new procedures with covid and now an added stress will be planning for my content with new technology and figuring out ways to social distance.

Lastly, I just have so much question and feel so nervous. How are high school students suppose to have a bubble, when they are constantly moving. How are we back at school when the covid counts are still pretty big for our state (lets not compare with other states since we have a unique case, since we can close off the state to tourist). Will I have enough supplies to constantly clean my computers and student desk with the amount of movement in the classroom. Ive heard my school say they have hand sanitizers but what about things to clean the computers and desk.

I think moving the date can give school time to prepare themselves and their communities.

Thank you for your time

Lena Miyamoto

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Knox <ilmaknox@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sarah Knox
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Jaime Lewis
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I support a delay in the start of the school term to better prepare for the safety plan and curriculum building for remote learning. I am alarmed at the utter lack of preparedness going into the start date for this coming school year. As a parent of students set to attend Waiakea Elementary School, I have no faith that the school has properly trained its staff to address the emerging safety needs to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Schools had no plan up until only a few days ago and that has allowed zero time for input from the community and staff to troubleshoot problems before they occur. This plan was also constructed with zero input from the community in the first place which means it will undoubtedly need alteration upon implementation especially after such a hasty development.

The remote learning component of the proposed plan is woefully insufficient and could be described as supplemental at best. Providing the children with a substandard curriculum exclusively to meet a relatively arbitrary start date is unacceptable. More time should be taken to include teachers in a more flushed out and substantial distance learning curriculum.

The action plans to address Covid-19 exposures is not nearly robust enough to make it useful or actionable. There needs to be an explicit course of action to be taken at every level including to communicate to the parents in cases where members of the school have had exposures to Covid-19.

What is a small delay at the beginning of the year in exchange for a more meaningful and safer educational experience that is more inclusive of all students and teachers?

Sarah Knox

Parent, Waiakea Elementary, Hawaii Island

Testimony BOE

From: Niele Leadbeater <leadbeatern143@gmail.com> on behalf of Niele Leadbeater
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:08 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am an elementary school counselor. In terms of opening the schools to students on August 4, I feel it's too early. Our school needs more time to prepare safety routes for the students, staff and families. Every year is nerve racking but this year is different. Teachers haven't been in school yet to prepare for the children. We only get 2 days of administration time and 2 days of our own time. This year there is a pandemic and we haven't gotten enough instruction and training to move forward with the opening of school. Virtually would be ideal until we can all be prepped and trained for the new schedule.

We need the differentials to keep our highly qualified teachers in our district. Our kids suffer through the on going cycle of poverty and not having the right resources to reach DOE standards!

Mahalo
Kim

Testimony BOE

From: Hagihara Deborah <deborah.hagihara@mililanihs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Hagihara Deborah
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

testifying on Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

I am a Secondary Special Education teacher at Mililani High School. I am currently the special education teacher in Algebra 2 and Statistics and Probability. In addition, I am PLC (Professional Learning Community) leader for Algebra 2, as well as a school wide mentor for beginning special education teachers, and part of the ILT (instruction leadership team) for Mililani High School.

I urge you to please continue funding the differential for special education teachers, hard to staff geographical location teachers and hawaiian language immersion programs for the school year 2020-2021. I understand that in these hard economic times you are looking to cut funding where you can. However, as a special education teacher in leadership positions and a mentor I can not state the importance of continuing the funding.

During this time of COVID-19 all teachers have had to work harder to create and deliver curriculum to students. Special education teachers have had to work the hardest with creating and differentiating curriculum so that all students are successful. In addition to continuing to communicate with parents, students and administration while dealing with IEP's. If the differential is taken away it will be harder to maintain and recruit teachers especially in special education. This will negatively exponentially impact the hardest to fill teaching positions. If this pay differential is taken away I am sure that the education of all students will be impacted for many, many years. What is being asked will create an economical hardship for the government for a short time but will impact education here in Hawaii for a decade or longer.

I can attest to the success that I have seen in special education teacher recruits in my school. In addition to retaining the top teachers due to the pay differential. I am sure that the success that I have witnessed will disappear as the funding disappears. Teachers are not staying in special education for the money, however, for once we felt as though we were appreciated for all the additional hours we put in. Special education is able to recruit better teachers and increase student academic achievement. I urge you to please keep funding this year. I have witnessed the positive impact in the classroom and with teacher's job satisfaction all that leads to higher student achievement. The basis of any society is education. Please continue funding the differential not just for teachers or students but for the state of Hawaii's future.

Thank-you for your time regarding this matter.

Deborah Hagihara
Mililani High School
Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Tyla Woods <tylahawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Tyla Woods
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Testimony

Could you please not include my Full name and address and phone number on my posted testimony? Thank you.

On Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 11:59 AM Tyla Woods <tylahawaii@gmail.com> wrote:

I am testifying on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

I am a parent and my child attends Haleiwa Elementary. I love the school and staff and I know they are doing their absolute best they can to prepare for this upcoming school year. We were given a distance learning online survey and I chose the option of "not sure and want more information on distance learning" and then yesterday I got a telephone call. In our pamphlet received from our school there were general guidelines for distance learning (self guided, check in once or twice a week on teacher assigned time, and an example of a similar program/platform that might be used for distance learning). I asked the if there was more information on what program/platform might be used so that I can prepare or look into to confirm that I (and my child) can handle "the distance learning model" to support my child's learning. She said she would email and I followed up with an email saying I didn't get an email with the information. I am relieved that distance learning is being offered as an option but I don't feel the school district is prepared in many ways. I understand things are constantly "changing" however we are at a little over a week until "showtime" and I don't know how to prepare my child for distance learning even though it is offered and I don't feel like our schools, teachers, and staff are supported with a solid plan on starting the school year safely. I don't feel like we as a community are ready to begin a school year without any solid plans in place. There has been a change of 3 feet versus six feet for safety and required mask wearing and non required mask wearing-why is this just for school? If anything we should be more careful in this close contact school setting rather than more lenient. I don't feel it's fair to keep the 6 feet and mask mandatory rule for everyone except at schools.

Mahalo

--

Tyla Woods
67-003 Kahaone Place
Waialua, HI 96791
(
808) 551-6216

Testimony BOE

From: Delia Ishibashi <deliaishibashi@yahoo.com> on behalf of Delia Ishibashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony (Opening of Schools)

My name is Delia Ishibashi and I teach 6th grade at the middle School on Kauai.

I am expressing my disappointment in the haphazard rollout of Opening Schools for the School year 2020-21 during this pandemic.

There seems to be a rush to open schools when there hasn't been a clear cut explanation to questions teachers have addressed to the State DOE and State DOH.

Teachers want students to attend school but we are requesting a delay to start. Do you think only two days of prep prior to kids starting is enough for teachers to plan and get ready when we have so many things to worry about because of the virus?

We need time to plan lessons for distance learning just in case we have a shut down. We need time to make sure we plan accordingly because now we won't be seeing our students as much during the week like before. I do not even agree having kids come in half a day while we plan on the afternoon. Why can't we delay kids returning for just a few days more so teachers can have time to digest all the new information and procedures about covid 19 and more time to carefully plan digital lessons?

I also want to say that this ohana bubble is far from it. I will be exposed to many students throughout the day for about 6 hours in my classroom and during recess. I don't know where these kids have been or who they have been exposed to. Yes I will be wearing a shield and probably a mask but what about how thoroughly clean will my classroom tables and chairs be after each class? I hope the state will distribute Lysol wipes and masks to each teacher to keep our classroom clean and every student will protect others by wearing a mask.

What happens if I get sick and the school cannot find a sub for me? If a child gets sick with covid, will the whole 6th grade building shutdown or will the whole school shutdown? We don't even know what the clear cut answers are!

Please do not rush to open schools until a secure plan and safe protocols are in place. Teachers are putting their lives on the front line so we want to make sure we are safe and protected, along with our keiki.

Sincerely,

Delia Ishibashi

Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School

Kauai District

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Dwayne Abuel <dwayne.abuel@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Dwayne Abuel
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To our leaders:

My name is Dwayne Abuel, Technology Coordinator and teacher at Highlands Intermediate School. I have been teaching over 25 years.

I am very concerned about the unsafe decisions that our leaders are making that not only could jeopardize my health and my families health, but also the students and staff around me. Nothing is funny about leaders saying things like, "Cluster infections will happen but at least we can contain them".

We are test subjects and we do not get any hazard pay. We are being forced to teach in a new environment that most of the teachers are NOT ready to teach in. Plus, there are students and parents out there that would guarantee NOT follow any policy, protocol, rules, and laws that make for a safe environment.

I do NOT see any of the leadership wanting to spend time on our FRONTLINE to see if we do or don't get exposed. I for one am vulnerable and the best my bosses can tell me is to keep washing up and follow CDC guidelines? Even the bosses themselves do not feel safe.

I do not know what it's going to take to make you folks realize that we are humans like you and can bleed the same. We are more than just statistics. Please get us better answers and help us get the time to prepare. I must admit, not everyone needs time to prepare, but most teachers who do not have an online based curriculum cannot just attend a one or two day workshop and be expected to function. It also takes practice.

You folks are rushing us into a battle that we may not be able to win and there may be some who will fall, in terms of health and trying to teach in the new environment.

Do not rush into things! Learning takes a lifetime and when individuals are ready. We cannot force things down people's throats. The stress we have during COVID-19 is just too high. This includes everyone else. The pressure of reopening this soon is too much. Please!

I hope you can reconsider reopening so soon without giving us good answers that we feel safe with and hope you can provide the funding needed, plus give us time to learn all the new tools in the new environment of virtual learning. At the current state, it is too much that you are asking of us. Everyone is on edge and I would not be surprised if teachers either quit, commit suicide, go in depression, or just not come to work fearing for theirs and other people's lives.

Thank you for your time,

Dwayne Abuel
Technology Coordinator/Teacher
Highlands Intermediate School

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Testimony BOE

From: hawaii10 <hawaii10@gmail.com> on behalf of hawaii10
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony regarding School re-opening

Aloha,

My name is Kelli Totten and I have worked for the Hawaii Department of Education for 21 years. As we consider re-opening schools, I have several concerns that I feel need to be addressed in order to provide for the safety of students, staff and families.

- Will I be provided with adequate, professional training in how to perform my job safely in a pandemic environment PRIOR to school opening? And/or prior to interactions with other staff?
- If I am required to stay home to quarantine after one of my students or fellow staff tests co-vid positive, will any leave be approved under worker's compensation?
- What type of PPE will be provided for employees and students?
- Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?
- Will staff be properly trained by Aug. 4?
- How will school meals be provided?
- Who will supervise students during meal periods?
- What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- How will physical distancing be enforced?
- How will social distancing be accomplished for students riding buses, as our buses are currently so crowded, due to lack of drivers, that they require students to ride 3 per seat?

I would appreciate a written response to these questions.

Mahalo,

Kelli Totten

Testimony BOE

From: Vickie Lynn Kam <noreply@jotform.com> on behalf of Vickie Lynn Kam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!



Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Vickie Lynn Kam
Email	VLPKAM@YAHOO.COM
Subject	8085429206

Message Hawai'i's teachers have been working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've helped their students continue to learn, even in the face of impossible odds.

Eliminating teacher shortage differentials at this time would be a slap in the face of our classroom leaders. We're already going to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers because of health concerns, our state's quarantine requirements, and the looming threat of furloughs. Reducing bonuses for teachers willing to work in high-needs areas would make that situation much worse.

According to HIDOE data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 2020–21 school year increased by 29 percent, while the number of teachers who left SPED positions decreased by 57 percent.

Similarly, nearly twice as many educators transferred into hard-to-staff schools for the upcoming school year as compared to last year, while the differentials led to a 41 percent decrease in those leaving hard-to-staff locations.

In other words, the differentials worked. Our teacher shortage already stands at over 1,000 teachers each year. We could easily see that number double or triple because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

Now is not the time to cut teacher pay, which will ultimately endanger the quality of our children's

education. Instead, we should invest in our teachers,
upon whom our keiki's future depends.

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

Testimony BOE

From: joanna@hawaiiintel.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Ms. Payne, Mr. De Lima, Mr. Barcarse, Ms. Cox, Mr. Kawano, Ms. Namau'u, Mr. Takeno, Mr. Uemura, and Mr. Voss,

Once again I am writing to you to protect the institution of teaching and the teaching profession in Hawai'i. In other words, I'm writing to you to do right by Hawai'i's children.

Please continue funding the pay differential. It's cut and dry — data shows that pay differentials have made a huge difference in the retention of qualified individuals as well as in the retention of qualified teachers in undesirable areas. Take these differentials away and say hello to a mass exodus of qualified teachers; say hello to empty teaching lines, say hello to unqualified subs; say hello to unsafe learning conditions (hello COVID-19); say hello to lower test scores, say hello to less learning. I challenge you to be more creative and spare Hawai'i's education system from further decay. Don't devalue teachers!

Joanna Silva

Testimony BOE

From: DIANNE AMARAL-DUVAUCHELLE <suga96707@gmail.com> on behalf of DIANNE AMARAL-DUVAUCHELLE
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:13 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: cuts to shortage differentials and delaying student start date.

Aloha Board of Education,

I've been working for the Hawaii State DOE as a sped teacher since 1998 . I've spent the last 9 years as a SSC and because of the pay differential decided to go back into the classroom as a sped teacher. It's critical we keep the pay differential for our hard to fill/sped positions. Throughout my teaching career I've seen many of our sped teachers move into general education positions or other DOE positions; some leaving the teaching field entirely. There's a shortage in sped teachers in our state. Cutting the differential will only make the sped shortage worse.

I also would like to request a delay in our students' start date. Although I'm very excited to return to the classroom, I want to ensure I'm able to keep my students safe as possible. I don't feel we have things thoroughly planned out and by pushing back our students' return, we can afford the time to work this through and possibly have a more concrete plan. Addition to student safety, we also need to keep teachers/staff safe as well. Please know I have three family members in my household with medical conditions, placing them in the high risk category. This really concerns me.

Mahalo for your consideration in this matter!

Sincerely,
Dianne Amaral-Duvauchelle
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: kuliananotme@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening Schools

Hello,

As a 12 month employee I have been pondering our current situation all summer. I have been working from home and at school when no one is in my office. As the SSC, I have risked my health assessing and observing students, but took care of myself as much as possible by purchasing my PPE, asking parents and students to wear masks, and assessing in more open, airy school cafeteria to limit as much exposure as possible.

Yesterday, I arrive at the office and was totally overwhelmed. The office is shared by 3-4 professionals at a time. One cannot wear a mask and we have been careful to avoid one another for the summer months. When school begins for teachers, the room needs to be available for the 15 to 20 special education teachers to obtain materials of instruction, reading assessments, and IEP hard copy records. The room is built under a building and only one side has windows. Fresh air does not circulate due to the position of the windows. NOTHING HAD ADDED OR TAKEN AWAY TO PROTECT ANY OF US.

In between filing and printing documents/assessments that I scored from home, I put my mask and gloves on and began working on the room arrangement. Moving chairs away to discourage anyone coming in to sit, sweeping and clearing and spraying surfaces so it would be an easier to clean environment. It crossed my mind, if the floor had not been cleaned and vacuumed, nor the trash taken out, except when I put it outside the door (when testing, I carried trash bags with me to throw away used masks, gloves, and paper towels after cleaning and in between students.) why would this room be a safe place to work once teachers arrived?

I purchased clothing racks at Target to hang clear shower curtains in front of my desk and work table. There are no plexiglass shields, no thought to how this could be a safe environment for the numerous amount of people that tend to move through this space. I can keep parents a bay by having the WebEx meetings, I can hang the shower curtains and use the PPE I have purchased.....

I call my office the "After Thought Office" as it is always thought of after, not proactively, even in normal circumstances. The fact is I can't be an after thought now as I am at high risk. So why is the superintendent implying that we are ready? Did anyone go look to see if we are ready? How many of us are the "After Thought"?

I am asking to be allowed to work remotely, however, it seems to not be a thing.....therefore, I carry a sheet with my leave and the form to resign in my planner....always.

Thank you,
Sandra Leah Mattli
SSC in West Hawaii

Folks this office is of high importance to parents and students in the area of special education, just FYI.

Testimony BOE

From: Melisange Ouellet-beaucaire <melisange.ouellet-beaucaire@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melisange Ouellet-beaucaire
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:14 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: From a 1st year teacher

Aloha,

I teach at the biggest high school in the state. This will be my 2nd year teaching for the DOE. Let's use our common sense here. We are in a pandemic and you want me in 4 days to move into a new class. Unpack boxes and set up my classroom learn how to do virtual teaching, learn the platforms I'm going to teach with, read all my students IEPs, plan an entire semester, make sure I have PPE and do everything else I usually do in 4 days to prep for 6 months. And yes they are half days for the first two weeks but we still need to have our virtual online classes running on august 4 withouttttttt any training!!!! Come on State of Hawaii. We are more Akamai then this. Listen to the teachers the ones doing the teaching. If we ask for more time it's because we NEED it.

Peace

Meli

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: parris and sala kawaauhau <parris_sala@yahoo.com> on behalf of parris and sala kawaauhau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Allowing students back to school.

I have 2 boys in Makakilo Elementary and I don't care what the board decides I've already informed the principal at my boys school that they better have daily packets ready for my boys to be picked up because my boys aren't going back to school. My daughter goes to Kamehameha and she was given the option to do distance learning. All school should have this option regardless of the pandemic. Coronavirus is not going away. Will school be held liable if my child contracts it from someone at school? My child's life is more important than education. What is the point of an education if you're dead.

Thank you for your time

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Mahea Kiyan <mahea.kiyan@gmail.com> on behalf of Mahea Kiyan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony - hard to fill compensation
Attachments: Testimony2.pdf

Please see attached for testimony.

- Special Education Teacher
- Leeward District - Nanakuli/Waianae Complex
- Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am **not** in favor of discontinuing extra compensation. I am a special education teacher with two K-6 certifications. I am also a nationally board certified teacher. I can teach anywhere, but I choose to teach in the Nanakuli/Waianae complex where we have one of the highest number of teacher vacancies. This is unfortunate since our students come from diverse backgrounds and need the most support.

Please make education equitable. Differentials (extra compensation) will allow students to have access to a qualified teacher. Students who need the most come from my district where we have one of the highest number of teacher vacancies. Please give what was promised to teachers for the benefit of the students who need highly qualified teachers the most.

Also, do what is right. Give teachers what they deserve, what they were promised. Make students and teachers a priority.

Testimony BOE

From: Christina Chun <GNC00@msn.com> on behalf of Christina Chun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:16 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am an elementary school teacher in Mililani, and I am also a parent of two children who attend Moanalua Middle and Moanalua High School.

As a 2nd grade teacher, I want to get back to teaching our students and I do believe that it is so important that students return to school. However, I also believe that our schools are not ready to safely re-open. Our administrators have been working very hard, and teachers have been spending many unpaid and voluntary hours over the summer meeting to discuss important issues such as safety procedures and protocols, and we still have so much to discuss and plan. I personally would like to have time at the beginning of the year to plan and collaborate with fellow teachers and staff and make sure our procedures are in place first, before welcoming the students to campus. To do this simultaneously would not be the safest option. Let's not rush into this, but give us time to do it correctly.

It is also frustrating that each school has been spending so many hours trying to figure out how to implement a safe re-opening, because we have not been given clear guidance by the Dept. of Health. We need clear written guidelines to ensure consistency between and among schools.

I also feel that the "Ohana bubbles" the Dept. of Health refers to is not a valid reason that it is safe to re-open schools. At our school, at least 4 different classes will all be sharing the same bathroom. I will have students from a fully self-contained special education classroom joining my class every day, and those students see specialists daily, such as speech and occupational therapy, not to mention that each child will go home every day to their own families, so how many bubbles are we being exposed to now?

It is important for our children to return to school, but the teachers are stakeholders in this too, and I feel that our health and safety has not been considered. We go home to our own families with children, with elderly parents who are at risk. We need to delay the opening of schools until we have more questions answered.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Christina Chun

Testimony BOE

From: prattbt <prattbt@yahoo.com> on behalf of prattbt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teatimony

To whom it may concern,

I wanted to let you know as the husband of a teacher and father of 2 students I am disappointed in how the HI DOE is handling school. Policies are poorly written and hard to understand. I do not want my wife or daughters at any of the schools until their safety is assured.

Anthony Pratt
808 345 5062

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Molly Phipps <mollytphipps@gmail.com> on behalf of Molly Phipps
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to Delay the Opening of Schools

My name is Molly Phipps and I am about to start my 5th year teaching 5th grade at Kihei Elementary School on Maui.

I urge you to delay the opening of school for students. I urge to think realistically what is being asked of teachers to have ready with 4 days, or 28 work hours. We are being asked to:

- Reorganize our physical classroom to allow 6ft distance at all time
- Reorganize how we distribute classroom supplies that used to be meant for a whole class to have access
- Create a plan that targets academic standards in person
- Create a plan that targets academic standards for online says between in person days, which will most likely involve creating videos ahead of time
- Create a plan that targets academic standards for families that choose to do all distance learning
- Have a plan for students who will start the first day of school online, hoping they have a device and know their log in information while in person students start learning safety protocol
- Be ready to address SEL and trauma of students dealing with a pandemic
- Be trained in a daily safety protocol
- Come up with a plan to teach safety protocol to students
- Go through the usual beginning of the school year tasks that must be addressed before students arrive

We are being asked to do all of this within 4 days, 28 work hours, unless give up our own personal time. I hope you can see that there is NO POSSIBLE WAY we can create a plan worthy of our students, and be ready to care for them and all they go through by August 4th. Any other career, we professionals would never be asked to go in with this little time to create a plan. How do you expect us to make an effective plan in such short time? I urge you to delay the start of school. It IS for the good of our keiki.

Sincerely,

Molly Phipps

Testimony BOE

From: Sami Seeman <sami.seeman92@gmail.com> on behalf of Sami Seeman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern:

I am emailing to testify on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

This past month has been filled with many changes. Some, such as postponing the trans-Pacific quarantine order being lifted, have been for the better. Others have given an idea of what happens when we rush back to normal. Aside from July 1 and July 7, the daily number of new cases reported has been in the double-digits and includes two record setting days. I know Hawai'i has it better than the mainland in regards to numbers. We were diligent about staying home for a time.

Opening our schools mean the "Ohana bubbles" grow and merge. When children are back at school, parents and guardians can return to work. The bubble grows some more. When someone gets sick or people don't quarantine, we will be forced to close down our schools again because the bubbles were an illusion.

To expect teachers to be prepared for the inevitable 100% distance learning, you need to give us time. Our four days at the beginning of the school year aren't all dedicated to training or planning and preparing lessons. Nine additional half-days while we are teaching is too late. Our expectations are changing hourly right now and we are lucky to get information before the parents at this point. Another part of preparing is making sure we have the supplies necessary. This year will require a lot of cleaning supplies and in case you haven't noticed, those are hard to come by. Stores don't have an unlimited stock of soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and facial tissues. These are things we typically ask families to provide for the classrooms (due to budgets). Even if they were to order online, there is a backlog and shipping takes longer than normal because we live on an island in the middle of the ocean.

So many things have been taken from us lately. It is unfair to take advantage of our nature to do right by the children. We will be going 100% virtual at some point because circumstances now are worse than when we shut down campuses in March. Give us the time to prepare now so it isn't as drastic when the inevitable happens.

As for the possible budget cut that would remove the additional funds for the SPED teachers and other hard to staff areas, why mess with a good thing? It has helped put teachers in classrooms and provided consistency for students.

Doing right by the kids meanings doing right by the teachers too.

Sami Seeman
Teacher
IPES

Testimony BOE

From: Cdk OrtizFong <cdk5428@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cdk OrtizFong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening schools

Our government has failed us. We were promised re-closure of the state with increase of covid new cases and covid related deaths. Instead, we are forcing our children, by the thousands to be Guinea pigs.

And why are the lower grades for Waimalu going to have face to face classes everyday. They have a higher tendency to want to touch surfaces and others more often than higher grades. Wth?

Also, teachers were not given sufficient enough time to prepare for the school year. Keep distanced learning.

Have you hired enough extra staff?

Chris Ortiz

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Ci HI <bileckic18@gmail.com> on behalf of Ci HI
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I would like to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until proper safety protocols have been communicated to families and teachers, and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

I am a special education science teacher and Transition Coordinator at Kalaheo High School and I live with an autoimmune medical condition and I have an increased risk factor for COVID-19. I have taught in Hawaii for over fifteen years and I am a single parent to a child in middle school.

I will highlight my foremost question up front in this testimony: Who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided.

A few days ago health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him “just today” to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It’s unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student’s home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students’ access to 100-percent distance learning options. I’ve heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option.

I would like to further augment with my own questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?

- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student get infected? Or a co-worker of a student's parent?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day.

It's true that Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, but it's also true that the DOE really hasn't made it clear how to handle closing classrooms or entire schools if those ohana bubbles become infected. Further, ohana bubbles do not really work when considering over lapping bubbles of school buses, extracurricular activities set to start again on Aug 19, etc.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received NO offer of training for the school reopenings from the DOE. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training.

Others will point out that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students ALREADY RETURN to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety BEFORE they come back to our buildings.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teacher and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Cicily Bilecki, Windward District, Oahu, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Darrow <ldarrow@kaohaoschool.org> on behalf of Laura Darrow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Laura Darrow and I am a teacher at Ka'ōhao School in Kailua, Hawaii. My daughter will attend fourth grade at the same school I teach at and my son will begin seventh grade and Kailua Intermediate School (KIS) on the Windward side of Oahu.

I am submitting this email as a member of the HSTA as testimony on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Teachers are not prepared to begin school on August 4th, 2020. I personally teach at a charter school and my position of combined school librarian and RTI Teacher has been eliminated one week prior to the start of school and I was told that I would be teaching a combination class of first and second grade students to accommodate social distancing requirements and reduce the number of students within those two grade level classrooms. Initially, I was not given a classroom in which to instruct these students but since then (over the last few days) our director has told me the art room was then available. This space is not currently fit to facilitate a general education classroom of the ages of the students I will be teaching and I will need additional time and materials in order to get the space ready for first and second graders for daily face to face interaction (we are one of a few public schools that are offering daily on campus instruction for all students at this point).

When I attended the parent meeting for KIS last week Tuesday for my son, a presentation was given that explained the rotating schedule of students divided by last name two days on campus and two days off campus. The administrators explained that when the cohorts of students were not on campus, they would be participating virtually with the students on campus that day with the same teacher in the corresponding class. One of the teachers at the school appeared in the meeting to help answer questions but also explained to the administrators that she was unsure of how she would simultaneously teach a smaller group on campus while the other half of her group appeared and participated virtually in the same class from home. She said that she only had one computer which would be used to teach the lesson to the students on campus. It is clear that teachers need more time, resources and clarification about how their schools will execute the plan that they have decided upon.

In addition, the daily evolving nature of the Covid-19 crisis and recent increase in cases in Hawaii should also be monitored within the next two weeks and then schools can have a better idea of what to do and more preparation before beginning what we can surely describe as the most tumultuous school year in our current life span.

Sincerely,
Laura Darrow

Testimony BOE

From: Monica Wakida <monicawakida@gmail.com> on behalf of Monica Wakida
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I wanted to voice a concern with an issue the public school system is deliberating on right now. I do not believe the withdrawal of the increased benefits that educators with the hardest positions to fill will be beneficial. Instead, I believe it will be detrimental in retaining qualified teachers in these specific fields. Having a family member, who is a sped teacher, I have seen firsthand the amount of time, energy, and dedication she puts in to her work. We need to retain these experienced teachers who genuinely care for our children and want to see them learn, progress, and advance and by taking away a benefit-they so rightly deserve- will only lead to the disillusionment of the public education system and most will eventually leave the kids who need them the most.

How can Every Student Achieve if they aren't given the proper teachers and learning tools to succeed? Please do not take away this funding.

Thank you,
Monica Wakida

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sherry Gonsalves <sherry.gonsalves@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sherry Gonsalves
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony BOE

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Education:

Please consider this my testimony in support of opening schools safely for the 2020-21 SY. As an educational leader, I understand the importance of students returning to school safely and as soon as possible. We have all worked diligently throughout the summer along with our dedicated essential school staff, many who volunteered their time to help in preparing for the opening of this new school year. By hosting 8 classrooms on our campus during the summer, we have gained a better understanding of what to anticipate on a larger scale when all students return.

With great anticipation, we look forward to welcoming back all of our students. While we greatly appreciate the State and District leadership, collaboration and negotiation that has gone into developing this reopening plan, I am becoming more concerned about our available resources since we are starting to see more students withdraw from our school. Due to a decrease in student enrollment, we have started making needed adjustments to our projected budget including reducing available staff including one less kindergarten classroom which could require moving to an A/B schedule. Parents have expressed they are reluctant to enroll their children in kindergarten until there is a better understanding of what the school year may look like for their child.

While we will continue to follow the recommendations to stagger the students drop off/pick up times and locations, provide designated recess play areas for classroom ohana bubbles and will implement three lunch shifts to allow 6 ft. spacing between students to the best of our abilities, I am growing more concerned about being able to ensure the 6' distancing requirements in all areas of the school campus during these non-instructional times.

We do not know what the future holds and it would be very beneficial to have the first two weeks dedicated to PD for teachers on distance learning. This additional time will allow teachers and staff to be more prepared to begin the school year and more involved in the development of the school's distance learning plans. This will also provide supplemental time to set up classrooms so they will be better prepared to teach all students upon return and provide a smoother transition for students, teachers and parents in the event we need to transition to full remote learning in the future.

This additional time will also allow for student devices to be prepared for distribution and for parents to return the required permission forms in advance. While nine days in theory sounds like enough time to assess students, please keep in mind most students will only be attending school 2 to 3 days a week on an alternating schedule in the first two weeks. Since parent permission will be needed for students to use the computers, we need to ensure all parent permission forms are returned within the first few days since students will most likely need a day or two to complete the required assessment.

Once again, we greatly appreciate the leadership and support that has gone into preparing for this opening at all levels and hope this helps to share the perspective and concerns of a school level administrator.

Sincerely, Sherry Gonsalves

Sherry Gonsalves, Principal
Kilauea School
2440 Kolo Rd.

Kilauea, HI 96754
(808) 828-1212 ext 105
(808) 828-2034 facsimile
Email: sherry.gonsalves@k12.hi.us

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Testimony BOE

From: Kris Murali <krismurali59@gmail.com> on behalf of Kris Murali
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Kris Murali
Subject: Testimony

Aloha: I am a high school teacher at Kihei Charter School. I am 60+ years old with health conditions and am very concerned about my safety and ability to teach face to face or even share small office space to offer virtual school. I would like to offer my past experience with successful online teaching as well as learning as evidence for your consideration. During the 4th quarter of last year, many of my students successfully continued to code for their computer science class and learn complex topics like optics for their physics classes and if we gave grades, then I feel almost all students would have done all their assignments. I also took an online PD course last month for a whole week with zoom session of almost 40 fellow teachers from Hawaii and we collaborated on group sessions, completed homework for grade and had small group help sessions with our tutor(s)!; I have very good set of online materials and feel I would give it 150% effort to reach every student without the fear of covid hanging over my head. I appreciate it if our BOE would seriously consider going online for our schools for the fall semester.

Mahalo,

Kris Murali

Physics/CS/Engineering Teacher
Kihei Charter School

Testimony BOE

From: Brandee Kahalekomo <bkahalekomo@yahoo.com> on behalf of Brandee Kahalekomo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:25 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Brandee Coughlin EA
West Kaua'i Complex

I don't feel comfortable going back to work with the current situation of the virus. But, it's my only means of income. I assumed we were going to be trained, but heard that's not true. What little training that will be held, is only available for teachers. Even though we work with students as well.

What happens if our own children get/are sick?

Will we be allowed to leave to pick them up from school?

Do we take off to stay home with our sick kids?

Or do the same if we are sick?

Who is supposed to find subs to take our place when we are out?

What if there aren't any subs?

What if they can't find a sub when my teacher is out? Will I still be expected to work by myself?

What if a sick student is sent home, will siblings be sent home as well?

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Natalie V <natalie.sltx@gmail.com> on behalf of Natalie V
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:24 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

- What type of PPE will be provided for employees and students? Who will pay for this? My DES gave us plexiglass, face shields, and ONE bottle of cleaning spray. The bottle is more than 1/2 gone after completing assessments for 4 students this summer. I cannot even purchase cleaning supplies because of the limit at stores; nor do I have the money to purchase PPE. The face shield is already scratched. We have asked the DES for more, we were told, there is no money. Well I don't have any either. Without the proper PPE and cleaning materials, I will not be able to go to work safely or keep the children/staff safe. If I will not be provided with the cleaning supplies, I cannot work safely.
- Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?
- Will staff be properly trained by Aug. 4?
- What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- How will physical distancing be enforced?
- How can I possibly provide the legally mandated minutes for 50 students? What will happen when I have to quarantine? SLPs, OTs, PTs, do NOT have subs. Who will make up those minutes?

Natalie Vitale
Speech Language Pathologist
West Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Emiko Joy <emiko.joy@paia.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Emiko Joy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:26 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Reopening of School and Differential Pay for Hard to Fill positions

- Q. Joy, Kula Kaiapuni o Maui, Pa'ia, Kumu Haumana Kinana
- 7/23 Meeting Finance and Infrastructure & General Business
- Topic: reopening of schools, differential pay

Aloha kakou,

I am a special education teacher at a Hawaiian Language Immersion School and would like to offer my thoughts on these items that may be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

I would like to thank the BOE for their ongoing and laborious, and often conflicted, work on helping to prepare our schools for reopening safely and effectively as well as ensuring that our schools are staffed with quality teachers.

I agree that schools should open to service our students, however, I am very troubled at the lack of guidance provided to our schools by the DOE regarding our most vulnerable populations. We are told only, at our school levels, that these students are able to attend daily, which is completely appropriate, but every school is burdened with ongoing challenges that are brought up continually as we attempt to plan (with as many staff that are willing to volunteer their time to do this).

For instance, our district has mostly agreed to follow the Model B scheduling due to our limited space and need for social distancing. Several schools will have one full day of school wide Virtual only learning per week (many chose our typical short day, for schools that have them, to be the virtual day). Where is our vulnerable population proposed to be on this day of every week? Are they now in mixed bubbles if grouped together or with their gen ed teachers while they do virtual class at school or in a "self-contained" environment, without access to non-disabled peers (for those with inclusive LREs) because there now are less or no non-disabled peers on campus and are put into a sped room?

I'm sure there are many other issues that will come up. This is just one that we have recently been faced with that we have had some discourse on, but with continued confusion on any other options we can produce as we are also looking at equity for all students in regards to in-school attendance and as much simplicity of scheduling for families as well. (As we looked at the ABABA/BABAB model, we found there would be a group that would be shorter on in-school days)

Another pressing issue is when families of vulnerable students want only distance learning. Our school will take these case by case, but it worrisome that we may not be prepared to start the school year well-prepared for the many challenges we face. My school still has to catch up with all the postponed eligibility, annual, reevaluation, transition, and student focus team meetings that must be continued when school resumes while both managing these ongoing concerns.

I also would like to mahalo the BOE for the generous differential pay that I have been able to benefit from. It was extremely helpful as many in my family have lost their jobs/lessened hours and as some have returned home for support.

I would love to continue to receive this pay, but also realize that it may not be realistic with ongoing problematic financial trends. I will leave this up to you, who have so generously thought of keeping our schools and precious programs staffed with quality teachers. I have not decided to leave if we lose this additional pay,

but I have had many discussions with my colleagues who have other options and are considering it (moving out of state, going into private schools, etc).

Mahalo for your time.

Much love to you with my hopes for clarity, unity and justice during your meeting.

Testimony BOE

From: Marlene Leary <marlene.leary@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marlene Leary
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; Jason Kuloloia; Paul Zina; KFINN@hgea.org
Subject: 7.22.20 BOE Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

Kaua'i High School is not ready to open safely on August 4th. As an educator and school principal, it is important to ensure a quality educational experience for my students, families and staff. We are not ready to open for various reasons. I have kept informed on the different perspectives on opening schools on August 4th as both a school leader and community member. The different stakeholders have valid reasons to support their stance. However, my biggest concern is the ability to ensure the health and safety of our students, the staff and our Kaua'i community once school is open. Based on the lack of safety supplies and the need for further staff development, we are not able to open in a manner that is safe. Our inability to effectively open on August 4th is not because of a lack of effort or work on the part of the people here, we have been working harder than ever. I am appreciative for the collaborative effort of our twelve (12) month workers from UPW and HGEA. Without their flexibility and dedication to education, many COVID-19 related tasks have been completed.

Research shows that teachers make the biggest impact on students' achievement. Their ability and comfort level to support our students' social emotional learning and to provide effective delivery of their content are critical to students' success. Therefore, the feedback from my teachers is an essential piece to my determination of our readiness. Teachers are requesting for professional development on how to effectively implement distance learning both in the blended model and online option only. Despite the short time frame, the optional participation, and the 2.4% budget cut, one third of my teachers have extended themselves to participate in professional development and collaboration. My concern is the other two-thirds who could not participate. . Adjustments have been made to our Administrative opening days to allow for more COVID19 health and safety training. However, it allows for little Professional Development for those two days. The first four days before students start is not sufficient to get all our teachers ready for the new change in instructional delivery. We still need to cover the essential information required by the Department and reserve the two days of teacher directed time as part of their contract. The first nine (9) ½ days of school will be focused on providing professional development and training. While this is appreciated, the fact is with lunch and a required hour of planning the time on professional development amounts to 45-60 minutes each day. This is not sufficient considering the huge shift in delivery that has to be made. Teachers want to do the best job possible for their students. Research results show the fruits of their work and dedication. The lack of teacher preparedness will only add to the level of stress. The impact will be felt in the classroom where our students deserve to feel safe and to be provided with the best education possible.

In addition, we need more time to prepare our campus. There is so much to be done. The physical campus needs to be prepared. Social distancing markings have to be placed on a campus housing 1,200 students. PPE supplies need to be available and distributed to 90 meeting spaces. Back in March when this pandemic started, the Department asked schools to submit the numbers needed for PPE and cleaning supplies for three months. In late April we were told they had not been ordered. We scrambled to purchase our own but have not received our full orders of hand sanitizers, cleaning dispensers, PPE, etc. We do not have an estimated time of delivery. This is

understandable due to the high demand. In order to reopen the school in a safe manner, it is crucial we have these items. We are not prepared to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff that is being promised and messaged to our stakeholders by the state and department.

A common question I receive from parents, staff and the community is "What happens if there is a reported positive case on campus?" I have provided access and clarification based on the Health and Safety guidance provided by the Department. However, without a clearly communicated plan there is much uncertainty and fear. This only adds to the nervousness and trepidation our community is feeling about the reopening of schools.

I am respectfully asking that the opening of school be delayed. In order to provide teacher training and professional development an extra five (5) days would be beneficial. The availability of cleaning/disinfecting products and PPEs, on the other hand, would impact the start time based on each school. Teachers, staff and school leaders want to provide the best learning environment possible for our children. Without a delay in the start of the school year for students, such an environment will not be possible.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

--

Marlene Leary
Principal
Kaua'i High School
3577 Lala Road
Lihue, HI 96766
(808) 274-3160



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Testimony BOE

From: nicholas koomoa <nickoomoa10@yahoo.com> on behalf of nicholas koomoa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am the father of 2 girls (2nd grade and 8th grade) and I do not want them to go back to school on Aug 4th. I feel that they're alot of risk and danger that you are not taking seriously in sending our kids back to school. As another 9 year old girl sadly passed away today in Florida due to Corona virus, how can you ask us as parents to make that decision to place our children in danger? They're safest at home, we need to learn to adapt to change. You need to require training for all your staff as well as teachers on how to effectively offer education virtually. Thank you for your time, and please, put safety first before convenience. Aloha

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Shelby <shelb_e67@yahoo.com> on behalf of Shelby
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

Hello! I am writing in response to the [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My family urges the reconsideration to delay opening public schools this August due to several personal health related issues as well as for the general safety of Hawaii residents. We, among many other parents, understand the difficulty it is for everyone to get back to the “new” normal. Our children attend Makalapa Elementary School with many military families. Opening our school alone is a big cause for concern as most of the parents protect and serve our state and country. Not to say that anyone or other schools take more precedence than others, but we would not be doing our due diligence to protect our youth by opening schools so quickly when the state alone is not reopened. The risk of exposure would be high with the various branches of military (look at the recent HPD recruits and officers currently on leave, for example).

Personally, our children are at high-risk health-wise. One of them also needs special considerations under a 504 plan. A modified schedule would not be helpful or beneficial for him even in these proposed “student bubbles.” Is there a plan to hire more teachers/assistants and custodial staff to help with the extra shifts of sanitation enforcement, and specifically for a child such as ours who needs special attention?

As much as we want our children to live a “normal” childhood, we should really take our time and hear our teachers out. They are such an important part of our children’s future. Don’t rush this. Let the teachers come together and decide. They themselves are grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles. If they don’t feel safe enough to teach or put their own kids at risk right now, why should we?

With all of these reasons aside, our kids are also just kids who like to play, get dirty, explore, and touch everything and anything. It’s already a struggle on our own to help them be more sanitary more than usual. We are not ready as parents, teachers, and as a state.

Thank you for your time and understanding. We hope to hear better news in the coming week.

With best regards,
Shelby

Testimony BOE

From: Brittany Engbarth <brittanyerin25@gmail.com> on behalf of Brittany Engbarth
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Hello,

My name is Brittany Engbarth and I am a special education teacher at Mililani Uka Elementary. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

The special education teachers need their extra compensation this year more than ever before. One reason is because the special education teachers have even more on their plate now that the classroom education assistants will no longer be able to help the entire classroom with special education students, but they will be assigned to a particular student who used to have a paraprofessional. Thus, more responsibility will be placed solely on the special education teacher.

Another reason is special education, hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian language immersion positions have numerous openings and the schools have a very difficult time filling and keeping people in those positions. If you take away the one incentive that we have, the schools will really be short those essential positions. Who will be affected? The students. The students who need the most intensive instruction in our state, will be losing out and will end up with a year long substitute. Is that fair to the students? No. I strongly believe the most vulnerable population needs qualified, decently paid, dedicated teachers, who will do everything in their power to better their students. The special education population was greatly impacted with the school closure due to COVID-19. Some special education students regressed with their learning and behavior progress without face-to-face instruction. These students can not afford any more setbacks.

A third reason is that Hawaii has a very high cost of living and young teachers are low on the pay scale due to the limited years of teaching and professional development credits they have. Young teachers are critical to keep in Hawaii schools that way they will stay many years in the profession/the island for many years to come. If you want to keep the young teachers, who have college debt to pay off, bills, rent, and classroom/instructional materials to buy then you need to keep the extra compensation. I personally can not afford to live on Oahu if you cut my salary. I am twenty eight years old and I am trying to start a family. Every dollar counts.

These are the three reasons why special education teachers, hard-to-staff location, and Hawaiian language immersion teachers need their extra compensation. If you cut our salaries, then the teachers will relocated to the mainland or elsewhere and the students will be the ones to suffer.

Thank you,
Brittany Engbarth
Mililani Uka Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Britos <erinbritos@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Britos
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:28 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

From:
Ms. Erin Lynn Britos
English Faculty, McKinley High School
Tiger Media Learning Center

Aloha,
I would like the start of SY delayed until the end of the month in order to streamline planning and to add testing and screening procedures at our school.

I object to NO SCREENING; temperature checks, and/or select-pool testing provided to DOE campuses.

Teachers will be subjected to approximately 60 students per day. Additionally, students will not be isolated into any cohorts; so students will be exposed to that same number of students in five different classrooms throughout the day.

This is not a trip to COSTCO folks.

There has to be better support and additional procedures involving public health officials to facilitate and manage the risk on each campus where people are routinely convening.

Mahalo,
Erin L. Britos.
Highly-qualified veteran Educator, mild-asthma patient), and
Mother of high risk student.

-

Testimony BOE

From: Cynthia Rothdeutsch <cynthia.rothdeutsch@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cynthia Rothdeutsch
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:28 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on reopening school
Attachments: BOE Testimony.pdf

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony about the reopening of school attached.

--

Cynthia Rothdeutsch
Principal
Kamali'i Elementary School

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Cynthia Rothdeutsch
Principal, Kamali'i Elementary School**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that I submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although I have crafted multiple plans for reopening my campus over the summer, adapting each time new directives were given by the DOE, I feel that I have to express my concerns that I continue to have in regards to reopening our schools. I have been in the DOE for 30 years, 8 years as an administrator. The stress of these past months, knowing that the decisions that I make will affect the health and safety of my school community, is a daily burden. I do not feel that schools are prepared to open on August 4th. We can open, or we can open well with proper planning and resources. The difference between the two options may be the degree to which the health of my students, staff, families, and community are negatively impacted. As principals, we malama our schools and community. If a student, staff member or family member dies from COVID19 due to contracting it on my campus, I will bear that burden and responsibility. I am not prepared to safely open school. The opening page of the DOE Return To Learn: School Reopening Plan Health and Safety Handbook lists the following three assumptions:

1. COVID-19 will not be totally eliminated, there will always be cases in our community
2. Every COVID-19 case can not be prevented; need to manage spreading the disease

At this point in time, I am not able to put the necessary safety procedures in place to adequately manage spreading the disease on my campus.

These are my main concerns with only 13 days left until our students are scheduled to arrive:

Safety and Health Concerns:

In a recorded message to all DOE employees yesterday, Superintendent Kishimoto stated, "Our state emergency management agency has \$100 million to provide safety supplies to state agencies. Some schools have placed additional orders on their own but all schools have what they need to reopen safely." I have received from the DOE / state approximately 60 cloth face

masks, a dozen face shields, and minimal supplies for our health aide. I have ordered for my school, aerosol sprayers to disinfect classrooms, face shields for each staff member, disposable gowns, plastic desk shields for our students, plastic storage containers for each student's supplies, disposable masks for adults and students, and gloves. We have additionally placed orders for necessary cleaning supplies including sanitizing wipes. Most of these items have not yet arrived even though they were ordered in April or May. I have shared a plan with my school community on the cleaning process we will be implementing daily, but many of the needed materials for the process are not yet on my campus.

Systems:

As of today the following critical systems are not in place or not fully functioning

- Bus - our school received no paper bus applications and the online system is not operational. On Maui, bus services are contracted. How can the bus company plan for routes if our parents are not yet able to apply for bus service?
- Distance Learning - we will be offering a distance learning option for our families. The DOE gave the elementary schools permission to have a distance learning program and a guidance document last week. As part of their plan there is a distance learning contract that we are to use. That contract is still in draft form and under revision.
- As schools adapt to blended learning and distance learning models, the need for devices and internet access becomes critical to ensure equity for all of our students. The DOE has not been able to address this issue and schools are still not able to support all families and students.

School Planning

On June 26, 2020, the Memorandum of Understanding was released to schools. We then had one week as a staff to select a model to reopen our school. We submitted our plan on July 6, 2020 and it was approved and publicly released on July 8, 2020. The following day at the BOE meeting several plans were questioned due to interpretation of the 6' social distancing. Our school had to change our plan and so this week we are again reaching out to our parents to determine which students will be attending our school, which will choose to homeschool their children, and also to let our parents know about our distance learning option. I will be calling every family on my campus by Friday. After that I will need to adjust class lists and even change teacher assignments. I need to have this completed by Monday as my teachers report on Wednesday and our parents need to know their child's class assignment and rotation schedule.

Our teachers are expected back to school on July 29, 2020 for four days before school starts. They are having to completely reconfigure their rooms to allow for 6' social distancing. Our rooms, which were collaborative learning spaces with flexible seating options will now be wall to wall desks with 6' distancing. The new procedures that we will have to put into place will require decisions to be made **as a staff**. Some decisions, such as bell schedules must be approved per the HSTA contract. Our staff needs time to work together to create new processes and practices to ensure the health and safety of our learning 'ohana. We need to have time for PD on distance learning programs. I will still be moving teachers into new grade levels as late as Monday, those teachers will need time to learn a new curriculum.

I know that the DOE trusts that we can "make it work". They know that we are used to building the plane as we are flying it. However this is uncharted territory and mistakes made now could result in loss of lives. We are being asked to build while we are flying, but we do not even know what it is that we are flying! I am asking that the beginning of the school year be delayed for students, so that staff have time to properly plan, and that resources necessary for health and safety are in place on our campuses.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and prepare would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia Rothdeutsch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Rothdeutsch
Principal, Kamali'i Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Edward Hayward <pikihayward@yahoo.com> on behalf of Edward Hayward
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:28 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Start Date

CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Edward "Pīkī" Hayward], I am a kumu of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the date that students physically return to campus for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino is located on a small campus in South Kona. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in student enrollment, so much so that we do not have the physical space to house all of our haumana. With the implementation of social distancing, we are left wondering how our already overcrowded kula will be a safe space for our haumana and limahana. Our kula has not been given clear safety protocols, nor have all of our limahana had the opportunity to be trained on how to implement the vast amount of new expectations placed upon them for this school year.

I believe in order for a safe and successful return back to school campus and classrooms for both haumāna and staff during this challenging times, proper trained sessions will need to be conducted to ensure a clear understanding of signs and procedures without causing unwanted stress.

Mahalo nui no ke kōkua,
Edward "Pīkī" Hayward

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Macadangdang <jennifer.macadangdang@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jennifer Macadangdang
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

Aloha Board members,

I am writing this email to object to the possibility of discontinuing the teacher differential pay for special education teachers, hard-to-staff areas, and Hawaiian language immersion programs. Discontinuing this extra compensation for these teachers will be detrimental to our most at-risk students. If these differentials are not secured, it will have significant impact on our teachers who were promised this compensation. It will lead to teachers needing to seek other ways to offset the loss of pay. This will result in teachers needing to put more time into second jobs. This time will take away from the time it would be spent planning for some of our most at-risk students. As a special education teacher, it is impossible to complete all of the required demands within our contractual time. These positions require additional time to properly plan for those students, but if teachers need to obtain a second job, they will not have the extra time to ensure their students are receiving the education they need and deserve.

As a certified special education teacher, who will be entering my 4th year teaching in special education, the differential has been effective in maintaining special education teachers at my school. This is the first year that our SPED department will not be experiencing an almost complete new group of SPED teachers. For the school year 19-20, we only had 3 returning SPED teachers, out of 13 positions. This upcoming year we will be returning 12 SPED teachers, all who are certified in teaching special education. We have never returned more than 3 certified SPED teachers while I have been teaching. It is obvious that the DOE and BOE's original commitment to continuing these differentials was helpful in maintaining so many certified SPED teachers for this school year. With our current situation due to the pandemic, it is even more critical that we maintain SPED teachers who are certified. Not only is this important to ensuring that our highest at-risk students receive the best education possible, it also saves an incredible amount of time. Every year that new teachers come into a SPED position, hours and hours are spent training new teachers on procedures and protocols that must be done. Maintaining properly trained SPED teachers ensures that the time and effort used for training does not need to be repeated year after year. This allows for more efficient use of time and allows teachers to spend more time focusing on their students. It will save money in the long run.

I ask and hope that you will take this testimony into serious consideration when making the decision on teachers' differential pay. The decision made will have a significant impact on the future of our most at-risk students and our schools.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Macadangdang
Special Education teacher: Fully self-contained classroom
Ewa Makai Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Dondra Ozaki <dondraozaki@gmail.com> on behalf of Dondra Ozaki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action Item H.

Hawaii State Board of Education,

Testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii Sate Teachers Association (SY2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

For the past 17 years, I have been teaching elementary school for the Hawaii Department of Education. I have always felt that I had enough time to plan and prepare for each new school year. This year is different. As of today, July 22, 2020, because of all of the changes and uncertainty brought forth by this COVID-19 Pandemic, I am still unsure of what grade I will be teaching and if I need to prepare for in person teaching and/or distance learning. School is opening for students on August 4th. I want to return to work. I want to work with my students and watch them grow and learn in a healthy and safe environment. Even if I learn of my grade level placement today, my colleagues and I will need time to prepare our lessons, the school will need time to review and have an understanding of all of the new health and safety protocols, and discuss how we will go about doing our new normal. Teachers will need to have training in distance learning which requires much more preparation time than in person learning. Distance and in person learning teachers will need the time to collaborate and plan together so that when all students return to school we won't see gaps in learning. During the Senate hearing on the reopening of schools, Superintendent Kishimoto mentioned various online platforms that will be used and teachers will need to be trained on how to use and execute those platforms. We need more time to prepare as a school community so we can have a successful reopening.

My school administration has the monumental task of working to gather important information needed to plan for the new school year and as I write this testimony, they are diligently working to gather information regarding parent preferences for in person or distance learning so that teacher positions can be allocated accordingly. I am thankful to have a hardworking and dedicated school administration! I feel that what the department is asking of school level administration is simply unfair. There needs to be more guidance from above. While I write from the lens of my school, I have a network of friends and family members who are also educators and their schools are also experiencing the same challenges. For example, my nephew attends a small school on a neighbor island. My brother and sister-in-law are opting for distance learning. His school will be challenged with their ability to provide distance learning because their staff size is already so small. The Hawaii Department of Education claims that students will have access to 100% distance learning but nothing has been published by the department on how this option will be accessed or utilized by families. My nephew is fortunate because my parents are both retired educators who will work with him at home but not all families have that luxury.

Lt. Governor Josh Green was on the news this morning and stated that the Department of Health owes teachers more planning. The Hawaii State Teachers Association has repeatedly asked the Department of Health for written guidance on the opening of school buildings and it has not been provided. Superintendent Kishimoto also stated during the Senate hearing that teachers received training during the summer. Perhaps a very small percentage of teachers may have received it, but the extent of the training that I received was the opportunity to watch a 1 hour long distance learning lesson. There were only 8 slots available for the time period that I signed

up for. So while that particular observation was available for teachers, it was limited to a very small group. We have over 13,000 public school teachers in the state of Hawaii.

I hope you will take this testimony into consideration. I work in the trenches at the school. I know what it is going on at the school level. We are not ready. We want to return to work. We need more time to plan and prepare. We want to have a successful school reopening.

Sincerely,

Dondra Ozaki
Teacher, Ewa Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: SLKFB Bonk <sandykfb@gmail.com> on behalf of SLKFB Bonk
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; Yamanaka, Rae; elizabeth sharrock; Moana Hokoana; robin Merriam Walker
Subject: Delay Schools Opening, Please

Aloha,

I am a 70 year old middle school teacher in the vulnerable group experiencing severe anxiety about our readiness to open schools in Hawaii. I am not alone; teachers want to teach but many of us are SCARED! We are talking about life and death here.

Yes, our schools have tried to create a safe environment and I champion them for it; yet there are so many variables with over 700 people visiting our campus in one week's time and so many opportunities to spread the virus with limited ability to track it; we could have a wildfire spread in a short period of time.

- * Bus drivers in the USA have been contracting and spreading the virus.
- * Pacific Islanders, of whom many are our beloved students, are contracting the virus in California at one of the highest rates proportionally.
- * Teachers are expected to use their own sick leave benefits if they catch the coronavirus on campus, quarantine, get better and return to campus.
- * Both the DOH and DOE expect and accept that there will be incidences of the virus in our schools. This makes me very uncomfortable.
- * Please give us an option we can trust.
- * Teaching virtually is a fantastic choice, but first we must get Internet service to all our scholars. I am prepared to do it; it worked just great in our 4-week Summer 2020 Distance Learning for ELLs.

We must do everything to calm down and stop this virus now before things get out of hand. Hawaii is making a Herculean effort to stop Covid-19 by tracking, instituting quarantine and testing visitors. We have to be part of the solution not add to the problem.

Please get our kids Internet so we can work with them online during this difficult and dangerous time. Google Meets--is an effective and fantastic way to face-to-face with students and avoid exposure to the coronavirus. In this kind of dire situation we must social distance for real.

Thank you for your efforts; let wisdom and the will to do right, prevail.

Sandra Bonk
Keaau Middle School
ELA/ELL Teacher Coordinator

Testimony BOE

From: Darlene Dunston <darlene.dunston@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Darlene Dunston
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of schools

That old saying: WALKING A MILE IN MY SHOES . . . Before you decide if it is safe to be back on campus.

THIS IS A CHALLENGE TO YOU ALL'S BELIEFS REGARDING THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS.

I would like to see every single person working in the state's leadership who are involved in moving to have the schools open, spend all day in a classroom rotating with the students for the first 2 weeks of school.

Some of the same people need to catch the city bus and/or the school to a school.

According to having a Safe Learning Environment, how can the state prove that all of our campuses are Pandemic Safe?
I am a high-risk teacher and I have 2 grandchildren who are in high school and are special needs.
It is obvious that the state has not yet answered all of the HSTA questions regarding all of the needs of opening safe campuses.

All of those questions need to be answered and implemented to make sure that everyone is going to be safe.

High Schools cannot put our students in what the state is referring to as a "bubble." Students have between 4-7 different classes a day. That means 4-7 different teachers and 100s of contact with different students.

Students need to be monitored when changing classes as they walk through hallways, up and down stairs.
Then there is the monitoring of students eating lunch. They have to remove their mask to do so. During that time period, how are they to be eating and distancing themselves when most schools don't have enough cafeteria or outdoor seating for students.

Also, do the state leaders actually believe that students are going to follow the safe distancing during recesses and lunch recess. They are not going sit there and talk with one another. And there is how some of the spread will happen.

When students walk into the classroom after being exposed outside, how does the state know that they will NOT be bringing in with them the droplets of the virus? It is believe by the scientists that the smaller droplets can travel and live longer.

What about all of the supplies that is needed to keep desks, chairs, etc. virus free?

Teachers will not have enough time, nor is it their responsibility to disinfect each object in the classroom. How is the state going to keep the furniture virus free?

I want to return to my classroom and my new 9th graders. But at the same time I want to be that outgoing teacher that I have always been. My personal anxiety is super high and continues to grow each day heading towards returning to class.

I feel like a soldier going to the front lines without any weapons or shields to defend myself and all of those with me.

Who will take care of students when I get sick? Not the one or two days out with a cold etc. But quarantined for 14 days and if I get the virus then more than likely months to follow?

Subs are retired and just as high-risk as a lot of the teachers.

What will happen when students and teachers, etc. get sick or die and their families come after the state for not providing a safe learning environment?

Testimony BOE

From: SLKFB Bonk <sandylkfb@gmail.com> on behalf of SLKFB Bonk
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item H...previous email from Bonk eom

Testimony BOE

From: anoakup <anoakup@aol.com> on behalf of anoakup
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pandemic Training

What happens if a student, staff member, and or teacher tests positive and we came into contact with them? Are we covered financially for the 14 quarantined days? And if we do have to quarantine and we come back to work and it happens again, are we covered for the next round of quarantine?! I have a 1 year old at home, what if I bring it home to her or the rest of my family? So many unanswered questions that make us feel that we are unsafe to go back to work and feel that we are not a priority with all of these unanswered questions and concerns.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Uilani Uwekoolani-Aarona <uwekoolani@gmail.com> on behalf of Uilani Uwekoolani-Aarona
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

This is my testimony in regards to the discontinuance for differential pay for hard to staff positions and the concern of opening schools on schedule, Aug. 4, 2020.

My name is Reba Uilani Uwekoolani-Aarona. I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion Program teacher at King Kekaulike High School in Maui County. I teach grades 9-12.

In regards to the first issue - The call to discontinue the pay differential for hard to staff positions - I strongly OBJECT to the discontinuance of this pay differential. The awarding of the pay differential was the first thing the BOE and/or the DOE has done to show they value the teachers working in those areas. Many of them never teach the same lesson more than once because they teach multi-line and multi-grade classes. The workload is 3x harder than a general education teacher, teaching a one-grade level subject. They deserve the pay, not to mention we need the retention!

In regards to the second issue - the opening of schools on Aug. 4 - I strongly OBJECT TO OPENING SCHOOLS ON AUG. 4TH TO STUDENTS! It is NOT safe. There is no other place, besides hotels, that has the number of people in one place, as schools do. Some of them upward of 1,000 students. We all know, they will NOT social distance, they will NOT wear a mask all day, they WILL share food and drinks with each other. If one student gets COVID-19, it will take out communities! Teachers don't feel safe. I don't feel safe! My 81 yr old mother lives with

us, and my 10 yr old son is on immune suppressant medication. My job may put their lives in danger!! I didn't become a teacher to put my family's lives in danger.

--

Me ka ha'aha'a,
U'ilani Uwekoolani-Aarona

Testimony BOE

From: Kadie Lyn Kurokawa <kdhoops808@gmail.com> on behalf of Kadie Lyn Kurokawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE TESTIMONY

Dear BOE

I will be entering the 5th grade at Mililani Waena. I am excited to be a 5th grader. But I am also very worried and scared.

I know that our teachers are working very hard to plan for school to begin. My mom is a teacher, so I see what she is going through. They are rushing and making sure we will be safe. Our health and safety is too important to rush into decisions. I want to be able to go to school and feel SAFE.

I want to go to school to be able to learn but not worry that I might get sick or come home and make my family sick! Please consider starting school for us later so my mom and other teachers have time to get plans set.

Sincerely,
Kadie Kurokawa

Testimony BOE

From: Shea Harper <sheaharper@hotmail.com> on behalf of Shea Harper
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

From
Shea Harper
4th Grade Teacher at Haiku Elementary
Parent of a student at Haiku Elementary

Testimony for [July 23, 2020](#) Meeting of Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Aloha,

My name is Shea Harper . I am submitting my testimony on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

Trainings that were offered were optional at best and none were officially offered. People who wanted to learn on their own time and could afford to do so had to take their own initiatives.

Our last principal at Haiku Elementary left to take a position on Oahu to be nearer her aging parents. Our school was left rudderless during an extremely unsettling time. Therefore, several of us stepped up to help with ideas and planning to help with reopening efforts. We again had to meet on our own times and with our own initiatives to try to lay the groundwork for a safe reopening at Haiku, all volunteer efforts.

Almost every teacher I know is a planner and a self-directed learner. We work to be prepared and do our very best for our students, even when we are working well beyond our contracted hours. I've always said that we teachers are philanthropists at heart, however, we don't have the wealth to provide endowments or scholarships, we just give of ourselves.

However, we should not have to give of ourselves at the risk of our lives and our families' and friends' lives. We are not doctors, nurses, medical professionals. We should not be asked to go back to work with some of the most uncertain circumstances just because families need to get back to work. We are not daycare providers. We are educators. We do not want to NOT WORK. We want to BE SAFE and provide our very safest and best educational experience for our keiki.

We are educators who don't even have the same precautions that the grocery store clerks have. We do not have plexiglas shields, face shields, 6 foot distancing stickers, limits to the amount of people we come in contact with. To go try on glasses at a Costco Warehouse, temperatures are taken, questions are asked. We do not have even those same assurances and we are going to be with people from many different families, areas, walks of life, etc. for long periods of the day. And it's not just the teachers and the students-there are Educational Assistants, Recess and Lunch Supervisors, Cafeteria Workers, Office Staff, Substitutes, and all of the families belonging to each of these stakeholders that will be affected if we don't open appropriately and safely.

As I mentioned before, I am the parent of 2 middle schoolers. I know I am going to need to be at my own school campus every day, but with the blended learning models, my own children likely will not be at school every day. We live in a rural area and my children are the first to get on the bus and the last to get off the bus, spending about an hour and a half daily in a school bus. How many contacts will they meet just in the trips to school and back? What guidance have we received as parents? None.

This year, as with any year, we will have 4 paid days to start planning for this school year. Those days are never enough to get everything ready. Teachers and staff work well beyond contracted hours, on weekends, and holidays in a normal school year. This year there has been no guidance from the DOE on how we can safely open our schools. It has been left to schools to decide, and my own school and my children's school both have new principals, which brings a whole new situation to the table.

As one of the first districts in the country to return to school, 4 days is absolutely insufficient to help us make our safest, best informed decisions and plans to keep all school stakeholders safe. I, along with many parents, staff, educators, implore you, to delay the start of school in the way of the status quo. We teachers and staff can go back to work [on August 4](#), but please give us more time to make the safest and best decisions to open schools safely.

Allow us the time to put procedures in place that shopping malls, restaurants, and gyms have been allowed to do. We need more training, time for our input, and respect of our opinions to prevent the spread, illnesses, and death due to Covid 19. Give us the time to do this without having to scramble with guesswork and no guidelines. If there are no mandatory or consistent guidelines, how can any steps we take be reliable? Let us, the people who are entrusted with educating and raising our keiki, do our very best to make sure we are opening our schools with the safety and excellence every person demands and deserves.

Mahalo for your attention, consideration, and time.

Sincerely,

Shea Harper

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Lum <jennifer.r.o.lum@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Lum
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Proposed Phased Reopening of schools this fall.

We, the educators, school staff, family, community members, health officials, Propose a Phased Reopening of the Hawaii Department of Education, Schools, and other school-related services. The movement from one phase to another should be determined only by the level of COVID-19 disease spread and should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy.

The three main Phases must include an option for parents to keep their kids at home and be provided full online schooling conducted by REAL teachers.

Phase I should last until a threshold of at a minimum of 1 month rolling average ≤ 3 new cases/day and be Fully Remote with no option for in-school learning.

Phase II should be a hybrid that schools have already designed for the upcoming school year once the threshold of at a minimum of 3 months rolling average ≤ 3 new cases per day with a smaller percentage of students on-campus and others remote with a rotating schedule.

Phase III should be a return to in-school instruction but with the option of remaining fully remote based on the families' wishes.

In this way, we will be able to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school. So, for example in Phase II, if a school has a student test positive then the impact will be on less than half of the other students and staff, than if we just open the schools completely right away.

We feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different.

Our greatest concern is for our teachers, their families, and the families of our children. Although it has become clear that COVID-19 generally has little (known) impact on children in the near term, we simply don't yet have the information about how the disease spreads among children that we need in order to make good decisions. Additionally, we don't know the long-term impact of the virus on the human body. Until we learn more I strongly support the phased return to school as outlined above in order to mitigate the risks about which we are currently aware.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Lum
Ewa Beach

Testimony BOE

From: April Gragas <april.gragas@gmail.com> on behalf of April Gragas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to testify on Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am deeply concerned that there was no training given to school staff and families for how to safely return to school. In order for everyone to fully understand what safety measures are required, what steps must be taken to safely teach students and get 100% buy-in and agreement from all staff that they will follow these protocols the DOE needs to provide proper training.

ALL stakeholders need to fully understand what is being required and asked of them-a memo home to parents that many won't read is not sufficient and is dangerous! Everyone needs specific plans to follow and trainings on how to fully go online if needed again. Everyone also needs a chance to talk about their concerns & fears and have them properly heard and addressed before they can be expected to feel safe about returning to school in person.

The teachers and other staff will be having prolonged contact with many individuals outside of their household unit, exponentially increasing their risk! This is unacceptable! These students will then return home only to potentially expose their families to danger. Again, not acceptable!

I urge the BOE and DOE to postpone the start of school so that ALL stakeholders have time to be trained and properly supported to open schools safely & properly.

Thank you for your consideration.

April Gragas
Concerned Community Member

Testimony BOE

From: Randall Miura <randall.miura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Randall Miura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Thursday, July 23, 2020
Attachments: BOE Testimony - Nanakuli_Waianae.pdf

Testimony: General Business Meeting, Thursday, July 23, 2020

From: Nanakuli/Waianae Complex Principals

Subject: Relating to the Reopening of Schools

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Nānākuli-Waiʻanae Complex Area Administrators**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with deep concern and careful consideration that we take the extraordinary step of submitting this testimony to you. We strongly agree with the need to reopen our schools for our keiki, but our concerns for our communities' safety and our ability to carry out our plans compel us to share the following with you.

As Nānākuli-Waiʻanae Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to our following areas of concern:

Direction and Communication:

- We appreciate the inclusive and compassionate intention of our leadership.
 - We acknowledge that this is a time of unprecedented challenge for the DOE.
 - We understand that no plan can be perfect and adjustments are necessary.
- Our struggles with moving forward in this admittedly challenging pandemic are these:
 - There have been announcements of directives which later morph into recommendations which result in chaos and uncertainty.
 - Offices within the DOE have provided redundant and sometimes conflicting guidance, especially around CDC-oriented responses, and leaves us unsure of which document upon which to rely. We need our Offices to be in sync.
 - HSTA has had more input on serious issues than administrators.
 - Communication has not been consistent. We often hear of new directions, guidance, and procedures from HSTA or the news media first.
 - With the pressure to reopen very soon, we still lack guidance, especially around SPED procedures, and will not have the time we need to carry out the guidance once it finally arrives.
 - We hear over and over that 'we are awaiting AG approval'.
 - We appreciate the trust placed in us to make decisions at the school level but to be effective we need parameters, consistent and timely guidance, and structure.
 - The pieces simply do not fit together as we will try to show in the following examples.

Personnel:

- The FFCRA allows staff without child care or who cares for someone at risk to take up to 12 weeks of leave at two-thirds pay or more. We are woefully unprepared to deal with having up to 4,000 teachers take advantage of this leave. **With only two weeks to prepare for reopening, administrators still have received no guidance, no procedures, and no answers to questions.**
 - What if a significant number of teachers exercise their right to execute FFCRA leave, extended sick leave, extended leave without pay, resignation, or retirement; does the DOE have a plan to support schools and principals? Does the DOE have an applicant pool to fill positions for the opening of school on Aug. 4? What if individual schools face significant staff shortages? Is there a process to decide if that school opens (or remains open)? Even in a full distance learning mode, how will instruction be delivered with a reduced teaching staff?
 - We are often short of substitutes, especially in our hard-to-fill area. How do we maintain normal instructional and supervision operations if there are no substitute teachers available? How do we prepare should we be short staffed? What is the balance between being able to safely stay open and having to send students home during the day? It is difficult to cancel and send elementary school students home once they have arrived in school. Does the DOE have contingency plans and supports to prevent this from occurring?
 - This should have been sent out to teachers weeks ago so we would have some idea of its impact and planned contingencies. **Instead, we are deeply concerned that we will not be staffed and able to open school safely.**
 - We have never been responsible at the complex level for managing the substitute teacher budget as teachers receive 18 days per year of sick leave which can be accumulated and used when needed. This benefit is a reserve managed by the State, yet we have been told we will be given a 'substitute teacher' budget and told that it is up to us to manage it and absorb its attendant and unnecessary workload. Sick leave is like health care: Large entities benefit from scale, small ones are vulnerable.
 - This is an extremely short sighted budgetary practice. We have NO ability to manage this fund as sick leave days are a contractual right. Are we expected to pay for subs out of our operating budget when the funds run out? And run out they will if teachers are taking FFCRA leave.

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Principals are responsible and accountable for all aspects of their school operations. As of this date, there has been limited support and resources to plan for and fund a safe full school reopening (not just a limited ELO program). This includes explicit guidance, training, supplies, and a plan to maintain and sustain supplies for daily operations.

- The DOE has agreed in an MOU with HSTA that teachers are not responsible for cleaning anything. This severely restricts the school's ability to maintain a disinfected environment because teachers have always been responsible for maintaining cleanliness in their own classrooms. This includes teaching children to clean up after themselves as well as maintaining their room as they see fit. Administrators have been responsible for floors and trash daily as well as yearly deep cleaning. **We are not equipped to disinfect classrooms and all high touch surfaces on a rolling basis throughout the day, yet that is the promise that has been made by Leadership.** We have been trying to order supplies and it would have been helpful to have vendors vetted for product compliance and expedited through the HCE process.
- Conflicting guidance and communications on the use of face masks
 - DOE/HSTA MOU allows for teachers to make the decision on mask usage in the classroom. However, school administrators are responsible and accountable to all aspects of the school operations. Are principals no longer accountable for the use of masks in the classroom?
- Custodians, SHAs, Cafe, and Office staff have not received any direct training (from either DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Principals are pulling information from the CDC website. Shouldn't the DOE research, interpret, and provide clear and timely communications and training for Health and Safety standards and expectations?
- No guidance on documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides) and any new procedures or changes.
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult "bubbles", including on the bus, in case DOH asks us for this information.
 - Steps or procedures on what to do should a student or staff member be identified as positive or in contact with someone identified as positive. What happens to the students that were in the same class as that student or teacher? Does everyone need to quarantine? Are teachers still responsible to provide instruction during this time? If not who is? Are students still required to participate in instruction during this time?
 - What are the communication protocols?
 - What are the guidelines and processes for individual classrooms and/or individual school closures?

Lack of Safety and Health Supplies:

- Little guidance provided on approved disinfectants and cleaning supplies beyond the CDC website reference, leaving room for possible misinterpretation.
- Support not provided to ensure that vendors will supply hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc. in a timely manner. Although it was ordered back in March, many schools have not had their supplies come in.
- Have not received guidance on what type of PPEs are required for staff that work with students with challenging behaviors and health needs. No meaningful PPE supplies

received by the schools, or a plan to sustain such consumable supplies.

- We have not received the medical grade PPE for our most at risk SPED staff/students.

Distance Learning:

- Initially, the State's plan stated that parents who wanted to opt out of returning to campus were expected to homeschool. There was a reaction to this and suddenly schools are now expected to provide an online, virtual option for these students and families with no guidance, support or funding.
- **The timeliness of information that we have received from leadership has made it very difficult to make the best informed decisions, being inclusive with our school and community, on how to plan for the safe and effective opening of the school year.**
- Schools do not have information on possible distance learning curriculum options to make an informed decision. Neither is there time for schools to review and vet the different options to make an informed and collaborative school decision. The schools also do not have the necessary funds to fund an online curriculum program as it was not included in the Academic Financial Plan developed at the end of the previous year.
- Schools lack the money to purchase programs for virtual learning as well as pay for additional personnel to monitor and properly support 100% distance learning students.
- What type of virtual/distance learning platforms are available for our Hawaiian Language Immersion Program students?

“Ohana Bubble”:

- We take full responsibility for curriculum and instruction and understand that creativity and exploration are important in order to improve.
- We take responsibility for implementing all directives and guidance around health and safety given to us by DOH and DOE.
 - The Ohana Bubble is a concept and not a directive that can be followed as described. We have received neither guidance nor explicit expectations around its implementation.
 - We see many difficulties with maintaining such bubbles as described in the news. The Ohana Bubble concept impacts student scheduling, student services delivered, student placement, and operational schedules such recess and lunch. It is complicated by our schools' logistics and drop in service providers, etc.

Professional Development/Training:

- No schedule/menu of available training for the first nine days for teachers
- Who will properly train substitute teachers in distance learning, health and safety protocols, and DOE expectations? When would this occur? Will they be compensated
- We will need to be trained on new distance and/or virtual learning platforms. Limited voluntary training was provided during the teacher's summer vacation. Are there more planned? What is the plan?
- Additional time needed for Tech PD with teachers of various comfort levels and skill sets
- Schools need time to provide technology in-service for parents/guardians. Families need time to process the information and have opportunities for follow up. Some of our students' guardians are their grandparents who need greater assistance with technology.

- Health and Safety training for Administrators, teachers, custodians, and health aides.

Food Service:

- Limited guidance or support from School Food Service (SFS) on the implementation of school meals. We still don't know if/when we will have drive-through meal service.
- No additional support to be able to distribute meals with social distancing. Many schools have only a few meal clerks and associated hardware (scanners) that allowed for normal operations. To maintain social distancing, meals need to be distributed in a way to reduce congestion. No additional supports or procedures provided.
- Limited information and no additional support to provide Grab and Go meals for students not scheduled to be on campus.
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is grab n go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.

Student Transportation:

- No guidance and expectations communicated to schools and parents
- Is it confirmed that school buses will be able to provide student transportation as requested by schools? No verification provided.
- Will student transportation for IDEA students be in place for the start of the school year? No verification as of this date.
- What are the expectations and rules for students riding the bus? Schools and parents have not been informed.
- For possible back tracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks if a student doesn't have one?
- Has any communication on bus transportation procedures been communicated to schools and parents?

Substitute Teachers:

- What happens when there are not enough substitute teachers?
- Has the DOE updated the substitute teacher pool? What does that look like in a complex area?
- Who will train the substitute teachers in the new model and procedures? Who will train them in managing the online learning of students if they are in a long term position?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave and we are unable to maintain social distancing on that day in school?
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teachers and sub teachers report to school?
- Will additional devices be provided to substitutes if the teacher is out due to childcare and takes their device with them? The substitute will need access to the programs the teacher is using, is it expected the teacher will share the login information or are we required to provide the sub their own due to security and FERPA?

Additional Guidance Needed:

- Personnel issues (Certificated & Classified)-Some schools are still waiting for approval to

hire these vacant positions. Positions were purchased in June, but they still haven't been processed and cleared for hiring of personnel.

- Although this process has been put on hold for some position categories, it has been ridiculous to have to submit a 2 page request for authorization to get a substitute custodian or substitute EA or Meal Clerk on the substitute list.
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- The "Opt In" form for online, virtual learning option is not officially available yet, so schools have already created and sent out their own.
- We are still waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, Least Restrictive Environment Placement, how to determine a plan in the event of closure with parents, and are being left with not enough time to hold all of these meetings.
- We also need direction on how to deal with a SPED student whose parent requests online, virtual learning in terms of which services need to be offered.
- Ch. 19 guidance on addressing student offenses committed during virtual instruction.

We are committed to Giving Hope, Acting with Kindness, and Working Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. We agree that students need to be in school. In order to open in a safe manner, we request input into a plan that has specific health and safety protocols, answers to the most serious issues raised in our testimony, and contingency plans in the event of unsafe conditions on campus.

We thank you for your consideration and support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nānākuli-Wai'anae Complex Area Administrators

Randall Miura, Leihoku Elementary
Suzie Lee, Ma'ili Elementary
Wade Araki, Makaha Elementary
Christine Udarbe, Nānāikapono Elementary
Lisa Higa, Nānākuli Elementary
Darin Pili'aloa, Nānākuli High and Intermediate
Ray Pikelny, Wai'anae Elementary
Disa Hauge, Wai'anae High School
John Wataoka, Wai'anae Intermediate

Testimony BOE

From: Sui Lan Gomez <suilangomez@gmail.com> on behalf of Sui Lan Gomez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to oppose agenda item G - The discontinuance of hard to staff and special education differentials.

Aloha Members of our Board of Education,

I am writing in favor of keeping pay differentials just recently awarded this January 2020.

I am opposed to Agenda Item G - the discontinuance of hard to staff and special education differentials.

As a newly single individual, having gone through an unanticipated change in marital status, I find myself in the position of supporting myself in Hawaii's tough economic housing landscape. I am extremely grateful and fortunate to have qualified to take advantage of the DOE's Teacher Housing program, though it has a time limit. I am trying to juggle my living costs, debts incurred from transitioning to single status and savings to be able to afford the costs of housing in the real world, once my tenure in the state's Teacher Housing program has ended.

The differential I received this January has been a godsend in helping me to make ends meet in my personal finances. Without the differential, I may have to explore other sources of income to be able to meet my financial goals by the time my tenure in Teacher Housing has ended. Any time I would need to spend working at another job would impact my time regarding planning and preparation for teaching, especially with the many new components involved in this particular 2020-21 school year, new curriculum, new protocols for on campus teaching, health considerations and risks, etc.

Coming from a school that is "hard to staff," I and my colleagues registered a great sense of relief, appreciation and boost in our morale, as hard-to-staff campuses place added pressure upon existing staff to fill in or do without - those duties which would normally be borne by other staff, had their positions been properly filled.

I urge you to consider keeping the pay differentials, especially in this very trying time for teachers - who now have many new and difficult demands placed upon them, navigating the new pandemic/school landscape. We need to do whatever we can to keep and strengthen our existing dedicated teachers...which will eventually attract more teachers.

Mahalo for all of your support and your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Sui Lan Gomez
Grade 1 Teacher
Waimea Elementary School
Honoka'a Complex

Testimony BOE

From: Barbara Bloemke <bbloemke@gmail.com> on behalf of Barbara Bloemke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha Hawaii State Board of Education,

Attached is testimony regarding the reopening of school on August 4, 2020.

Mahalo,
Barbara Bloemke

 [BOE testimony](#)

7/22/2020

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Barbara Bloemke and I am a 21 year employee of the Hawaii DOE. Today I am writing to you to express my deep concerns over bringing our children back into the classroom on August 4, 2020 without what I believe to be a clear, comprehensive plan for addressing the safety of everyone in our schools. We've been told that the lack of tourism will help ensure our safety as we begin our blended school schedules, but months of no tourism haven't eliminated the double digit numbers of new cases we have occurring on a daily basis. We hear that the Department of Health has been working closely with the DOE on ensuring the safe reopening of schools. They are working on response plans to outbreaks, and reporting protocols to address the inevitable. I'm sure that a great deal of our half-day trainings during the first two weeks of school will be devoted to informing us (school staff) about these plans, protocols, and safe practices but this training should be done before we begin with students. It doesn't matter whether we have the social distancing & sanitizing practices in place, all teachers should be confident in the protocols related to safety throughout their individual facility before greeting any child at the door of a classroom.

I am also concerned about the backup plan for teachers that become ill and are unable to be at school. We already have a shortage of Substitute teachers and for the few that we have managed to retain, are they going to be prepared to step in to possibly fulfill the role for an extended period of time? It is not just current certified teachers who need to be prepared for this opening of the school year but also our back support, substitute teachers. I believe the state needs to offer these employees some training in COVID practices, protocols and procedures prior to the opening of schools as well. There are so many new and unknown pieces to education in the classroom at this time that what the students need more than anything are teachers who can confidently assure them they are safe as they begin the separation process from months with their parents. I urge you to consider delaying this interaction between students and teachers until we can at least confidently keep our students safe and give their parents true peace of mind.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Barbara Bloemke
Elementary Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Pauahi Ah Tou <pauahi54@gmail.com> on behalf of Pauahi Ah Tou
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay students return to campus

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

Re: Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Dear CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Felicia, I am a Makua (parent) of students who attend Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino on Hawai'i Island. I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the date that students physically return to campus for the 2020-2021 school year. Our kula has not been given clear safety protocols, nor have all of our limahana had the opportunity to be properly trained on how to implement the vast amount of new expectations placed upon them for a safe return this school year.

Our 'ohana deeply feels that our keiki should not return to kula until it's safe; realistically speaking, that would be when social distancing is no longer required. A classroom should not be limited or bound by "social distance" COVID-19 related protocols. The right time to return to campus would be the same time a mask or social distancing is no longer needed.

My keiki are under the ages of nine years old. From speaking with my keiki about what's happening in the world right now, I am not confident they would effectively learn in a classroom. Their young minds don't understand exactly why they will be separated from their classmates and friends; distracted by a face mask they will remove every chance they get.

Please don't force 'ohana like ours to make difficult decisions about our keiki's education, just because officials can't make figure out better solutions to move forward.

Me ka ha'aha'a

Ka 'Ohana Espinoza

Testimony BOE

From: Malia Busby <malia.busby@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Malia Busby
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: AGAINST Re-Opening Schools Now

Aloha,

I am a highly qualified, tenured 2nd-grade teacher on Molokai. I am firmly against the re-opening of schools at this time. It is not safe, not conducive to the adequate delivery of standards-based education, and will have a negative impact on the social and emotional well-being of our students.

From the moment our students step onto the bus, the social distancing measures to keep them safe will be compromised. How will they be kept 6 feet apart when entering the bus? How will they be monitored to ensure their masks stay on during the entire bus ride? What about when they exit the bus? How will they be kept 6ft apart? They won't be. "Bubbles" will be popped before students even enter the campus. And that is just at entry on day one. Pretending there will be intact bubbles throughout each day is ludicrous. I can appreciate fantasy fiction within English Language Arts, but in this very real life and death pandemic? No.

With half the class being taught virtually at a time, there is no way to deliver a standards-based curriculum effectively. Parents are not teachers. Many have both parents working. Who

will oversee student learning at home? Who will troubleshoot inevitable tech issues? How will we know that work submitted has been done without adult assistance? How will we enforce attendance? This means no RTI groups for differentiation. How will we effectively address the gaps? How will we issue authentic grades? Where will we find the time to teach all the subjects in an even shorter school day/week? We can't. We will essentially have to water down the curriculum, as well as the safety precautions, in order to "open our economy". Teachers are not babysitters!!!

Socially and emotionally, with re-opening at this time, we are subjecting our youth to a major shock. Masks eliminate the ability to read social cues. Shields and thermometers place barriers between everyone. They all have to be facing the same direction. They can't play on the playground equipment, can't use balls, jump ropes, or any equipment which is shared. Hugs are not allowed either. So basically, effective communication and collaboration are off-limits. Everything will have to be constantly sanitized before and after use. They can't eat together in the cafeteria, or attend assemblies, or work in groups. How do we build these crucial relationships then? We don't. We can't. The only relationship we will foster is a distanced one. They might as well be at home.

For those of you who have never actually taught in a classroom, PLEASE HEAR US TEACHERS.

It is not physically, educationally nor emotionally safe for our precious keiki to return to school right now.

Please put human life above money.

Mahalo,

Malia Busby

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Testimony BOE

From: HaYn Ohana <haynohana31@gmail.com> on behalf of HaYn Ohana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; kamaliileilani14@gmail.com
Cc: Eddie Entendencia Jr.
Subject: Testimony

State of Hawai'i Board of Education & Department of Education:

This isn't the time to put the President's threats to take away funding before the compassion of true humanity. Your teachers...OUR teachers are seriously concerned and the BOE & DOE are not listening! The teachers were the faces of comfort & relief in the start of the pandemic seeping into Hawai'i. They had the calm voices saying, "Hey kids let's keep going on line!" It was a welcomed distraction in my home with keiki in 5th grade, Gr. K. I only had to educate my pre-school aged mo'opuna. Parents have the same concerns.

The major problem has already been given a name: Coronavirus a.k.a. COVID-19.

Spin-off Problems:

1. No guarantee of 'Zero' COVID-19 contractions to students, faculty and staff at all schools.
2. Increased medical bills IF there are COVID-19 positive cases coming from schools once they open.
NOTE: I would want positive cases from schools to be publicly reported on the news. Also, who's responsible for paying those bills? It shouldn't be the people saying we shouldn't open schools right now...which are a lot of teachers and parents.
3. My oldest grandchild's school gave mom a choice in June to do "distance learning" OR return to campus. Mom chose distance learning. In July the tables turned. I told mom to check with the school again. She was told things were changing, despite her decision. This is an obvious sign of unpreparedness and that President Trumps threat not to fund schools affect the educational hierarchy.
4. My classmate posted after a virtual meeting with his child's school, that the "new measuring" technique has been implemented there. Apparently the distance between students' desks are measured from the center of 1 desk to the center of adjacent desks to the left and right. What? That's not how stores have been measuring 6ft distances in their aisles and at their check stands. I'm starting to see the connection to the reports of Hawai'i having the lowest education rating across the U.S.

My Suggested Solution:

Go ahead and continue to fit the schools for protection against the spread of this pandemic. It means the schools will be ready to receive everyone when it is safer for them to return...that time though, is not now. We haven't even passed the flu season. We're almost 2 months into the hurricane 🌀 season at this point in time.

Build an online homeschool structure for our teachers and students. Whatever online structure UH uses for online courses is what all Hawai'i schools should be using. If this pandemic has proven anything it's that we need an online based, distance learning system in every school, at every grade level.

I am aware of families that don't have someone to stay home with the keiki. Those are the kids who would need the traditional education method. Has the BOE worked with the Teacher's Union to see if there are teachers

willing to work on campus? This is the "options age." It doesn't have to be one or the other. Some teachers teach from home and some on campus. The main focus is they are ESSENTIAL! Far more than the Superintendent, BOE or DOE. The keiki and the teachers are the priority. Everyone else gets paid because of them.

Testimony BOE

From: corinne shinn <cyscokids@icloud.com> on behalf of corinne shinn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:40 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Oppose the re-opening on 8/4/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a special education teacher. Due to the inconsistencies and misinformation provided by the DOE, and above all, lack of concern for the safety of students and all school employees, I have decided to retire. I am not willing to put my life and those of others, especially our little ones, in jeopardy. This virus has a long reach and does not discriminate. Knowing the ease at which this virus spreads, should there be someone who gets sick with Covid at my school with connection to my class, I will feel as if I am responsible for their illness, forbid a loss.

Questions that have arisen in my mind since this ongoing, back-and-forth discussion on school reopening are:

1. Why are there stringent safety protocols for establishments such as stores and bars, but none for schools?
2. Why was a proclamation made for everyone to wear a mask whether indoors or outdoors, but no ruling on the wearing of masks by EVERYONE in school?
3. What is the protocol for students who refuse to wear a mask and demonstrate unsafe behaviors?
4. Why is it that a 6 feet distance is considered safe for everyone, but it took HSTA negotiation to establish that students need to be 6 feet distanced for safety?
5. Why are teachers required to go into an unsafe working environment without a choice and without stringent safety precautions?
6. Why are teachers not getting paid hazard pay but getting pay cuts?
7. Why are teachers expected to work and take courses and workshops during their off time, without pay?
8. Why are teachers expected to know how to teach distance without training?

I have gone through distance learning during the 4th quarter of last school year. As a veteran teacher of over 20 years, I found it difficult to research and navigate through various programs to find out which worked for my students while implementing and providing online instruction to my students.

The DOE stated that the 4th quarter lessons were enrichment activities. However, students who had special needs were provided with work that impacted their progress reports and extensive data collection was required of us, teachers. More training is necessary to promote effective distance learning. As stated, teachers were thrown into a situation that they were unfamiliar with and lacked guidance from district resources and the DOE.

As I, myself, a grandmother with school-age grand children, I implore you to postpone the re-opening of school for the safety of all. This decision will significantly impact EVERYONE in the community.

Sincerely,
A concerned teacher and grandmother

Testimony BOE

From: Leona Kassel <leonakassel@gmail.com> on behalf of Leona Kassel
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:40 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony-- General Business

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am writing as a community member, educator, and parent concerned about potential cuts to teacher salaries and the hard to staff differentials (agenda item VI.G.).

In this moment of multidimensional crisis, I urge you to make decisions about our state's education priorities with justice and resilience in mind. Hawai'i has allowed a chronic teacher shortage to fester and underfunded teacher salaries to persist for far too long. The deprioritization of our public schools has contributed to the precarious position that we find ourselves in today, a situation where we have inadequately resourced schools attempting to reopen amidst a global pandemic. I urge you to unequivocally reject any pay cuts to teacher salaries, including the hard to staff differentials.

We are in a critical moment when inequities are being further exacerbated at the precise time when our most vulnerable communities need to be building resiliency. We cannot be morally complicit in the simultaneous defunding of public schools juxtaposed with a further enriching of America's billionaires. Many of these very billionaires own property in Hawai'i. It is a moral travesty that we allow underfunded public schools to lie neglected in the shadows of multi-million dollar luxury homes. It is past time to insist that the property owner's of Hawai'i, in particular the owners of multi-million dollar luxury homes, contribute to our public school system. Are you considering initiatives that will increase access to equitable educational opportunities and community resiliency, such as a property tax for education?

All of Hawai'i's children deserve access to exceptional public schools, regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status, it is a fundamental component of our communities and our democracy that we must prioritize. As a public school graduate, I can say with certainty that the most significant factor in my education was the quality of my teachers. We need you to advocate for the stable educational resources that our keiki deserve by prioritizing education funding. We need you to reject cuts to teacher salaries and education funding. Our students are counting on leadership with integrity at this critical moment in history and I urge you to protect our public schools that are so essential to the strong and resilient communities required to overcome current unprecedented challenges.

Sincerely,
Leona Kassel

Testimony BOE

From: David Grupp <dgrupp@waimea.k12.hi.us> on behalf of David Grupp
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:41 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: MOU, hard to staff

HIDOE,

I want to address "gaps" in what has been identified in the current MOU and training / detailed documentation obligations that have not met my interpretation of execution at this time.

I have NOT received training that supports safe operation on campus with teachers and students present.

Prior to the MOU, I communicated with principal, acting vice principal, anyone involved in the summer school program that was offered at my campus and stated that a significant effort could and should be made during the summer program that would determine effective logistics that comply with social distance, masks, transitioning from gathering to non-gathering scenarios for distributing meals, and how to approach "distance" teaching / learning.

Teachers need to plan, practice and improve the onsite logistics changes that will keep all onsite personnel / students safe in our new virus conscious world.

Students attending summer programs would have had the chance to practice these new and vital behaviors.

We can not expect families and students to show up and "just know" what to do.

We are in a situation of needing a new "drill" to teach students, as we have in case of a fire. The problem is we are essentially already "on fire" and the DOE, sans support of the DOH is asking teachers to train students on this new "drill" while the building is already "on fire" .

I have not been invited to participate in any training that supports this, voluntary or otherwise.

If you want teachers to volunteer for such professional development, invite and include us early and often. I am more likely to participate in saving \$ for DOE if I am invited this way.

I want to be effective at my job, what ever job that is. DOH, CDC, some entity that is NOT conflicted by political pressure, please provide quality, science based best practices for virus safe educational setting and I will WORK my guts out !

There is also the topic of "hard to staff" differential.

Loss of this will absolutely promote my moving to a different career. Not just to an easier to staff campus location. Living in the smaller communities comes with many limiting conditions for my students and for my professional interests. This means I have to fill the gap for my students as a teacher.

Small isolated communities struggle to comprehend the needs , expectations, demands of the 21st century that public education is expected to prepare young people for. Further this has a direct effect on island residents LEAVING the state for better employment and incomes. Differential pay for hard to staff IS compensation for reaching the extra "yard" and bringing the outside world in to focus for our students, and in my perfect world, fostering confidence that this state, even our small, isolated communities have resources and riches to cultivate and protect that can become the new industries Hawaii desperately needs to develop in order to recover and thrive from development of not only visitor industry.

If HIDOE does not value the mindset for circular economies and the richness that well educated citizens who remain and rebuild our state as adults have, then pay cuts and furloughs will guarantee that the status quo will continue. One industry, one source of prosperity and ONE chance (in a million) to recover.

Or... bet on better pay acquiring and keeping better teachers, who generate better skilled and capable citizens who keep Hawaii for Hawaii residents .

I am NOT FAT !! Teachers are not "the fat" for budget cuts to trim.

David Grupp

Testimony BOE

From: kim l pottorff <808kim.p.is@gmail.com> on behalf of kim l pottorff
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:41 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening Schools

To whom it may concern:

I, Kim L. Pottorff, parent of two students in the Hawai'i Public School System; give this written testimony to the BOE concerning the reopening of the schools. I oppose the reopening of schools on Aug. 4, 2020.

I feel there has not been enough planning to reopen safely. There has been little information about how students and schools will maintain a safe environment while open.

Some unanswered questions I have are as follows:

Will the schools have guidelines for disinfecting the classrooms/desks before each period?

Will the schools provide the needed components to disinfecting the classrooms?

Will the schools provide PPE for students that arrive at school without or provide PPE that may need replacing while student is on campus?

Will the schools provide PPE for teachers and staff?

How often will restrooms be cleaned? What is the minimum amount of restrooms that are required per number of students on campus?

What does the "school/classroom" bubble look like at the high school level? Students change classrooms and student peers multiple times in one day.

Teachers and staff across the board have NOT had adequate meaningful training in any of the areas of distant learning or protocols for safe handling of PPE or lack of it.

Hawai'i should delay reopening of schools until these and many more questions are answered. Please reconsider the current decision to open schools Aug. 4th.

Mahalo,
Kim L. Pottorff

Testimony BOE

From: jaymie kamaka <jaymiekamaka777@gmail.com> on behalf of jaymie kamaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:43 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

Re: Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jaymie Kamaka, I am a makua of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino. I am submitting testimony in support of continuing the pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Located in South Kona, Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino is the only public K-12 Hawaiian medium school on Hawai'i Island, and only one of two in the state. Every year it is a challenge to fully staff our kula with the kumu and limahana needed for our keiki. Not only is it difficult to find kumu that can 'olelo Hawai'i as well as teach academic content, but we are also located in a geographic area that is hard to staff.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua, Jaymie Kamaka

Testimony BOE

From: Leinz <leinz259@gmail.com> on behalf of Leinz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:44 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening up the schools

Sent from my iPhone

I am a special education teacher and the opening of the schools would not be wise at this point and time. Not to mention we are not all trained for all situations that may arise. I am not prepared for this up coming year opening on the 4th. I would be if there wasn't a pandemic, but we live in a dangerous and uncertain time. By saying that our approach in reopening the schools should be purposeful and intentional Reopening so that the Teachers, Parents, and Students are confident in the safety and the learning of all involved. I am saying that we should wait to reopen the schools in the state of Hawaii until we are better prepared!!!

Testimony BOE

From: Noel Richardson <tatsukoa@gmail.com> on behalf of Noel Richardson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:45 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Kailua Complex Principal Testimony.pdf

Name: Noel Richardson Principal, Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate School submitting on behalf of the Kailua Complex Principals

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda item: Both D and H

Position: Opposed (Please see attached attached testimony)

Mahalo!
Noel Richardson
Principal

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Kailua Complex Principals**

July 21, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although we are expected to be “good soldiers” who follow directives, we can not in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we continue to have in regards to reopening our schools. The depth of these concerns keep us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities, students and staff in our hands.

As Kailua Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, School Health Aides, cafeteria, clerical staff have not received appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Principals are pulling information from the CDC website. Where is the department's safety division?
- Still no guidance on documentation from the Department of Health or Public Health Nurses for our School Health Aides (SHAs). What training has been provided to SHAs? What do schools do if they do not have a SHA?
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on backwards tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for school to better prepare and keep track of student and adult “bubbles”, including bus transportation should the DOH ask for specific information.
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of school operations with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, custodians, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom do not report until students do. In a typical school year, opening and training everyone with compliance training and setting the tone for the school year takes up the entire allotted time. This year we must complete this in a virtual format, with a compressed leadup, utilizing inconsistent information, with no additional time allotted to train our faculty and staff who are scared and returning from a complete school system shutdown.
- What are guidelines for administrators who will be entering different bubbles throughout the day? Are we allowed to do walkthroughs etc without penetrating bubbles and possibly spreading the virus? What happens if a school office has to close to infections or a principal has to quarantine? Will a TA be assigned? Will the principal be able to work from quarantine?

Lack of PPE or supplies; lack of online devices:

- Schools not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- Schools not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc. Although it was ordered back in March, many schools have not had their supplies come in. (Keep in mind that schools have been using their WSF funds to purchase these supplies, when the state could have provided much of this through CARES act money. Currently vendors are unable to provide wipes.
- Schools lack mifi devices to ensure equitable internet access for all students.
- Many communities lack cellular coverage to ensure mifi devices work.
- Schools lack devices to ensure equitable access to distance learning platforms. For example, only summer learning hub chromebooks were delivered to the school during the last week of the summer learning by the Office of Information Technology Services(OITS). Schools were tasked with inventorying these chromebooks and disseminating to students and families. Schools that did not run summer learning hubs, did not receive laptops. Laptop distribution and accountability takes an extraordinary amount of time, especially if schools do not have a system to distribute laptops to students.
- Schools lack the time to train students and families on how to access hotspots and chromebooks which will provide them access to distance learning content for all schools with a Blended or Hybrid model. Additionally, training is needed to access distance learning platforms and communication tools to maximize distance learning engagement for students.
- Schools lack the personnel to ensure that devices are cataloged and inventoried properly to ensure accountability.

Training promised has not been provided

- Expected training for the first nine days for teachers. What training is going to be provided? Distance learning platform training? Online delivery platforms? Are schools to develop their own protocols? Given the negotiated items with HSTA, schools have less than two hours daily to train teachers during the first 9 days. This equates to less than 2 full days of training.
- How to properly train substitutes(certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them? How are they compensated?
- Training on virtual learning platform. Which platform? Nothing has been finalized for K-5 schools and training for 6-12 platform (BlackBoard) takes 3 full days of training. Please keep in mind that training does not mean comfortable or competent in the platform. Elementary school principals were only recently informed about possible platforms and given on a couple of days to make a decision. Normally, teacher teams would go through vetting the platform and determine if the platform is right for their school community. Training for the secondary platform (Blackboard) was conducted over the summer, but not everyone could attend this training. Many schools are just now vetting and ordering their online learning platforms. Ideally, these platforms would have been ordered earlier in the summer with training provided. Each school is conducting its own research on programs and training opportunities.

- Superintendent continues to reference distance learning training provided to teachers, all of whom are on summer vacation until July 29, 2020. Training for all teachers did not occur. While teachers did share powerful practices through a Leadership Institute Forum, topics covered highlights and did not lead to scope and sequence planning with job-embedded practice.
- The Principal's Handbook V.2 section on "Contingency Planning - Cases of COVID-19" on page 25 states: "When a student or employee either tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact or household member to someone who has tested positive, please refer to the Health and Safety Handbook for further guidance on next steps and cleaning protocols." When clicking on the link, Administrators must enter their intranet passwords and then are asked a question in big letters saying "Let us know why you need access to this information". It is clear in BOE resolutions regarding the reopening of schools that these policies and procedures must be clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.
- No clear protocols on how schools will handle emergency drills and procedures. For example if we are still unable to do large gatherings in places, how will school's conduct mass evacuation drills? If each school is to come up with their own protocol, we need time to plan this out.
- No additional staff to manage distance learning. Principals are still waiting on how Enrollment Count Date will impact their school and their school allocations. If WSF is cut, schools may not be able to offer what was presented to parents.

Need guidance in....

- OTM - The Office of Talent Management has not clarified and trained SASAs on personnel issues (Certificated & Classified) that will result from COVID-19 related leave requests and possible school closures. (e.g. SASA Academy update or CABM training)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone that has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, Health & Safety Handbook, Addendum to HSTA MOU, etc.)
- Poor and haphazard communication - Rather than info coming out via DOE Memos, information is coming piecemeal through the media, press release/press conferences, emails, draft handbooks, CAS. DOE COVID page hasn't been updated in a while.
- "Opt In" form for distance learning option not officially available yet.
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, compensatory services, etc

Food Service

- OSFSS - School Food Service has made no adjustment for "Point of Sale - POS" to accommodate for Grab n Go food pickup for students to access their Federally subsidized meals when they are not on campus for face to face learning. During Grab n Go food service (Q4 last SY) student verification is completed by an Administrator and lists are completed by a meal ticket clerk to expedite food delivery and promote safe traffic flow. Normal POS procedures require individual student verification and account charges to occur as they would during normal cafeteria scanning, this is not possible on a public street or thoroughfare with curbside pickup.
- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the students socially distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is grab n go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation

schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.

- OSFSS - School Food Service does not have the supplies to provide for Grab n Go packaging allocated in their current budget, this is currently being provided by WSF for schools who will be providing curbside pickup for meals. Additionally, many schools have received a reduction in Meal Ticket Clerk (MTC) hourly allocations when there exists a greater need to service students and scan in both a face to face and distance format during the school day.

Student Transportation

- Busing registration will not accept payment.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible back tracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Are bus drivers responsible for having a seating chart for each route to back trace any students with positive test results?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks if a student doesn't have one?
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has provided little or no guidance on Health & Safety policies and procedures for those under their care during transportation to and from DOE facilities.
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has informed us via memo that due to social distancing and lack of availability there will be no service provided in some areas, there have been no specific details provided. As there are not enough buses to accommodate ridership with social distancing guidelines will buses be reallocated to provide equitable access to those with greater distances between home and school (e.g. Increasing the miles from school calculation based on expected ridership)?

Substitutes

- Where are the substitutes coming from?
- Who will train them?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave?
- Where is funding for substitutes coming from?
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teaching staff reports to school?

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4 is being forced onto us with minimal support and answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,
Noel Richardson
Cherilyn Inouye
Lisa DeLong
Nathan Maeda
Aaron Okumura
Pua McElhaney
Stacey Oshio
Gay Kong

Kailua Complex Area Administrators

Testimony BOE

From: Sen. Kurt Fevella <senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov> on behalf of Sen. Kurt Fevella
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:45 PM
To: catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov; testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov;
boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov; shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov;
kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov; margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov;
lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov; kili.namauu@boe.hawaii.gov;
dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov; bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Request to Push Back Re-Opening of Schools



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

July 22, 2020

Chair Katherine Payne
Hawaii State Board of Education
1390 Miller Streer
Honolulu, Hawaii
96813

Aloha Chai Katherine Payne,

As the Ewa Beach 19th District Senator, I am writing in behalf of my constituents regarding the concerns for the school re-opening. We are scheduled for reopening of schools and since the news of a child whom tested positive for COVID-19 on 7/13/2020, there is an immense risk concern. I am requesting that the reopening date could be postponed until after Labor Day, so that we are able to provide the proper training for our teachers. A suggestion from many of my constituents is for the state to have a re-opening plan that all schools would implement into their system. Another suggestion that was made is that we reopen in three phases in preparation for face to face:

1. Phase One Virtual setting until a threshold of COVID-19 cases is met (minimum 30 days)
2. Phase Two Hybrid setting until a higher threshold of cases met (minimum 30 days)
3. Phase Three Return to Full Classes

It is my hope that you take this as a very serious matter for the safety and health risk that COVID-19 poses on all our children and teachers. Please keep my office updated with the status by email reply or by contacting my office at (808) 586-6360.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kurt Fevella".

Senator Kurt Fevella
State of Hawaii, District 19
Minority Leader/ Minority Floor Leader

State Capitol, Room 217
415 S. Beretania Street,
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-6360
Fax: (808) 586-6361

Testimony BOE

From: Pauahi Hookano <pauahi.hookano@gmail.com> on behalf of Pauahi Hookano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Covid 19 and differential pay

Aloha,

I teach at Kalama intermediate. I have autoimmune issues that led me to dialysis. I also had serious medical issues that required me to stay in the hospital for 6 months. I am at serious risk from dying from covid 19. I do not feel comfortable going back to school. I refuse to die because of the policies of the DOE. I did not sign up to be a sacrificial lamb of the DOE. It is almost as if the DOE is more interested in the federal funding than the lives of the children and teachers .

Regarding the differential, kaiapuni teachers deserve it. I leave late when I am able. Everyday I see the Kaiapuni teachers leave late. Kaiapuni teachers create their own curriculum that incorporate western and Hawaiian concepts, and try to develop their critical thinking skilld.

Very humbly submitted,
Lisa Ann Pauahi Hookano, M. Ed
245 Wailua Rd
Haiku Hi 96708

Testimony BOE

From: Madeline McKinnon <m.mckinnon@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Madeline McKinnon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:47 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - hard to staff/SPED bonus

ITEM VI. G. BOARD ACTION ON TEMPORARY DISCONTINUANCE OF EXTRA COMPENSATION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, HARD-TO-STAFF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS, AND HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

WEDNESDAY JULY 22, 2020

Aloha e Board of Education,

My name is Madeline McKinnon and I am a special education biology teacher at Waianae High School. I would like to emphasize the importance of these funds to the passionate educators working with our high need students, and in our hard to staff locations.

I will try to keep this concise because I am sure you all receive so many emails!

- Special education teachers really do have two jobs, one as a standard teacher, and another where you are responsible for a specific caseload of students who need your support and services throughout the year in a specialized manner. Since special education teachers spend so much extra time with their caseload (preparing for IEP meetings, offering services, checking in with families and general ed teachers) I have seen a lot of amazing teachers opt out of their special education positions in favor of general education, leaving special education positions to be filled repeatedly by less experienced teachers. I believe that if special education teachers were compensated for their efforts, we would see more qualified teachers in such important positions.

- When I decided to work in Waianae I knew I wanted to completely dive into the community and really get to know the place and people I was going to be working with. I believe that the hard to staff bonus draws and cultivates amazing teachers to this coastline and provides students with access to great, diverse minds of teachers who may otherwise not be willing to make the commute or pursue further enrichment in their own teaching practice through classes/PD.

Thank you so much for considering my positions.

We really do need your help to keep offering students the best we can.

Mahalo,

Madeline, Leeward District, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: kelly gomes <kgomes8104@gmail.com> on behalf of kelly gomes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:48 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: cuts to differentials

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my support for the continuation of differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian emergent and hard-to-staff schools. My understanding is that the DOE offered these differentials in January with the purpose of giving teachers the time to put in their transfer requests by the deadline for the 2020-2021 school year. Although we did not expect such a disruption in our lives and in the world with our current situation, I do not think suspending the differentials is the right thing to do. For the teachers who put in their transfer requests for this very reason will now be in positions they could have chosen not to be in had they known the differentials would be stopped. These teachers are well aware of the sacrifices sped teachers and teachers in hard-to-staff schools make, that is why they were not in those positions to begin with. With half of all Hawaii teachers not reaching the five-year mark and with about a thousand long-term subs and substitutes, cutting differentials will only make these numbers grow. This is on top of current talks of salary cuts as well as the fact that since 2009 when we had "furlough Fridays" we've been "compressed" on the pay scale, many new teachers getting nearly the same pay as veteran teachers. Like the lack of movement on the step schedule since then, if we "suspend" differentials, we may never get it back.

Please continue to show support for teachers in these areas and not cut differentials.

Thank you,
Kelly
(DOE sped teacher since 2006)

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Uyehara <ashleyu@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Ashley Uyehara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:49 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Ashley Uyehara
Kaimuki Complex

My concern as an Educational Assistant and parent is we are not ready to open schools just yet. The number of cases in Hawaii is still going up and there is no safe plan to return.

This is all I heard from my school requires masks and 6 feet distance. The first two weeks when students are back it will be half day each student is put in different groups and come for a few hours. Once students are released we the staff and teachers will have training on how to work around covid and keep safe.

Bottom line is there is NO SAFE WAY to be in a class with more than 10 people. We has educators our job is to teach and keep kids safe. How are we going to teach and have to worry at the same time if another kid doesn't have their mask on or is too close to another student.

Hearing what schedules are being followed at school is ridiculous. There are some schools where kids are just going one day for so many hours or twice a day.

Testimony BOE

From: Aja Correa <lilinoe.correa@gmail.com> on behalf of Aja Correa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:50 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Hello,

Sorry this is a little late but my name is Aja Correa and I have 2 school age children and a one year old at home. My children attend Moanalua High School and Moanalua Elementary School.

I am writing in response to the "plan" of reopening the public schools, which I am against at this time. For starters, the number of cases in Hawaii have INCREASED in the past few weeks. How does it make sense to send children physically to school when data clearly shows that people in Hawaii are not following guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19? My youngest son had chemotherapy when he was 2 and as a result, his lungs have been affected by one of the medications. I would not risk him going into a situation where he could potentially be harmed seeing as the COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. What kind of person would willingly send their child into harm's way?

Why do members of our legislature hold virtual meetings??? Yet, we are willing to send children to school? There are so many multi-generational households in Hawaii, where if a child brings home the virus, the results could be disastrous for one family. I know of many teachers who care for their elderly parents... what happens if they were to pass it on? This is all just unnecessary risk taking.

We let out convicted criminals from jail in order to prevent them from getting the COVID-19 virus, but it's okay for kids to gather and contract the virus?

Please reconsider your "plan" before making a poorly thought out and rushed decision that may very well affect thousands of people in Hawaii.

Thank you

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Frank Cabe <frankcabe.fc@gmail.com> on behalf of Frank Cabe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

Aloha! I am a parent of 3 wonderful boys, my 2 younger ones goes to Kaimiloa Elem and my eldest will be going to Ilima Middle school this coming year. My eldest child is an IEP student and has medical condition. As parents, we are terrified to send him to school.

1. He does not like anything his face so wearing mask has been a difficult task.
2. He does not know when NOT to rub his eye's / face, he always has watery eyes.
3. He is very loving, very affectionate child and will many times hold, touch even hug people.
4. Last but not least, he's non-verbal.

As much as we would like to send him back to school. For his sake and his peers to stay healthy. We ask the school to push back the reopening of school or at least until we get the covid-19 under control and stick with virtual learning for now.

Its very obvious that this virus is still very rampant and to open school now is like sending him, our kids to the wolves. Are we going to wait for 1 on of our kids to get sick or even die and then we say, "Oh ok, that wasn't a good idea?".

Please do not reopen school!

From a very concerned parents,
Mahalo!

Testimony BOE

From: Abbey Palmer <abbey.palmer@gmail.com> on behalf of Abbey Palmer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:54 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Regarding Special Education Differential Pay

My name is Abigail Palmer and I am a Special Education teacher. I am writing my testimony regarding the agenda issue “the Department is requesting a temporary discontinuance” of these differentials, with the reasoning that “these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted the state’s overall revenue and budget.” I am writing to urge you to reconsider taking away the differential. Teachers need the differential to help support what we do. I went into Special Education in order to help students, to make sure they never felt out of place for learning a different way. Not only do I teach six periods a day, but on top of that, I have an IEP caseload of 15-20 students. Managing my caseload and my teaching is not only difficult but also time consuming. The mornings are early, the nights are late. As SPED teachers, we work two different jobs and get paid for one. Does that stop us from giving our best 24/7? No. We do it because we love the kids and we know that every child learns differently. If you take away our differential pay, you are showing the world that you do not care about us. You don’t care that we differentiate our lessons for every single student in our classroom, six times a DAY. You don’t care that we are collecting and analyzing iep data constantly. You don’t care that we spend hours reaching out to our sped parents, building connections, working together to develop and strengthen the goals and objectives of our students. If you take away our differential, many of us can’t survive. So many teachers already work additional jobs in order to pay for the materials they need in the classroom to help the students. We already spend so much of our personal money even more so now buying curriculum, and modified it to help distance learning when covid started. We are buying educational materials, sanitizer, wipes, Lysol out of our own bank accounts because we know we need to keep our students safe during the pandemic. With covid curriculum cuts, we are already using our own money to buy curriculum for our students. If you take away this differential, you are snuffing the life out of educators who have put our blood, sweat and tears into this profession. We are spit on, we are cursed at, we are not valued, yet we still come every day with a smile on our faces. We give 1000%. We won’t be able to survive without our differential. If you do this, many teachers will be forced to leave Special Education because they will no longer be able to afford it. Please don’t do this to us. Teachers deserve better than this. Please show us that you still care about us, before it is too late. It is not our fault that COVID happened and Special Education teachers shouldn’t have to pay the price because of it.

Thank you,
Abigail Palmer

Testimony BOE

From: Kayla Hernandez <Kayla.Hernandez@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kayla Hernandez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kayla Hernandez and I am a special education teacher within the Central District for the Hawaii State Department of Education.

I am opposing the request for a temporary discontinuance of differentials for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and hard-to-staff schools.

Current data indicate that teachers were increasingly retained in multiple districts across the state of Hawaii when teachers in the following areas (special education classroom teachers and hard-to-staff schools) were given compensation for these important areas to create a community of highly qualified teachers in very high demand as many schools in the past found it hard to staff these different teaching positions.

In addition, the incentives for differential pay allowed more teachers, like myself, to be recruited into the field of special education and I was an emergency hired special education teacher since 2019.

The differential pay allowed teachers in special education classrooms, Hawaiian language immersion and hard-to-staff schools feel more appreciated.

Special education teachers are required to do more compared to other teaching lines. The amount of time spent for IEP meetings, documenting multiple paperwork, supervising multiple adults in the classroom, following federal and state guidelines, collaborating with multiple individuals (general education teachers, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, Licensed Behavior Analyst, and others) to ensure accommodations and modifications are being met to aid the students' needs as well as other duties.

I strongly agree that the funding for teacher shortage differentials has positive results as indicated for recruiting and retaining teachers especially in Special Education teaching lines and hard-to-staff schools. At this time, the Hawaiian language immersion position does not have data to compare; however, being in the state of Hawaii, the importance of Hawaiian language immersion is very important for the revitalization to the Hawaiian language and ensuring the language lives on with promoting the Hawaiian language provided by the public education sector.

--

Warm Regards,
Kayla Hernandez
Special Education Teacher
Aliamanu Middle School
808-421-4100

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Testimony BOE

From: Sheela Castro <sheelanabel@gmail.com> on behalf of Sheela Castro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Sheela Castro i am a parent of 4 children. Two of which are in kindergarten this fall, a toddler, and infant. I am very concerned about schools opening on August 4th. Two of my children have Asthma and one has Febrile seizures. Their dad has high blood pressure, Afib, and other health conditions. This makes my family high risk. I and my family have worked so hard to protect our family from covid-19 So that our kids or their dad dont get it. I feel homeschooling shouldnt have to be the only option. There should be an online/distance learning option for all schools with familys like mine who have health conditions and are high risk. I have called and talked to the school Principal at Jefferson Elementary who says K-2nd grade will be face to face. He was waiting on the DOE to get back to him about distance learning cause there was other parents with the same concerns as me. I then called the DOE who transferred me to someone and couldnt get thru. I also emailed Superintendent Kishimoto of my concerns and havent heard anything back. I called the principal back after hearing the hearing with Kishimoto and other officials. She stated that there is an online option/distance learning for familys who do not want to send their children to school. I let him know i watched the hearing and what she said. He basically said he will figure something out if i could give him time and he will work on it with his teachers and staff and call me back. With that being said it seems no one is prepared for schools reopening and no one is on the same page. The BOE, HSTA, and all schools need more time to be prepared and the proper training on distance learning and covid-19 procedures. Its like the DOE,BOE, HSTA, and Principals are all on different levels and dont know what to do. We are all supposed to be working together as one family to support our teachers and students in whats best for everybody. Again im concerned for my childrens health but at the same time want them to have a decent education. Thank you for your time and hearing me out.

Sheela Castro
Phone# 3414301
[Email:sheelanabel@gmail.com](mailto:sheelanabel@gmail.com)

sheela

Testimony BOE

From: Bryan Loo <bryan.loo@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Bryan Loo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:55 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Relating to the Reopening of School for SY 2020-21
Attachments: PW Complex Area Admin Concerns.pdf

To Whom It May Concern,

Please see attached testimony from the Pearl City - Waipahu Complex Area Administrators

Mahalo

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Pearl City - Waipahu Complex Area Administrators**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although we are expected to be “good soldiers” who follow directives, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we continue to have in regards to reopening our schools. The depth of these concerns keeps us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities in our hands.

As Pearl City/Waipahu Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns

- Custodians, Classroom Cleaners, School Health Aides (SHA), Cafeteria Personnel, and Office Staff have not gotten appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Principals are pulling information from the CDC website. Where is the department's safety division?
- Still no written guidance documentation from the Department of Health, Public Health Nurses for our School Health Aides
- Every school had to create their own parent and faculty handbook without any vetting process

ASK: 1) Training modules that can be reviewed repeatedly or as needed for all role groups listed above

2) Written guidance manual for SHA/admin with specific steps to address potential COVID cases.

Lack of PPE and Supplies

- Schools not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- Schools not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc. Although it was ordered back in March, many schools have not had their supplies come in
- Lack of support/ coordinated effort from HIDOE (“tri-level”) in helping schools identify and procure PPE and supplies. Every school had to purchase on their own.

“Ohana Bubble”

- The Ohana Bubble is a concept and not a directive that can be followed as described. We have received neither guidance nor explicit expectations around its implementation.
- We see many difficulties with maintaining such bubbles as described in the news. The Ohana Bubble concept impacts student scheduling, student services delivered, student placement, and operational schedules such as recess and lunch. It is complicated by our schools’ logistics and drop in service providers, etc.
- Substitute teachers are not part of the school’s Ohana Bubble. What is the impact of this on school efforts to keep “bubbles” as isolated as possible?

Training has not been provided

- Teachers need professional development in virtual instructional delivery. They need time to plan and practice.
- How to properly train substitutes (certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them? How are they compensated?

ASKING FOR:

- 1) Professional Development around virtual instructional delivery for both blended and hybrid models

Technology

No systematic selection and training on any distance learning platform. Schools have been left to figure it out all on their own. No leveraging of economies of scale.

- Schools have ordered computers to ensure that all students have access to distance learning. However, there is a nationwide shortage of computers and schools are told that the earliest we can expect any new computers that we’ve ordered is October, maybe December. Although the DOE ordered computers for the summer learning hubs, we don’t have the number of computers in hand to support the students who need them. We don’t have wireless connectivity for the students who need them.

100% Distance Learning Plan

- Elementary Distance Learning plan options only approved on Thursday 7/16/20
- Secondary Distance Learning plan only decided on Tuesday, 7/21/20
- No implementation guidelines/rules for 100% distance learning provided
- Parents are inquiring and we do not have enough information
- “Opt In form” for 100% distance learning not approved by HIDOE Risk Management
- How do schools address 504, SPED, SPED PreK, ELL with regards to 100% distance learning?

ASK: 1) Finalized vetted opt in letter for Full Distance Learning.

Need guidance in....

- Personnel issues (Certificated & Classified)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone that has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HDOE documents (Principals Handbook V.1, V.2, Safety Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, etc
- Waiting on guidance to determine compensatory education for all students with IEPs.
- How and when do we provide the 3 hours of additional preparation per student for each care coordinator? Care coordinators have 10-15 students which equates to 45 hours in the first quarter. What is the 3 hours used for?

Food Service

- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the students physically distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining physical distancing. Schools needed to use school funds to provide outdoor seating areas for meals, e.g., tents, picnic tables.
- Is grab and go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- Schools had to plan for lunches to establish their schedules yet school food service managers are 10 month employees and when we asked for them to be recalled earlier the request was denied.

Student Transportation

- Who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Who will give Bus Drivers masks if a student doesn't have one?

Substitutes

- Where are the subs coming from? Has the DOE updated the substitute teacher pool?
- Who will train the substitute teachers in the new model and procedures?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave?
and we are unable to maintain social distancing on that day in school?
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teachers and sub teachers report to school?
- Will additional devices be provided to substitutes if the teacher is out due to childcare or other reasons and takes their device with them? The substitute will need access to the programs the teacher is using, is it expected the teacher will share the login information or are we required to provide the sub their own due to security and FERPA?

In the BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4 is being forced onto us with minimal support and answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pearl City/Waipahu Complex Area Administrators

Hanh Nguyen, August Ahrens Elementary
Kent Matsumura, Honowai Elementary
Alike Ahu, Kaleiopuu Elementary
Sheldon Oshio, Waikele Elementary
Pat Anbe, Waipahu Community School for Adults
Aaron Tominaga, Waipahu Elementary
Keith Hayashi, Waipahu High
Randell Dunn, Waipahu Intermediate
Amy Martinson, Highlands Intermediate
Stacie Kunihiha, Kanoelani Elementary
Alvan Fukuhara, Lehua Elementary
Bryan Loo, Manana Elementary
Doreen Higa, Momilani Elementary
Gavin Tsue, Palisades Elementary
Susan Hirokane, Pearl City Elementary
Joseph Halfmann, Pearl City High
Zachary Sheets, Pearl City Highlands Elementary
Troy Takazono, Waiau Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Mark Soliven <mjfcslvn04@aol.com> on behalf of Mark Soliven
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do not open school on August 4

Please open school campuses when there's vaccine or treatment to COVID19. Do distance learning when teachers are trained to do online learning, when parents can assist their children anytime when they are not working. I have a kindergarten. He cannot do virtual learning alone. How will I do it if I need to work to feed my family and at the same time attend to his virtual classes? It will work for me if school will give the concept to be learned on that day and I will assist him when I finish work, then, the teacher will evaluate him after on any day I'm off. If school will reopen without plans to fix the consequences of their actions, then they are not ready. The secretary or superintendent should be transparent by showing to public an action plan of what they should resolve specific problem that may arise. Our kids are not test subjects. They are humans like all the high officials of DOE who are responsible of protecting teachers and students and their families they come home to. Please don't sacrifice the lives of innocent kids when responsible adults can do something NOW. If they want that guilt will haunt them until their last breath, then go ahead and open the school. But, remember, KARMA will be with you because of so much innocent lives lost because of you. Decide humanely NOW and NOT LATER!

Sincerely,

Concerned mother

Testimony BOE

From: Carolyn Vidal <vidalc003@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Carolyn Vidal
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board Members,

Could you please delay school opening so that we could be trained for this “new normal “ because two administrative days will not be enough. I want my students, coworkers, and self to be safe and effective to deal with all of the new situations that will PLAGUE us from day one of this school year!

This is a very different school year where I am just a teacher NOT a health care worker who would be knowledgeable in all the situations I am about to be faced with.

Another major concern is PPE where masks, shields, gowns, and hand sanitizer should be provided to all schools so that we can protect each other.

Really think about your decision, would you like to be in my shoes?

I’m a very concerned teacher who is terrified of the unknowns and seriously considering retirement at this point in time.

Carolyn Vidal
Dole Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Gostage, Charles W (Will) CIV USN NMCPAC EAD (USA) <Charles.Gostage@navy.mil>
on behalf of Gostage, Charles W (Will) CIV USN NMCPAC EAD (USA)
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:56 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school. As a parent, I do not feel that we are ready to return to school in person and maintain everyone's safety. My children will be participating in 100% distance learning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Charles Gostage

Testimony BOE

From: melissa fletcher <bobby_mc_gee21@hotmail.com> on behalf of melissa fletcher
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY, URGENT. TO BE RECEIVED AND INCLUDED BY 1:30PM TODAY!

This testimony is for action item:

Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

My name is Melissa Fletcher, I am a local business owner and mother to a child that will be going into 2nd grade in Volcano, Hawaii this year.

We can not, with any kind of faith or sense of safety, allow our daughter to return to school with an impending reopening/lifting of quarantine, no vaccines or treatments on the horizon, and not nearly enough planning for control or mitigation of the risks of spread within a school setting.

We have been waiting for an explanation of remote learning options, but all focus seems to have been put on rallying kids back to school and getting parents to be okay with that, in spite of the critically flawed logic of opening 'Ohana Bubbles' to 'School Bubbles'... ??? That quite clearly bursts any bubble by opening everyone's 'bubble' to everyone else's. It's a flawed and, quite frankly, insulting analogy.

Opening schools at this stage puts our teachers, our children, our families, our communities, and our businesses and economy at an increased risk and it's entirely unnecessary. I stand strong in my conviction that remote learning should be the norm until treatment and/or preventative options become available.

Volcano School of Arts and Sciences is our school. I serve on the Friends Board there. I am opposed to reopening our school for face to face learning.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Melissa Fletcher

Testimony BOE

From: Hope Stocker <lalima1@yahoo.com> on behalf of Hope Stocker
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:58 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay school start

Aloha,

I am a school counselor here at KES and I agree that we need more staff time to prep before students come back. Although we have some procedures in place, we have yet to have a set policy for what happens if/ when someone gets infected. I am most concerned for the social/ emotional well being of my students yet we also need to consider our teachers well being especially those who are at high risk.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hope Stocker

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sen. Kurt Fevella <senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov> on behalf of Sen. Kurt Fevella
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: FW: Request to Push Back Re-Opening of Schools

Below is my Testimony

Mahalo

From: Sen. Kurt Fevella
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:45 PM
To: catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov; testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov; shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov; kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov; margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov; lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov; kili.namauu@boe.hawaii.gov; dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov; bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Request to Push Back Re-Opening of Schools



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

July 22, 2020

Chair Katherine Payne
Hawaii State Board of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, Hawaii
96813

Aloha Chair Katherine Payne,

As the Ewa Beach 19th District Senator, I am writing in behalf of my constituents regarding the concerns for the school re-opening. We are scheduled for reopening of schools and since the news of a child whom tested positive for COVID-19 on 7/13/2020, there is an immense risk concern. I am requesting that the reopening date could be postponed until after Labor Day, so that we are able to provide the proper training for our teachers. A suggestion from many of my constituents is for the state to have a re-opening plan that all schools would implement into their system. Another suggestion that was made is that we reopen in three phases in preparation for face to face:

1. Phase One Virtual setting until a threshold of COVID-19 cases is met (minimum 30 days)
2. Phase Two Hybrid setting until a higher threshold of cases met (minimum 30 days)
3. Phase Three Return to Full Classes

It is my hope that you take this as a very serious matter for the safety and health risk that COVID-19 poses on all our children and teachers. Please keep my office updated with the status by email reply or by contacting my office at (808) 586-6360.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kurt Fevella".

Senator Kurt Fevella
State of Hawaii, District 19
Minority Leader/ Minority Floor Leader

State Capitol, Room 217
415 S. Beretania Street,
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-6360
Fax: (808) 586-6361

Testimony BOE

From: Christopher Smith <christopher.smith@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christopher Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

Aloha,

My name is Christopher Smith, and I am a teacher at Kapolei Middle School. I am writing to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As a person who lives with two individuals who are at a higher risk of complications from COVID-19, I have approached every day with an abundance of caution and prudence. The prospect of returning to campus in less than two weeks, in the midst of an unstable pandemic, with many unanswered questions, is troubling and frightening.

The CDC recommends static groupings of students to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The complexities of considering this kind of change at the secondary level are significant. With our scheduled date of reopening on August 4, it is difficult for me to understand how we have had the time and resources for making intelligent innovations that might allow us to comply, on some meaningful level, with recommendations like this one.

I am concerned about the health and safety risks that come with the looming possibility of an increased teacher and substitute teacher shortage. It is already a common occurrence for schools to be short of the number of substitutes that they need. Office workers scramble to find any available adult on campus to supervise classes for whom a substitute teacher could not be found. Some teachers end up combining another class with their own, so that students are safely supervised. These responses, which are already in poor service to students and teachers, are now exponentially more problematic in the risks that they carry of spreading COVID-19.

It has been said that one reason for opening schools in August is to prepare teachers and students for the possibility of going back to 100% Distance Learning. We can find effective ways of training teachers on Distance Learning methods that do not necessitate face-to-face meetings. Schools already have methods for distributing devices to students that do not necessitate congregating in classrooms. Innovations will continue to be developed. Scientific, peer-reviewed studies that are focused on school environments will be published. We can make a more thorough and evidence-based approach to resuming instruction that will put our students, families, and communities at less risk. We need the time and the resources to do it.

Please delay the reopening of schools. Thank you for reading and for considering what I have shared. Please be safe and well.

Sincerely,
Christopher Smith

--

Christopher Smith
Band Director
Kapolei Middle School
95-5335 Kapolei Pkwy
Kapolei, HI 96707

(808) 693-7025 ext. 258

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Testimony BOE

From: Joy Bulosan <jbulosan@hgea.org> on behalf of Joy Bulosan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:01 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-2021
Attachments: BOE Testimony 23July2020.pdf

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

On behalf of Hawaii Government Employees Association's Executive Director Randy Perreira, attached is our written testimony relating to the July 23, 2020 BOE General Meeting agenda items regarding the reopening of schools for School Year 2020-21. Executive Director Randy Perreira will also be testifying orally at tomorrow's meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our public testimony,

Joy Bulosan

Field Services Officer

Hawaii Government Employees Association / AFSCME Local 152

888 Mililani Street, Suite 401

Honolulu, HI 96813

Main 808.543.0000 | Direct 808.543.0057 | Fax 808.550.8814

jbulosan@hgea.org | www.hgea.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



PLEASE CONSIDER YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE PRINTING THIS E-MAIL



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
July 23, 2020

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-2021

Chair Payne, and Members of the Board:

As the exclusive representative of more than 6,100 public school employees, Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA) strongly recommends that the Board of Education (BOE) delay the return of students to schools, currently scheduled for August 4.

On July 9, 2020, we provided you with written and oral testimony about why HGEA is not convinced that the Department of Education (DOE) is prepared to open schools safely on August 4. We shared a sampling of concerns and questions about proper protocols, training, and health and safety, that have been pouring in from hundreds of our HGEA members, including but not limited to principals, athletic health care trainers, school office staff, speech language pathologists, school safety and security officers, educational assistants, school health assistants, cafeteria staff and educational specialists. Since then, not much has changed. Many of these concerns and questions have yet to be addressed by the DOE, as we continue to get bombarded by even more questions and concerns from our members.

Many of our members will not receive training until they return to work for the new school year just 3 to 4 days before students are scheduled to report. If training should adequately prepare employees so they are confident in what they will be tasked to do, then clearly, schools are not ready to reopen. Employees are troubled that they are unprepared to do their jobs amid a coronavirus pandemic.

We expect the BOE to carefully consider and listen to the voices of those on the frontline, and not from the sideline. There is a reason why you are receiving testimony from hundreds of school employees who are telling you why August 4 is too soon. Hopefully, you will come to the realization that contrary to what Superintendent Kishimoto and her team are saying, August 4 is not realistic. Schools are not ready to safely reopen to students on August 4.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

Testimony BOE

From: Jolyn Yoneshige <jolyn.yoneshige@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jolyn Yoneshige
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I'm testifying on Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for](#)

I'm a first grade teacher on the Windward side and I honestly believe we cannot safely open on August 4th. This summer, I had the chance to work at Summer Hub and with my 8 students I still had trouble enforcing social distancing rules during recess with another adult. I'm not asking that you cancel school, I'm asking that you please allow time for us as teachers to train and be more prepared for what's to come for our students' safe return. I'm asking for the postponement of our student return date.

I'm not asking that we defer learning till September, but to at least give us the opportunity to do distance teaching till we have enough training as a school to protect ourselves and others. If we are taking the half day PD's to elicit more training, we are endangering our students. Why can't we take the time to either do full day training or do distance learning for at least those first 9 days?

It does not make sense to open now. We hear that students are less susceptible to Covid and are more asymptomatic, but what about our teachers, faculty, and staff who are older? We are knowingly endangering their lives. Not only that, but what about the kupuna or parents that the kids go home to?

If we're talking about ohana bubbles how can we do that is we have Specials teachers that rotate or students who attend multiple classrooms? What about recess and cafeteria? By contract, we're allowed to watch the kids at recess once every 5 days. We don't have enough supervision for staggered recess by class or if we were to put each class in a different play area. There's not enough people. We need more time to come up with a finalized plan.

If a third of our state's teachers are more susceptible to getting covid, they are also the ones more likely to retire early or request leave. Hence, creating a greater teacher shortage than necessary. Not only that, what about enrollment? If our school budget is based on the beginning of the year enrollment, and parents opt to homeschool, not only do we lose funds we also lose valuable teachers and positions. Looking further down the line, if parents decide to re-enroll students into class during the middle of the year now will we have over crowded classrooms again? How would that adhere to our social distancing rules?

Please take the time to reconsider reopening the schools until we can ensure the safety of everyone.

--

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Mahalo,
Ms. Yoneshige

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Testimony BOE

From: mary kuahine <kuahinema@yahoo.com> on behalf of mary kuahine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:01 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pandemic Training

Training for pandemic situation..... Do the Educational Assistants get training on how and what to expect if students or staff comes up positive? What to do to ensure the rest of us safety as well as our family members at home. Especially when we are working closely to our students. What if they don't want to wear their masks? Are we getting supplies for face shields? Sanitizers ? What about if we need quarantine? What happens? So many unanswered questions. We are putting our lives as well as the students at a risk . We all know that parents likes to send their kids to school with running nose and coughing. Help in this situation. Scary.

12:25 ↗



To: ▼ Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Training for the pandemic situation

Do the Educational assistants get training on how and what to expect if students or staff comes up positive? What to do to ensure the rest of us safe as well as our family members at home. Especially when we are working closely with our students . What if they don't want to wear their mask ? Are getting supplies for face shields?

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Annette Seki-Terada <asekit83@gmail.com> on behalf of Annette Seki-Terada
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:02 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Annette seki- terada mckinley h.s. my concern is that how will sped.Students be address. They are wheelchair students that are medically fragile and cant wear mask due to health issues and they are also non verbal. Some have behaviors issues that involves spitting. We work very closely with the student and are never 6 feet apart due to safety concerns. Many student come to school sneezing and coughing as a normal behavior. We as EAs are put in a very diffrent situation that has not been address. Attention seems to be given to the reg. Ed students. This needs to be addressed also. EAs are no less then teachers and other staff and should be given the same treatment.

Testimony BOE

From: Mei Arakaki <mei.arakaki@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mei Arakaki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:02 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Questions and Concerns Regarding Reopening

Aloha,

My name is Mei Arakaki, and I work in the Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area.

I am concerned about returning to school in my position of an Educational Assistant, because what my job requires of me often involves physical contact with the students I work with, and I have not been given any indication as to if I will be provided with PPE regularly enough to protect myself as well as the students I work with. Given the nature of the Fully Self-Contained classroom that I work in, we have medically fragile students, and I have to wonder what is being done to protect them from their peers, as well as the staff upon returning to school.

Will our students also be provided with adequate PPE regularly so that there is no risk of cross contamination?

In my classroom, staff were not formally trained on proper diaper changing procedures when we gained two students that wore diapers. I had to be the one to do it, simply because I had prior experience working in an accredited infant care center. For weeks on end, I was not provided with gloves or paper to change the students. I myself had to buy bleach and spray bottles to create sanitizing solutions because my classroom teacher would not.

Given such past experiences, I am frankly doubtful that teachers and staff will be provided the necessary PPE and sanitation equipment considering the statewide scale it is on.

How will we be provided the appropriate tools necessary for all to remain safe? And how will it be ensured to get to us on a timely manner?

As I understand it, students are being placed into cohorts so that when -- not if, but when -- there's an outbreak of Coronavirus, the school can simply shut down the one classroom and allow all other classes to remain unscathed, but how can we rest assured that contact tracing and isolating classes from one another will be sound and swift, when our school bathrooms are without soap and paper towels half the time during a normal school year?

Asking faculty and staff to choose to return for the sake of the students over the safety and well-being of them and their loved ones is not right, and I am concerned that the officials making the decision to open schools on August 4th are unaware of the long term and permanent damage that contracting Coronavirus can have. Lung scarring, heart damage, brain damage, severe kidney injury to the point of requiring dialysis are all reported lasting effects that survivors of Coronavirus face. Is it worth risking the lives of students and teachers and their families alike just so that we may regain some false sense of a "normal" life?

I understand the wish for things to return to "normal" and for our students to be back in classrooms, but I cannot agree and be complicit in the inevitable deaths that reopening prematurely will cause.

I personally know of at least ten people amongst my coworkers that are considered high risk, and I cannot fathom the fear and conflict the notion of returning to school is causing them. I would not be surprised if they choose to not return.

I care deeply for my students, as all educators do. They are the reason we entered the field of education, and they are the reason we continue to sacrifice so much of our time and personal resources -- educators desperately are giving their all for their students day in and day out, but asking them to now lay down their lives with no real plan for what happens when there's an outbreak of COVID is cruel.

I understand the implications that keeping our campuses closed and our students learning online may have, but teachers cannot teach their students if they are dead.

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Testimony BOE

From: Lina Manning <linalady@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Lina Manning
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Regarding BOE Memorandum of Understanding between Hawaii BOE and HSTA union SY 2020 - 2021 Covid 19 Response contract modifications and conditions of work related to Covid responses for Bargaining Unit 5.

My name is Lina Manning and I teach Grade 2 at Honokaa Elementary. I strongly believe that our school and teachers need more time to prepare before we are sufficiently trained and prepared for our school is ready to open. I am terrified that my campus, my classroom and I am not yet ready to be 100% ready to of keep our students safe from the Corona Virus. I am an older teacher and am not confident that the school has enough protective supplies to keep everyone safe. I need face shields! Does my school have enough? Do we have a health room AND an isolation room? Who is facilitating the isolation area? Our health nurse will be busy working in the school's tiny little health room. What about substitute r teachers? How can they be part of a cohort/ Bubble if they sub for other absent teachers? Is teaching this year going to threaten my life? Will I need to attend funerals of my students? OMG! I need to be prepared! Give us time!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jess Tanaka <jessellmk@gmail.com> on behalf of Jess Tanaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Meeting 7/23/20 at 1:30pm

Aloha,

I am writing as a school administrator who is charged to head the coordination for return to school. We are expected to have campus ready for students on August 3. We are not properly prepared. **I support an extension of any time to allow us time to coordinate with teachers.**

We need time to train all staff on health protocols, lunch, bus services and transition times. We also need more time to prepare our campus. Handwashing stations need to be connected to existing water lines, we need to change the structure of existing outdoor learning spaces for health room space and screening areas.

Any more time would be appreciated to provide the best, safety space to welcome back our staff and keiki to support the well being of our entire community. Without extra time to prepare, I fear for the safety of myself, our staff and keiki.

Mahalo.
JT

Testimony BOE

From: Cheyanne Thompson <cheyannethompson@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Cheyanne Thompson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:08 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Reopening of Public Schools!

Aloha,

I am first and foremost a parent of 2 children that will be attending school this Fall. 1 at a private school who has had all the "ducks line up in a round" to start on the 10th of August. As for my other child who is a public school student in elementary which he is supposed to return on the 4th of August I am torn to have him return at all. There is so much that was not communicated directly to myself as a parent that makes me very concerned about my child's safety. To this all happen in 2 weeks is just not ideal.

But, I am also faculty at a public and I can say we are not ready! So, many questions have arisen and bumps to a school who is over-enrolled to house these children safely in a social distancing manner.

I know of many schools that are dealing with the same issues. If we reopen in 2 weeks....we will be the only state to do so. Why should we become the static in the plan of reopening so soon. Give the schools time to make the necessary arrangements to have our Keiki come into an environment that is safe. We reopen soon you are putting the staff at major risk and when the "Kukai " hits the fan the staff will be sacrificed and there will be no one to teach our Keiki. Then, there will be a major domino effect and the Keiki will be ones to suffer the wrath of this illness.

I am asking on behalf of a PARENT and Faculty member to please delay the reopening of schools. It is for the safety of Keiki and our staff members.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Cassandra Hussey-Abril <casseylh@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassandra Hussey-Abril
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:08 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action Item G

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

Re: Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year

Aloha CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Cassandra Leonani Hussey-Abril , I am both a teacher and parent of children at Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am also the special education teacher at our school. I am submitting testimony in support of continuing the pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Located in South Kona, Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino is the only public K-12 Hawaiian immersion school on Hawai'i Island, and only one of two in the state. Every year it is a challenge to fully staff our kula with the teachers and staff needed for our keiki. Not only is it difficult to find kumu that can 'ōlelo Hawai'i as well as teach academic content, but we are also located in a geographic area that is hard to staff.

The demand for kaiapuni education grows each year, however with the lack of staff, our current teachers pick up the slack and fill in the gaps. We perform duties unlike other teachers in the state due to the fact that we are a kaiapuni school and speak 'ōlelo Hawai'i. We are asked to sometimes perform what seems like impossible tasks, but we do it for the betterment of our students and keiki. We are the teachers, but also curriculum makers, coaches, counselors, etc. for our students.

There is no kaiapuni curriculum provided in any of the content areas, and therefore we kaiapuni teachers are the curriculum makers. Normally, curriculum in English is created by curriculum developers who take years to make curriculum, and that is their only responsibility. However, our devoted teachers are doing that exact same job while also teaching day in and day out to their students, and also taking care of their families. We devote a tremendous amount of time and effort outside of our normal work hours to prepare and create curriculum for our students.

As the sole special education teacher at my school, I personally service all students with IEPs who are in special education from grades K-12. I serve as both an inclusion teacher and a resource teacher for students. I plan accommodations and modifications for my students across grade levels in all content areas, while also planning curriculum for middle and high school content areas like Algebra, Geometry, and English Language Arts. It is a tremendous task and takes an enormous amount of time and planning.

I am also an assistant volleyball coach for the boys' volleyball team at our school. Athletics on Moku o Keawe require much time for travel as we are the biggest island in the state. Our schedule requires

the team to travel for games sometimes 2 or 3 times during the week to places such as Hilo and Ka'ū, which can take up to 2 hours or more one way.

Lastly, I am currently in the Advanced Professional Certificate Program at Leeward Community College to obtain a Special Education Teaching License. I am committing my time to my program because I know that it will help me become a better educator, and teach my students that even teachers are continuously learning.

My point here is that as a special education kula kaiapuni teacher, I sacrifice so much time in order to provide the best education and opportunities for my students. However, I sacrifice my time at the expense of my family. With these differentials though, I am able to help provide for my family in the way that they need. And by receiving these differentials it would make my sacrifices with my family seem worth it as I will be able to provide for them in the end.

Me ka ha'aha'a,
Cassandra Leonani Hussey-Abril

--

Cassandra Leonani Hussey-Abril
casseylh@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Hobbes Lee <hlee@mckinleyhs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Hobbes Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Hobbes Lee and I am a classroom teacher at Mckinley High School.

I would like to submit my testimony on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

Scientists have rudimentary understanding of how the virus spreads yet the federal government is unable or unwilling to provide comprehensive guidelines on how to battle against the virus. Furthermore, certain politicians and high ranking government officials want to reduce funds for testing and contact tracing the viral infection. Nationally, the rate of infection is still rising with a continuous increase in demand for already limited PPE supply. Each state may continue to compete for a limited number of ventilators or resort to an option of having lines of patients in hospital hallways waiting for intensive care. More and more healthcare workers are being infected and their work load is making them stressed out. COVID-19 containment has gone out of control, causing a crisis in healthcare system, economic recession, and civic unrest to list a few. This is a national crisis. After months of being used to emergency situations, people seem to have gotten used to it and feel like they can weather the conditions. However, viruses are indifferent to people's feelings. Several vaccines and treatment drugs are being studied hoping to find a way to establish a strong molecular affinity between a viral epitope and antibody or a drug being designed. It is up to the level of control the scientific community, or a research institute can achieve at this molecular level that will ultimately design a vaccine and allow schools to reopen safely.

Until a vaccine or treatment becomes available, all we can do is to try to control where the virus can go and where it can not go. Scientists have rudimentary understanding of how the virus travels. After someone sneezes, large virus laden droplets can be released and get smaller over time in air. When the size of the droplet is reduced to a critical mass, it's movement is no longer heavily influenced by gravity and rather determined primarily by air current (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7151430/>). Most of the large droplets may be avoided as they fall to the ground or on someone's shoes within 6 feet of radius. However, the small droplets will fill the classroom over time and air will be saturated with the virus. The contaminated air with the virus can travel to different classrooms through a central air conditioning system. The school can not control where this virus can travel and where it can not.

Wearing a mask in a classroom can not stop the viral transmission. An N95 mask provides a physical barrier down to 0.3 microns. COVID-19 has a diameter of about 0.06-1.4 microns. If a traveling virus is temporarily stopped and trapped by an N95 mask or any available mask a teacher or student wears, it is only a matter of time when the virus can cross that barrier. The kinetic energy of the molecule and energy associated with particles around it with Brownian motion will eventually move the particles to different directions. Moving to an open space and changing the mask may reduce the transmission instead of keeping the students and teachers in one classroom for a full hour and a half continuously with the current model the school has. Without an active open air ventilation in place the school's reopening plan is too dangerous. Furthermore, not all the students will follow the mask rule. Students break the rules frequently, and the school doesn't have enough resources to assign effective consequences other than implying through lack of follow up (as admin is mostly tied up to other urgent day to day businesses) the student is in your classroom and what they do in the classroom is something teacher will have to deal with or without sufficient support. I had several students with IEP in regular education classes. Their IEP specifically states that certain students are having difficulty following directions. One IEP even stated and tried to normalize a special education student making threats to people because the student did that before. Not all the interventions teachers take do not work on some of these students with disabilities that they were born with. Reporting ch 19 violations to school admin doesn't do much as their actions are very much protected by IEP. Many students have disabilities and even average students can lose focus and not follow directions requiring frequent reminders. What if students don't wear masks? What if a student coughs intentionally without a mask in class? Students will walk around the classroom, sometimes socializing without 6 feet of social distance. When a student violates a school rule (any one of class A to C offenses described in chapter 19), a school security guard may be called and sometimes it takes 20 minutes or more for a guard to show up. Teachers are frequently reminded at faculty meetings that the lack of fund limits the number of available security guards on campus. During lunch time, many students are

walking off campus to nearby stores to buy food. They are not supposed to leave campus without permission. However, there is no security guard on the parking lot and people are moving in and out of the campus unsupervised all day. During the night time, countless (maybe up to 60 or more) homeless people are filling the school campus buildings to stay overnight. They leave trash and bodily fluid waste everywhere on the hallways, stairways, and near the air conditioning vent, sparing classrooms if they do not break in. Frequently, when custodians are overwhelmed by wastes and can not clean before the beginning of the class, students going to the morning classes have to walk over the waste in the building left by the homeless people. The school doesn't have control where people go during the day and night making it not possible to control where the virus can travel. The security cameras on campus seem to serve more as a deterrent. The limited fund to the school has been a challenge before COVID-19, and it will be a greater challenge to safety to reopen school with COVID-19. If a teacher brings up a concern about safety and equity, the default response usually goes to each department that such matters be dealt with within your department. The department chairperson who is also a classroom teacher makes decisions sometimes threatening the safety and equity of an affected teacher. The federal government says each state should decide how to control COVID-19. The state tells the DOE how to control COVID-19 situation in schools. The superintendent says each principal chooses one of 3 models and makes adjustments necessary to best run the school, which is basically saying the principal controls how COVID-19 is controlled without clear and effective guidelines. The principal will tell at the faculty meetings each department will choose which curriculum and plan how to work around COVID-19. The department chairperson selects a plan and each teacher in the department is to implement. If the plan doesn't work or becomes unsafe, the security guard and or admin is informed which doesn't help much to improve the situation. Unlike other issues and policies, COVID-19 can be unforgiving and people's lives can be in danger. This is not something that can be learned by trial and error. Any effort to ignore or reduce viral testing and contact tracing capability may grossly contribute to the spread of the virus. It seems uncertain at the moment if the lack of funds or capability to effectively test and contact trace may or may support or not support reopening the schools. It may be unthinkable to find media reporting a group of students' parents or a group of teachers from one school getting seriously sick. Distance learning is possible and putting in-person learning at this worsening time is dangerous. Hawaii may have a steady infection now. However, it may take one wave of visitors or one change in travel policy in the state or in the nation that can easily overwhelm hospitals in Hawaii. In the past, whenever there was an active shooting near the school, the school was put on lock down for safety. Also, the school went through numerous shelter-in-place or evacuation drills over the years. The virus is not something people can see without using a microscope, and this may make people less fearful. However, this virus may pose a greater threat to safety and security.

The spread of viruses is getting worse. In a classroom, there is a limit on how much students can keep up with responsible social distancing. The school can not control students during recess, lunch time, and after school hours. Homeless people are moving in and out of campus at night time. The state doesn't have control over which visitor can visit Hawaii and which visitor can not, and can not tell who are asymptomatic carriers. The state hospitals don't have control if they can secure enough PPE and ventilators when needed. The federal government doesn't seem able or interested trying to unify efforts to control the disease nationwide. If reopening schools will free up students' parents to go to work and help gain better control of the economy, the children of these parents are in need of both daycare and education at the same time. They can get education from distance learning. Their daycare can be planned through a task force or a committee (through school, or district level if needed) and services provided by the teachers or staff in classrooms with computers. People shouldn't put their lives on the line so students can learn with their friends in the classroom. People's lives are more important than students being able to learn in an environment where they can socialize and learn at the same time. They can learn online and they should be educated to live lives safely, putting their lives and their family members lives first before the instant gratification of contributing to the economy of the state.

Control what you can control and minimize contacts when possible. Asking teachers to implement plans with lack of tools to control the spread of viruses can not only endanger school communities, but can make the state getting control of the virus and economy more difficult. While people are making adjustments, viruses are adjusting and mutating making new strands. Those who recovered seem to maintain the antibodies for a few months. Without a vaccine, they can be vulnerable to the virus again. The lives lost that were avoidable may have long term consequences in the community even after the arrival of the vaccine. Rushed decisions made next several days may leave DOE with a huge and crippling dent for years to come. Students can lose their beloved parents or guardians and live with the consequences the rest of their lives.

I hope you will put the safety and people's lives first. Please postpone reopening of the school to students until it is safer.

Thank you,
Hobbes Lee

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Testimony BOE

From: Kealiiokainalu Villiarimo <truhawnboi@icloud.com> on behalf of Kealiiokainalu Villiarimo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Push start date back please.

Aloha,

This has been a stressful time. I hope we can get the start date for students pushed back so we can get health and safety measures in place first. Please, let's be wise and not too stubborn in our decision making.

Mahalo for your time,

The Villiarimo Ohana. (Maui)

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lina Manning <linalady@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Lina Manning
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials

This school year will be the most challenging of my entire teaching career! I will be asked to do things that I have never been asked to do before. How bizarre that conversations are happening to consider cutting the "Hard to Place" differentials that were FINALLY approved after we teachers fought so long and hard for them! It's absurd to take them away this year especially during a school year when teachers are being asked to risk their lives for their students!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kevin Yamada <yamadakev@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kevin Yamada
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:11 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Against opening the schools / insufficient Substitute Teachers

Board of Education,

I am against opening the schools. Until we get a vaccine or know more about the COVID-19 virus and how to properly cope with it, the schools should practice distance learning. Unless schools are provided enough PPE, cleaning products, safety training, 6 feet distance guidelines, requiring masks, temperature & COVID testing taking capabilities, and open ventilation environments, they should practice distance learning.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration: SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

There may not be a sufficient number of employees in your Substitute Teacher Pool and there are problems that complicate things. Consider the following:

- 1) REGULAR TEACHER POOL REDUCED - any high risk teachers due to age, medical condition, or personal choice may not return to the classroom
- 2) INCREASED TEACHER SICK CALLS - if a teacher displays ANY COVID-19 symptoms they will/should call in sick. Even if they only have the flu or common cold, the idea of "toughing it out" will no longer apply.
- 3) REDUCED SUBSTITUTE POOL - it will be reduced for the same reasons as the regular teachers - age, medical condition or personal choice. Many substitutes are retirees, putting them in the high risk age category.
- 4) BURSTING THE BUBBLES - if a working substitute does get COVID, this will cause a ripple affect into schools or classrooms they taught at in the past few weeks, potentially crippling many bubbles.
- 5) NO MEDICAL INSURANCE - substitute teachers are not provided health care. Will many risk the consequence of potentially thousands of dollars in medical bills for a hundred something bucks gig? Will they be provided COVID tests?
- 6) COVID PRECAUTIONS TRAINING - will all substitutes be properly trained to administer proper COVID precautions in the classroom? Is there additional training for classes with students with special needs? Will they be responsible for both the in person students and the distance learning students for that day?

For all the above reasons, please go with distance learning for now.

aloha,
Kevin Yamada

Testimony BOE

From: Sheri Majewski <sheri.majewski@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sheri Majewski
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:13 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education Directors,

I am writing in support of delaying the reopening of our schools. The rationale for this is plain and simple, teachers have not been trained in how to conduct online learning. This piece of professional development is crucial and it should be done before students come into the learning environment. We all are anxious to reopen and get back to routine living. However, it cannot be overstated that teachers need more training and professional experience in the realm of conducting classes online. It is only with this important step of preparation that teachers can facilitate learning that can be maintained in a seamless and effective fashion.

The DOE promises that we will be more cohesive when schools reopen, meaning that all teachers will operate on a common platform to give instruction. However, schools are set to open in one week, and we do not know what this platform is or how we will navigate students' learning with it.

It would benefit all concerned if teachers were back at school first, already on campus, with curriculum at our fingertips, in order to prepare for this dramatic change to delivering instruction. My concern is that we will not be adequately prepared for our students. We will be learning at the same time we will be teaching. This will be very stressful for teachers and students in the midst of everything else we will be dealing with.

I taught in the Summer Hub Program. I was in class, face to face, with my 6 students 5 days a week. It was a challenge for even such a small group of learners to stay on task and be productive. Clad in masks and adjusting to the unusual learning environment was difficult. These youngsters had trouble recalling basic academic skills that they had already learned previously. On top of this remedial work, students needed daily practice in new social protocols. The reality is that we will need to do more remedial work which requires slowing down the pace of learning as it is. To suggest that we can put more burden on our teachers and students without teachers being trained will be a waste of precious time. Teachers are only human beings as well, there is bound to be error. To build capacity and confidence of teachers in an online format of instruction, time is needed and we need your support.

Please support the teachers and students by bringing teachers back to school for more than 4 days in advance of students. Teachers will be better able to serve students and the schools we work in. Thank you.

Sheri Abigania, Grade 5 Teacher at 'Ele'ele Elementary School on Kaua'i

Testimony BOE

From: Elizabeth Tatofi <e.tatofi@capitol.hawaii.gov> on behalf of Elizabeth Tatofi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: PUSH BACK RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS

At the end of the day it will be impossible to know if we did too much to protect our children, but it would be quite apparent if we under react or do too little

PLEASE POSTPONE THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS

Elizabeth Tatofi | Legislative Office Manager
Office of State Senator & Minority Leader Kurt Fevella
Senate District 19 | 'Ewa, 'Ewa Beach, Ocean Pointe,
'Ewa by Gentry, Iroquois Point, portion of 'Ewa Villages
e: e.tatofi@capitol.hawaii.gov o: (808) 586-6360
d: (808) 586-6623 i: x6-6623 f: (808) 586-6361
Image

Testimony BOE

From: Burke Burnett <burnett@pacificscience.org> on behalf of Burke Burnett
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Burke Burnett; Burke Burnett; Burke Burnett
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to testify on Action Item **H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.**

My name is Burke Burnett and I am a parent with a daughter who is entering 8th grade at Kaimuki Middle School. I am also a scientist based at Bishop Museum, although I am writing now in a personal capacity. I am also one of the leaders of a grassroots movement known as Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools.

I am extremely alarmed that the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on 4 August puts the health and safety of our community at risk. The current state plan, which does not require the use of face masks - which we now know to be the single most important piece of PPE equipment - actively jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community. The reopening measures announced by Hawaii DOE **do not meet CDC recommendations**, and do not adequately consider the risks to our community or the consequences that are likely to result if the state proceeds with the current plan. It is unacceptable, and a recipe for a public health disaster.

There is mounting scientific evidence that COVID-19 is mainly transmitted when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even simply just breathes or talks. The conditions that facilitate viral transmission are closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces in which individuals are not wearing masks. (Thus it is not merely a matter of maintaining adequate physical distance.) Many of our classrooms exhibit precisely these qualities that we know, scientifically, to be unsafe. Therefore, **it is abundantly clear that the current DOE plan does not sufficiently address the fact that reopening our schools under the current plan will create exactly the conditions that are most conducive to transmitting the virus.**

The current DOE plan will result in increased community spread of COVID-19, and it is statistically virtually certain that some percentage of those new COVID cases will die. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the current DOE plan puts the lives of all our community at great risk. It is utterly irresponsible and callous - and thus it is completely unacceptable.

Among the most serious inadequacies in the current reopening plan are:

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking". Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.

2. Inadequate teacher or school training in necessary protocols to carry out either online or in-person classes.

3. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all the individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.

4. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules. It is likely that some teachers, foolishly, do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe untrue things, but as responsible public employees they do not have any right whatsoever to inflict that false belief upon others in their care. As an analogy, some teachers may not believe in vaccines, but we do not allow their opinion to change our vaccination requirements. Policy should be based on science, and on life-or-death matters of public health, certain things – like vaccinations, masks, and social distancing – mandatory, with no exceptions.

Taken together, the current state plan is a recipe for a public health disaster, and puts the lives of students, parents, and teachers at great risk. It is completely unacceptable. Under the current state plan there is no possibility that my family will be sending our child to in-person classes.

Therefore, **I am urgently calling on you to announce and implement a Phased Reopening Plan for Hawaii Schools** (PRP-HS) that more closely adheres to recommended public health protocols for school reopenings, and will mitigate health risks much more effectively. We also call for a mandatory mask requirement at the state level (not leaving it to teacher discretion), social distancing requirements as currently envisioned, and for each school to carry out an assessment of how to improve classroom ventilation to mitigate airborne spread of COVID-19.

Briefly, our PRP adds two initial steps that must be successfully completed before the proposed state "hybrid/blended" reopening can safely be carried out.

Phase 0 involves the rigorous training of teachers and administrators in the following: specific teaching protocols required to teach online classes; training of school staff and teachers in the effective disinfection of school infrastructure; COVID-19 protocols, such as how to assess and monitor student health status and steps required if teachers or students become ill. We anticipate Phase 0 to take approximately 4 weeks.

Phase 1 will begin 100% online distance learning for all Hawai'i public school students. Exceptions for students in need who must attend in-person classes will be arranged with each school, but the default is for total remote learning. Those teachers who must conduct exceptional in-person classes must receive special training and equipment to ensure their ability to conduct their classes safely.

Phase 2 will essentially be the state's current proposed reopening plan: blended online/in-person classes with students grouped into A & B and rotated daily.

Phase 3 would involve the resumption of 100% in-person classes.

The transition from one phase to another should be determined by specific benchmarks that indicate it is reasonably safe to progress to the next phase. These benchmarks should be based on the documented level of COVID-19 community-spread, and based on input from public health experts working with educators. As an illustration, Phase 2 would take place only after a rolling 30-day average number of daily new COVID cases is ≤ 3 per day; Phase 3 would be triggered only after a rolling 90-day average number of daily new cases is ≤ 3 per day. Note that these figures (" ≤ 3 day") are provided as illustration only; the specific thresholds should be determined via transparent dialogue between recognized public health experts, state educational authorities, and other education-related entities. These criteria should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy.

The phased approach we are calling for will allow us to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school.

Each of the three main phases (1, 2, 3) must include an option for parents to keep their children at home and to provide those students with full online schooling conducted by real teachers – not automated teaching programs. We feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different. Our greatest concern is for our teachers and their families and elders, as well as parents and their families and kupuna. Although it is evident that the risks of COVID-19 disease are generally much less severe than for adults, the risk to children is not zero. We also now know that children, especially those over the age of ten, can transmit the virus as or more efficiently than adults. As such, the risk to general public health posed by school-driven outbreaks of COVID is an unacceptable risk to society. It is also a fact that we do not yet know the long-term impact of COVID infection on the health of children or adults – but we know that some patients who have recovered are believed to have suffered permanent damage. In short, the risks of a recklessly fast school reopening plan are far too great to be acceptable to any reasonable, informed person.

I appreciate that the state, like everyone else, is dealing with an extremely challenging, unprecedented, and dire set of circumstances. However, it is absolutely clear that the current state plan to address our shared predicament is fundamentally flawed and is very likely to result in increased cases of Covid in our state, and that some percentage of those individuals will die or suffer permanent injury. It is unacceptable to base state policy on a cost-benefit basis that assumes the sacrifice of a few citizens is the price of returning our children to school.

The health and safety of all our citizens should be your most important priority. **Failure to improve the current reopening plan by adding the kinds of additional training, guidelines, and protocols described above would constitute a severe dereliction of duties by our public officials to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Hawaii, and we will hold them accountable for those actions.**

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy / plans that address the concerns I have expressed.

Best regards,

Burke Burnett
4129 Koko Drive
Honolulu, HI 96816

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Street | Honolulu, HI 96817 USA
Tel. +1-808-848-4124 | Fax +1-808-847-
8252 | Email: burnett@pacificscience.org | Web: www.pacificscience.org

Testimony BOE

From: Brianna Wianecki <briannawianecki@yahoo.com> on behalf of Brianna Wianecki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

I am waiting in regards to the H board action on memorandum of understanding between BOE and HSTA COVID response delay of school reopening.

My name is Brianna Wianecki and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee school on Maui. I do not believe that myself and the rest of our teaching staff are prepared to start teaching students in August 5. We will be coming back from summer break and having the usual amount of time to prepare for students yet we will have a whole different set of on-campus safety regulations to review and practice before students arrive. Additionally, teachers have not received any training or been given time to prep distance learning and I don't believe that we are prepared for that to take place part-time as it stands now or full-time, should schools close again. It would be in our best interest to delay opening so we could focus on implementing a better distance learning plan as well as a better prepared campus. It is not worth risking all of our safety.

Brianna Wianecki

Testimony BOE

From: Caleb Odam <caleb.odam@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Caleb Odam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:15 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re- this school year

Of course students get a better education if they have in person instruction from a qualified teacher, but we are in a health pandemic so surely kids can settle for online education until the pandemic is over.. We all know that the push to open school campuses is really about providing childcare for parents that cannot work from home. We should not rush to open schools for this childcare reason-- schools should start Quarter 1 with fully online distance learning, then re-assess for Quarter 2. The state should reallocate some of the money spent on the military (war/ death preparation) and put it into providing childcare for parents (life preparation). And if Hawaii DOE does go through with it's ill advised rush to open up school campuses, then it should provide childcare for parent teachers.

Sincerely,
Caleb Odam
Kauai High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Stacey Carvalho <auhealani@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacey Carvalho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:17 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Make it safe for everyone

Aloha,

My name is Stacey Carvalho and I'm a EA in the Aiea complex central district. I have a special needs medically fragile child that is ventilator dependent. He will not be attending school this fall and will only be doing distance learning per doctors orders (unsafe for him to be exposed). But the problem I'm facing now is that i must go to work (face to face) per BOE/DOE orders which could give me a greater chance of exposure. Meaning a greater chance to expose my son to the virus when i get home. I have not had any calls/text/emails ect. from my school or even the BOE/DOE to insure it will be safe when we get back in August. When will the BOE/DOE be training/teaching us on the protocols that are associated with covid 19!?. Will the BOE/DOE provide the PPE for all DOE employees to insure that everyone is safe (since safety is top priority). What will happen if i get covid 19 will the state give me free PTO and pay for care for my child? (since he is medically fragile and I'm the main care giver at night and weekends)Theses are some of my concerns and questions that i would like answered. See for me its not just "covid 19" a "flu type" as people may say. This is life or death for my son so i need theses concerns looked at and questions answered. Thank for your time

Testimony BOE

From: Barbie Mermaid <ba.mermaid@aol.com> on behalf of Barbie Mermaid
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Keeping teachers safe

Sent from my iPhone

Please delay the opening of school. This is the most loving and kind place. That is because of the amazing people. Keep our people safe. Mahalo's, Barbie Currier

Testimony BOE

From: Joy Ring <joyring64@yahoo.com> on behalf of Joy Ring
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:09 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE General Meeting

Aloha,

Please find below my testimony for yor meeting

Mahalo
Joy Ring-Gadow

State of Hawaii

Board of Education

July 23, 2020 – General Meeting

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

My name is Joy Ring-Gadow, an Educational Assistant at Red Hill Elementary School and employed with the Department of Education for the past 27 years. There is a lot of news and social media coverage about the reopening of schools and whether the DOE is truly ready to open. As a 10-month employee, I cannot tell you today if we are truly ready.

EAs and other 10-month employees such as school security assistants, school health aides, communication aides do not report to work until next Friday, July 30th. During a normal school year, we usually have an opening of the school year meeting with our Principal and assist our teachers in preparing the classroom for the students to return. I have never been more nervous about returning for a new school year amidst this pandemic.

As an active HGEA member leader, I have seen the numerous communications regarding the reopening of schools and I have received some information from the DOE and my school but I know that there are many questions and concerns EAs have that we likely won't get answers to until we return to school.

I have spoken to many of my colleagues and we also have the following concerns we want the Board of Education to know:

- 1) Will we be provided adequate training before the students return?
- 2) Will we have enough PPEs to ensure our health and safety to last beyond the first few weeks of school?
- 3) What happens if the teachers call in sick or are provided leave and reasonable accommodations? Will we be left to supervise the students who come to campus?
- 4) 10-month classified employees must accrue sick leave and many of us may not have banked any from last school year. Many of us will face leave without pay if we fall ill or must take leave for other reasons.

As educational assistants, the most vulnerable students on campus are in our care. But we need to also be concerned about our own health and safety and we hope that you are too.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Ring-Gadow

Testimony BOE

From: Stacey Carvalho <auhealani@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacey Carvalho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:19 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony BOE

From: Halle Maxwell <halle.maxwell@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Halle Maxwell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:19 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Additional Time is Needed!

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Halle Maxwell, Principal of Kihei Elementary School**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

I humbly and respectfully submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. I have been a loyal and proud employee of the Hawaii DOE for 29 years. This is the first time I have felt compelled to share my concerns in this manner. I have loved and cherished my career from my days as a special education teacher, all the way through the last nine years as a principal. I have worked at Kihei Elementary School for 20 years as an SSC, VP and Principal. I live within the school's geographic area and my own children attended this school. My neighbors are my school families! I have watched children grow up into amazing adults and community contributors! I love my school and my community!

For these reasons, it is important for you to understand that I feel responsible for the health, safety and emotional well-being of every student, teacher, staff member and their respective families. My leadership influences their immediate and long-term futures. My community trusts me and depends on me to do what is right. I am compelled to share my concerns regarding the opening of our schools too quickly and jeopardizing the health and safety of the people we are entrusted to protect.

My main concerns deal with needed training and the necessary resources.

Necessary Resources:

- Although we had ordered PPE and cleaning supplies months ago, we have still not received delivery of these items. Once delivery is made, we need time for proper distribution and training for the use and application of new cleaning products. All of this will need to happen while custodians are still busy getting classrooms ready and moving all of the excess furniture from classrooms to a storage area. Kihei Elementary is a large school so this alone will be extremely time consuming and taxing. Additional time is needed to accomplish all of this.
- I am extremely grateful that the state will be supporting our school with more devices! However, we have not received any of the additional devices requested. I do not feel confident that we will

have access to the devices we need by the start of the school year. Having all of our resources ready to go is essential to the opening of our school!

Training:

- Custodians, SHAs and cafeteria workers have not received the appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Yes, there was a powerpoint presentation which I shared with my custodians. Custodians are the key to keeping our facilities clean and safe! Is a power point really the standard of training we find acceptable?
- My SHA (School Health Aide) is another extremely important person in this process. As of today, she has not been trained.
- Teachers are so anxious about how to provide a quality education for our students, yet the DOE is expecting them to use July 29-August 3 for training instead of planning and preparing for instruction. This is not enough time!
- How to properly train substitutes (certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them?
- Training on effective virtual-learning teaching strategies and supports will be vital to providing a quality educational experience.
- Please keep in mind that administrators are still expected to do all of the traditional opening of the school year training in addition to all of this. When do we find the time for that?

I have many additional concerns around bus protocols and the true safety of the so-called “ohana bubbles” however, in the essence of time, I will stop with the above concerns.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that the Reopening of Schools on August 4 is putting us into a position where we can accomplish none of these things.

What we will end up accomplishing is a lack of trust, low employee morale and people feeling unsafe and disrespected!

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated. I have an incredible staff and community! Everyone wants the best for our children! Under normal circumstances, we want our students here, with us, where we can provide them with all of the care and attention they deserve! However, these are far from normal circumstances and we are obligated to put their health and safety above all else! Please consider giving us some additional time to do just that!

Respectfully Submitted,

Halle Maxwell, Principal
Kihei Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Louis Erteschik <Louis@hawaiiidisabilityrights.org> on behalf of Louis Erteschik
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Compensation for Special Education Teachers

To the Board of Education

We write in strong opposition to the proposal of the Superintendent to eliminate the teacher shortage differential – and in particular the portion which would reduce the compensation of special education teachers. We have been critical over the years of the lack of appropriate special education provided in Hawaii. We have been forced to attend countless numbers of IEPs to secure rights for special education children when the needs should have been obvious to the DOE. We have been forced to engage in major Federal Court litigation to compel the DOE to simply follow the law. The history in Hawaii of the Felix lawsuit has left a legacy where some improvements were made, but many advocates share the belief that over time a tremendous amount of “backsliding” has occurred, such that the DOE has regressed, as has the quality of the education it provides to these students.

The fault lies mainly with the administration and leadership of the DOE. In contrast, one of the real bright spots in the provision of education has been the teachers. Those who are on the front lines do their best to do an excellent job each day. They care greatly about their children. In this regard, being a special education teacher presents enormous challenges that go beyond what other teachers experience. The needs of this population are so different and the demands of this job are so great that it has been very difficult to attract people to enter that field. One of the steps that the DOE had taken which was very successful was the additional compensation that was offered to these teachers. If that is eliminated, it will further erode the ability to provide some quality education to these children.

It seems contradictory that the DOE would seek to renege on one of the best things it has done. We urge the Board of Education to reject this proposal.

Sincerely,

Louis Erteschik, Esq.
Executive Director
Hawaii Disability Rights Center
1132 Bishop Street
Suite 2102
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-949-2922 Ext. 211

Testimony BOE

From: Stephanie Ross <shmross47@gmail.com> on behalf of Stephanie Ross
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testify

Aloha,

I am a parent of children at King Kamehameha III Elementary and Lahaina Intermediate Schools. It is very concerning to me that the BOE is not being considerate to what the teachers have to say. I understand you hear what they say and consider it but then why? Why reopen when teachers feel they are not equipped with what they need to keep our children and themselves safe.

If teachers do not feel ready/safe returning to work and they are the people who are teaching our kids, then push the date back. We need to take into consideration that teachers have families too, children as well as kupuna to care for. Besides being under paid your're basically throwing them to the wolves as well as our children. They have families to support and care for also on top of teaching our children. I don't want teachers to retire or quit because their family is in danger. We already have a shortage of teachers. How are they suppose to do their job well when they are not equipped with what they need?

Please reconsider the start of school, I'd rather be safe than sorry. I, as a parent don't mind if the date is pushed back. Let's wait for all the safety equipment and supplies to come in, train and give the information to the teachers so they feel confident in moving forward.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Stephanie M.H. Ross

Testimony BOE

From: Morgan Bonnet <morgan.bonnet@gmail.com> on behalf of Morgan Bonnet
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board Members,

I stand fully behind this statement:

"We, the educators, school staff, family, community members, health officials, Propose a Phased Reopening of the Hawaii Department of Education, Schools, and other school-related services. The movement from one phase to another should be determined only by the level of COVID-19 disease spread and should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy.

The three main Phases must include an option for parents to keep their kids at home and be provided full online schooling conducted by REAL teachers.

Phase I should last until a threshold of at a minimum of 1 month rolling average ≤ 3 new cases/day and be Fully Remote with no option for in-school learning.

Phase II should be a hybrid that schools have already designed for the upcoming school year once the threshold of a minimum of 3 months rolling average ≤ 3 new cases per day with a smaller percentage of students on-campus and others remote with a rotating schedule.

Phase III should be a return to in-school instruction but with the option of remaining fully remote based on the families' wishes.

In this way, we will be able to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school. So, for example in Phase II, if a school has a student test positive then the impact will be on less than half of the other students and staff, than if we just open the schools completely right away.

We feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different.

Our greatest concern is for our teachers, their families, and the families of our children. Although it has become clear that COVID-19 generally has little (known) impact on children in the near term, we simply don't yet have the information about how the disease spreads among children that we need in order to make good decisions. Additionally, we don't know the long-term impact of the virus on the human body. Until we learn more I strongly support the phased return to school as outlined above in order to mitigate the risks about which we are currently aware."

Best Regards,
Morgan Bonnet
HD-25 / SD-11

Testimony BOE

From: Irene Kalama <irenekalama09@gmail.com> on behalf of Irene Kalama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:21 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Parent Thoughts

Aloha!

My name is Irene Tapia and i have one daughter attending kapolei middle school this year. I am emailing because i do not feel we should be reopening our schools. We should continue distance learning full-time until a vaccine has been created for COVID. We cannot use our children and teachers as guinea pigs they are far to valuable.

Before they reopen our schools the DOE needs to answer all the questions below. Our children and teachers cannot be the guinea pigs on our islands. We need to keep their safety in mind while making decisions.

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
 - If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
 - Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
 - What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
 - Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
 - Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
 - What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
 - What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
 - How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
 - How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?
- We are choosing to put our teachers in danger.
We aren't spending anywhere near the right amount to protect them. And in turn, we are putting ourselves and our kids in danger by agreeing to send them into schools.

Please take all these questions into consideration during your meeting today. Thank you for your time and have a Magical Day!

Sincerely
Irene K Tapia

Testimony BOE

From: Jenni Lebert <lebertj@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jenni Lebert
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony opposing school openings

Dear BOE Representatives,

I write this letter to you, as a concerned parent. I appreciate the fact that you have the difficult task of balancing safety and education for all students, teachers and employees, during this time.

There are several scientific publications, including the Center for Disease Control, that show children do acquire and pass on the Covid-19 virus, just as adults do. This can be further substantiated with news sources showing preschool, summer camps and schools here in the U.S. and around the world having outbreaks on their campuses, even when using the best protocols. Children are hospitalized, can have long lasting effects, or face death.

Teacher's are hard working, dedicated individuals. They value their job and our children, and need to be able to work in conditions where everyone's health and welfare is not at risk.

I have been following the re-opening of schools closely, gathered my information from news and different communications sources such as: hawaiipublicschools.org "covid10 updates", "return to learn", HSTA.org, CDC.gov, and local news, just to name a few.

I am exceedingly uncomfortable about sending my children to school because I feel I am putting their health at risk.

After speaking to one of the directors at my children's school regarding the "Reopening Safety Plan", I was left with even more concerns. I feel that the procedures and safety protocols are not stringent enough. The following are my top 3 concerns.

1. My school has written in their directive "Students will have the option to remove their masks while sitting at their desks as there will be 6 feet of separation from staff and other students. "

The data has proven than masks work at reducing the spread, and that 6 feet is a minimum distance. The virus does linger in the air for several hours. Having an open door in an airconditioned room does not negate these scientific facts.

How can a teacher possibly help a student when they are standing 6 feet away when they need individual help?

This social distancing rule is not acceptable. Wearing of masks should be

mandatory AND children should be a minimum of 6 feet away from each other, with dividers.

2. My school has written in their directive "All surfaces and other high-touch areas will be disinfected between classes." The director made it clear that the teacher and students were taking responsibility to clean the areas before another group would come in.

A child sitting at desk will touch any and all the areas of the desk and chair, top, bottom, sides and legs, and floor. I feel it as an impossibility that the teachers and students can properly disinfect the room before others enter.

We have not even addressed who will clean all the handrails between classes? How many times a day will the bathrooms be cleaned?

It is shocking that school leadership would consider this proper sanitizing procedures.

This is not an acceptable protocol.

3. Social distancing requires students to be 6 feet apart, therefore requiring smaller class sizes, more classrooms and teachers. For years Hawaii has had significant trouble recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Now there is an emergency proclamation that allows individuals "registered" in a teaching program to teach our students as long as they are mentored.

Just so I understand, I am required to send my child to school, in which the child sitting next to or behind my child does not need a mask, can cough and spread germs MORE than 6 feet, which then lingers in the air, while they sit at a desk, that another child "sanitized" and be then be taught by someone "registered" in an education program?

One of the directors of the school informed me that distance learning classes are not available to us. We would be required to remove our children out of their school. She did however state, that they were opening the school to get kids ready for distance learning because they are preparing to shut down the school. The director could not tell me how many positive covid-19 cases they would need to have before closing down the school.

This planning leaves much to be desired. Shame on you for putting my child (and teacher) in harms way and reducing the quality of their education. This is in NO way a superior model to distance learning.

I firmly oppose reopening of schools under these conditions.

Sincerely,
Jenni Lebert
Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Malisa Lono <lisnlii7.ml@gmail.com> on behalf of Malisa Lono
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:11 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY:H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 resp

Aloha,

I am writing to you as a concerned prekindergarten educational assistant. I do want to go back to school to give our students face-to-face instruction every day. However, I am concerned about the measures that the DOE has not prepared the teachers, EAs, and other staff members appropriately enough to have students safely return by August 4th. Teachers, EAs, and other staff members need time to prepare for students' return to campus and to set up a successful distance learning experience for those who have requested it. Schools need to have the PPE in order to ensure appropriate safety measures can be followed. It is easier to plan on paper, but the reality is that it is not as easy to execute the plan without proper training. Please do not allow our students of Hawai'i to be the first to return to school under such uncertainty. I urge you to support HSTA's request to delay the reopening of schools for the students. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Malisa Lono

EOEL EA

Waimanalo Elem. & Inter. School

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Joy Bulosan <jbulosan@hgea.org> on behalf of Joy Bulosan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening Schools Testimony from the HGEA Unit 6 Board of Directors
Attachments: BOE BU 6 Testimony 23July2020.PDF

Please see attached testimony from the Unit 6 – Educational Officers Board of Directors regarding the reopening of schools.

Mahalo,

Joy Bulosan

Field Services Officer

Hawaii Government Employees Association / AFSCME Local 152

888 Mililani Street, Suite 401

Honolulu, HI 96813

Main 808.543.0000 | Direct 808.543.0057 | Fax 808.550.8814

jbulosan@hgea.org | www.hgea.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



PLEASE CONSIDER YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE PRINTING THIS E-MAIL

State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association, Unit 6 Board of Directors

July 23, 2020

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

The Bargaining Unit 6 Board of Directors of the Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA) has serious reservations related to the safe reopening of our public schools to students on August 4, 2020. After listening to our fellow principals across the state we have concluded that the DOE is not adequately prepared to reopen safely.

Our bargaining unit consists of principals, vice principals, athletic directors, and complex area, district, state level and charter school educational officers.

While all educational officers have been involved at various levels in the planning and preparation, it has truly been our school principals who have been tasked with developing and implementing reopening plans for our schools. Our principals have steered the way through the tumultuous end of the last school year, and they will need to steer us through this upcoming school year.

We believe the directives to the Superintendent and Department of Education in the Board of Education's resolution to prepare for the reopening of public schools has still not been met, including but not limited to:

- Clear protocols, comprehensive and cohesive guidance
- Access to devices and connectivity necessary for distance learning
- Sufficient guidance to schools on ensuring the health and safety of thousands of students, families and employees
- Proper and pertinent professional development at no cost to its teachers and staff.
- Clear communication to the School Level

For school leaders to provide the best education possible, their scope of responsibilities expanded tenfold as they are now charged with providing quality learning based on the safest environment that can be created for their students, parents, teachers and staff. We ask that the BOE, the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent and the Department's State and Complex Area Level leadership be realistic in the expectations they set forth. Please listen to the school leaders and your employees.

We are also very concerned about what is being communicated by the Superintendent to our legislators and the community at large. Not all principals were in favor of the August 4 reopening. Thousands of teachers were not trained over the summer. Principals have not been fully involved in the decision making, including the decision to utilize ohana bubbles. Only one union was involved in negotiating processes that essentially impacted the working conditions of employees represented by other unions.

For these reasons, we ask the Board to urge the Superintendent to reconsider the reopening of schools to in-person instruction on August 4 in order to provide principals and school level staff to properly prepare for a safe reopening; and to request the Board to take action on any proposed changes to the 2020-2021 school year calendar if changes are necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Minakami, President
Kaneohe Elementary School

Kelcy Koga, Hawaii Director,
Waiakea High School

Wendy Matsuzaki, Windward
Director, King Intermediate School

Brett Tanaka, State Office Director,
Student Support Branch

Bert Carter, Oahu At-Large Director,
Kaewai Elementary School

Lorelei Aiwohi, Honolulu Director
Kalakaua Middle School

James Sunday, Central Director
Radford High School

Jon Henry Lee, Leeward Director,
Campbell High School

Jason Kuloloia, Kauai Director,
Kapaa Elementary School

C. Keoni Wilhelm, Maui Director,
Baldwin High School

Kathy Silva, Vice Principal Director,
Campbell High School

Testimony BOE

From: Pinapis Del Rosario <pinapis.del_rosario@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Pinapis Del Rosario
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to provide my testimony in regards to the reopening of schools on August 4th. As an School Administrative Service Assistant, I am involved in daily school operations and am in constant communication with our administrative team in the planning process to open up our school safely for students and staff members. At this point in time, I feel that we are not fully ready to open up our school in such a way that we can confidently ensure to our students, parents, staff/teachers, and community that we have considered and are prepared to address any safety/health considerations that may arise.

Major reasons to this hesitancy are as follows:

1. Lack of communication or awareness of D.O.E. procedures in regards to screening of our students, staff members, parents, visitors, etc. Discussions have been made with other schools that have made their own plans, but leaves other schools without any uniform guidance to know what should be done and trying to figure things out on their own.
2. Lack of financial support in obtaining proper PPE and disinfecting supplies.
3. Lack of guidance in ensuring that all individuals are maintaining social distancing.
4. Lack of guidance in how to appropriately respond when an individual may be presenting COVID-19-like symptoms.
5. Lack of resources to provide proper distance learning tools to our students and families.
6. Lack of uniform training to all staff members

Personally, I feel that there is a huge rush to open schools without fully analyzing the different scenarios that can take place and developing appropriate responses to those situations. I have continued to go into work since the beginning of this pandemic despite being considered high risk and am concerned for my other colleagues returning to work who also have health conditions. I am fully aware of the challenges our students and families are facing in distance learning and the difficulties that arise for some not being able to go to work. With that being said, we are not asking for schools to stay closed. We want our students to continue their educational journey with us and we want to support them the best way possible. Yet in order to do so we need more planning, more discussions, and more time to properly implement protocols that will ensure the safety and health of everyone. I stand firmly that the health of our school ohana and community should take priority and ask that our educational leaders reconsider opening up our schools too quickly.

Sincerely,

Penny Del Rosario
SASA
Aiea Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Shannon Sines <shannonlynnsines@gmail.com> on behalf of Shannon Sines
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:24 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Reopening of Schools

Aloha,

Over the past several weeks, our Complex Area has been working together to design and prepare the strongest reopening plans possible. Our new CAS Paul Zina has held bi-weekly leadership meetings in order to keep us as informed and supported as possible. With that said, we are still not ready to open school. Information is coming at such a rapid pace and changing so frequently, that it is cause for great concern. Our plans have been in a total state of flux as we work to accommodate new information and requirements.

Some specific concerns relative to our school are:

Health and Safety

- PPEs - We have enough to begin school, but are still awaiting orders we submitted in March 2020. There are concerns that reordering to replenish our stocks will be delayed as this has been the case throughout the pandemic.
- Sanitization/Disinfectant - Again, we have enough to begin school. However, our latest order was slow to arrive leaving us down to our final bottles of solution before we were restocked. This is concerning based on the rate we will be using our sanitization/disinfectant product on a larger scale once students arrive.
- School Health Aides - The return date for SHAs is July 29. This leaves an inadequate amount of time to train the SHA in the new Health Room procedures in preparation for the return of students.

Staffing

- We will begin the school year with 6 teachers in quarantine, unable to return until at least August 10.
- Two custodians have made the decision to retire July 31 and August 31 respectively. Filling these positions in a timely manner and providing proper training to new hires in the new COVID-19 procedures is concerning.
- We have been unable to fill our classroom cleaner positions thus far.
- We are awaiting notification of approval/disapproval of faculty requesting accommodations and/or special leave requests that could impact our Master Schedule.

Electronic Devices

- Our school is still in need of electronic devices for students. Although we are proud of the work our community has done in support of the Kauai Pilot Project, devices have not yet become available. We will be unable to support all students with a device as we begin our blended format on August 4.
- Our school is having difficulty finalizing a contract for IT services due to the increased needs that will be placed on the service provider. This is cause for a greater financial burden on the school than we had planned for.
- Our school is planning to utilize a variety of Google Suite applications with our students. At this time, it is unclear if the State gmail accounts/Google Classroom will be available at the start of school. This

is cause for additional work to prepare our school accounts should the State accounts not become available in time. This affects how we will train our faculty during our opening days next week.

Professional Development/Training

- We have much professional development planned for our teachers in the coming weeks. However, training is not scheduled to begin until July 30. This leaves an incredibly short turnaround time for teachers to put that training into action on August 4.

As an administrator, I do not bring up these concerns lightly. I feel strongly that our students deserve to be back in school under a well-developed educational plan. However, pushing to reopen by August 4 feels rushed. Designing our reopening amidst the COVID-19 pandemic has required an unprecedented amount of planning and coordination in a short amount of time. I believe that with either a delayed start of a couple weeks or an online only return for at least the first quarter would give schools the needed time to address safety, staffing and various other issues that are necessary to open under these circumstances.

Please know that regardless of what is decided, I will continue to support the HIDOE and the students and families of Kapa'a Middle School to the best of my abilities. We will continue to plan for the most successful reopening possible in order to keep students and staff safe.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shannon Sines, TA Principal
Kapa'a Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Wendy Joy Matsuzaki <wnmatsuzaki@gmail.com> on behalf of Wendy Joy Matsuzaki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:25 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony from Concerned Administrators from the CK Complex Area
Attachments: BOE Testimony 7_22_2020.pdf

Respectfully submitting testimony for the BOE meeting on July 23, 2020

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Castle-Kahuku Complex Area**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-2021

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. Although we are expected to be “good soldiers” who follow directives, we cannot in good conscience move forward without expressing the concerns we continue to have with regards to reopening our schools. The depth of these concerns keep us up at night as we hold the health and safety of our individual communities in our hands.

As concerned administrators from the Castle-Kahuku Complex Area, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, School Health Aides, cafeteria, clerical staff, school security, principals, teachers, and counselors have not received appropriate training (DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols from subject matter experts. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. In the absence of specific guidance from the Department’s safety branch, principals are taking the initiative to pull information from the CDC website.
- We are still waiting for guidance on documentation from the Department of Health and Public Health Nurses for our School Health Aides (SHAs).
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on contact tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used to better prepare and keep track of students and adult “bubbles”, including bus transportation should the DOH ask for specific information.
- To date, no information regarding COVID-19 testing protocols, contact tracing, or re-entry protocols for individuals returning to school due to an illness or COVID-19 has been shared with principals.
- Principals need time to teach and practice rituals and routines for all aspects of school operations with faculty & staff without students being present. Additionally, this will be critical for our substitute teachers, educational assistants, custodians, security attendants, paraprofessional tutors & part time teachers, etc many of whom do not report until students do. In a typical school year, opening and training everyone with compliance training and setting the tone for the school year takes up the entire allotted time. This year we must complete this in a virtual format, with a compressed leadup,

utilizing inconsistent information, with no additional time allotted to train our faculty and staff who are scared and returning from a complete school system shutdown.

- There is no guidance for social distancing for recess and lunch, especially in the secondary schools where masses of students will be going to lunch, removing masks to eat and socializing with friends. How will we regulate this with minimal resources?

Lack of PPE or supplies; lack of online devices:

- Schools are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- Schools are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc. Although it was ordered back in March, many schools are still waiting for the ordered supplies to be delivered.
- Schools lack wifi devices to ensure equitable internet access for all students.
- Many communities lack cellular coverage to ensure wifi devices work.
- The State provided hotspots that do not work adequately in all areas.
- Schools lack devices to ensure equitable access to distance learning platforms. For example, summer learning hub chromebooks were delivered to the school during the last week of the summer learning by the Office of Information Technology Services(OITS). Schools were tasked with inventorying these chromebooks and disseminating to students and families. Then they were collected back by the Complex-Area to be redistributed based on which schools had greater needs.
- There has been no guidance regarding the liability of principals for non-school related content or activity on chromebooks or devices issued to students, including any illegal activity.
- Schools lack the time to train students and families on how to access hotspots and chromebooks/devices which will provide them access to distance learning content for all schools with a blended or hybrid model. Additionally, training is needed to access distance learning platforms and communication tools to maximize distance learning engagement for students.
- Schools lack the personnel to ensure that devices are cataloged, inventoried and labeled properly to ensure accountability.

Training promised has not been provided

- Expected training for the first nine days for teachers
- Clear expectations from the DOE regarding who needs to be trained, mandatory training content, timelines, and credible training resources
- How to properly train substitutes (certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures? When do we train them? How are they compensated?
- Training on virtual learning platforms
- Distance learning training has not been universally provided to teachers as they are on summer vacation until July 29, 2020. Any training for teachers this summer occurred on a voluntary basis.
- The Principal's Handbook V.2 section on "Contingency Planning - Cases of COVID-19" on page 25 states: "When a student or employee either tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact or household member to someone who has tested positive, please refer to the Health and Safety Handbook for further guidance on next steps and cleaning protocols." When clicking on the link, Administrators must enter their intranet passwords and then are asked a question in big letters saying "Let us know why

you need access to this information.” It is clear in BOE resolutions regarding the reopening of schools that these policies and procedures must be clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

Need guidance in....

- OTM - The Office of Talent Management has not clarified and trained SASAs on personnel issues (Certificated & Classified) that will result from COVID-19 related leave requests and possible school closures. (e.g. SASA Academy update or CABM training)
- How will the school continue to operate if the Principal gets sick and or receives a DOH letter to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to someone that has or suspicion of having COVID-19?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- “Opt In” form for distance learning option not officially available yet.
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, determining and providing compensatory education, etc.

Food Service

- OSFSS - School Food Service has made no adjustment for “Point of Sale - POS” to accommodate for Grab n Go food pickup for students to access their Federally subsidized meals when they are not on campus for face to face learning. During Grab n Go food service (Q4 last SY) student verification is completed by an Administrator and lists are completed by a meal ticket clerk to expedite food delivery and promote safe traffic flow. Normal POS procedures require individual student verification and account charges to occur as they would during normal cafeteria scanning, this is not possible on a public street or thoroughfare with curbside pickup.
- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the students socially distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is grab n go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from SFS as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- OSFSS - School Food Service does not have the supplies to provide for Grab n Go packaging allocated in their current budget, this is currently being provided by WSF for schools who will be providing curbside pickup for meals. Additionally, many schools have received a reduction in Meal Ticket Clerk (MTC) hourly allocations when there exists a greater need to service students and scan in both a face to face and distance format during the school day.

Student Transportation

- Busing registration will not accept payment at this time.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible back tracing, who will keep a record of which students ride the bus on a given day and route?
- Although a student shows symptoms, the bus driver will allow the student to ride the bus to school for a school administrator to address at school

- According to the handbook, "Students will be allowed to sit no more than two persons per bench seat...provided that they agree to wear a face mask on the bus." Who in the DOE is accountable for these agreements?
- Are bus drivers responsible for having a seating chart for each route to back trace any students with positive test results?
- Who in the DOE is responsible for issuing an emergency supply of face masks to each bus driver?
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has provided little or no guidance on Health & Safety policies and procedures for those under their care during transportation to and from DOE facilities.
- OSFSS - Student Transportation has informed us via memo that due to social distancing and lack of availability there will be no service provided in some areas, there have been no specific details provided. As there are not enough buses to accommodate ridership with social distancing guidelines will buses be reallocated to provide equitable access to those with greater distances between home and school (e.g. Increasing the miles from school calculation based on expected ridership)?

Substitutes

- Where are the substitutes coming from?
- Who will train them?
- What will happen when we have too many teachers go out on leave?
- Where is funding for substitutes coming from?
- What will the support for the students and school be for when not enough teaching staff reports to school?

In the BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are working long hours and making every effort to make this a reality. We humbly request much needed support and answers which may necessitate the delay of the Reopening of Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. More time to plan, train and receive answers for our numerous questions would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,
Concerned Administrators from the
Castle-Kahuku Complex Area

Testimony BOE

From: Jody Adviento-Turner <jadvientoturner@gmail.com> on behalf of Jody Adviento-Turner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

As a parent of 2 school age children, I am asking to please consider:

1. Postpone the Aug 4th start date for our keiki to return to school. We feel our children's schools are not prepared to safely open up by Aug 4th. Postponing the start date would give schools more time to access and implement necessary protocols/procedures to ensure the safety for everyone.
2. Our son, entering the 4th grade, will be doing all Distance learning. Although he is in Special Education, we are choosing DL for his safety. We are glad his school allows the DL option and will access every quarter, which gives us the option for him to do 'Blended' later in the school year if we feel it would be safe for Face-to-Face at that point.

Unfortunately, the same option is not true for our daughter who will be entering the 9th grade. Her school is following the 'Blended' program with 1 day a week FTF and 4 days DL, however, if we choose all DL, we will not have the option to change to blended at a later time which is unacceptable. Another concern we have is her schools "2020-21 Student/Parent Handbook" states some services, including Tutoring services will be limited to students on all DL. This is extremely concerning as ALL students, regardless of program, should be provided the same amount of services. Our daughter also planned to participate in 3 different sports and it's absolutely disheartening that there is NO guidance as to if this would even be an option for her if she is doing all DL.

3. As a parent of a Sped child, I ask you to please consider not cutting differentials for the teachers...they very well earn and deserve it!

Lastly, schools are not prepared to open at this time. Please take this to heart for the safety of everyone.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jody Adviento-Turner
Parent to children at Waiakea Elementary and Waiakea High Schools

Testimony BOE

From: SimplyBlessed676 <etatofi@gmail.com> on behalf of SimplyBlessed676
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:27 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please do not open up the schools yet

Better safe than sorry. The teachers need to be trained. Open up after Labor Day pls

Elizabeth Tavake

Testimony BOE

From: Corey Nakamura <corey.nakamura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Corey Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:28 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Wilcox Elementary School is not ready to open safely on August 4th. We are not able to open in a manner that is safe for our students, faculty and staff. I have provided stipend days for our teachers to train and to receive the necessary PD to deliver instruction utilizing a blended and online approach. Aside from the PD, teachers have been volunteering countless hours preparing and organizing for what lies ahead. With the said, we are still not prepared to adequately open on August 4.

We still need to do or get the following:

- Figure out recess and lunch schedules
- Distancing in the cafeteria (we applied for a waiver but have not received a response)
- How to keep students within their ohana bubble during non-instructional time
- Protocols and procedures for online distance learning
- Safety plan for our school in the event someone is infected with Covid-19
- Schedule for staggered drop-off and pick-up
- Healthroom protocols
- PPE's on order still have not arrived
- Supplies used to disinfect classrooms still have not arrived
- Send out letters to parents/guardians

I am respectfully asking that the opening of school be delayed until August 10, 2020 so we can do the necessary preparations to open up school. Currently, I am feeling rushed, pressured and overwhelmed with all that needs to be done in a very short time.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. --

Corey Nakamura
Principal
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Lihue, Hi 96766
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Fax: 808-274-3152
corey.nakamura@k12.hi.us



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Testimony BOE

From: Single Payer Hawaii Healthcare For All Hawaii <singlepayerhawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Single Payer Hawaii Healthcare For All Hawaii
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:29 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re opening safely.

Dear State Officials:

Please consider a variety of strategies for safely reopening.

1. Allow parents to choose to educate their children at home or at school. Hopefully half will stay home, which will make maintaining social distance in schools easier.
2. In the classrooms, follow the example of Taiwan, and install partial plexi barriers around the desks of all children, both at their class desk and in lunch areas, so that all dining occurs in individual plexi protected areas.
3. install a large plexi enclosure around the teachers desk.
4. install HEPA air purifiers in class rooms
5. Hire BPWC antimicrobial fogger for monthly spraying. sales@bpwchi.com
6. Ask parents to do temperature checks of children before letting them go to class. the state must create a form of day care for children with high temp so that parents can go to work and kids with a temperature can have a safe place to be, other than a classroom. This will be a major, costly program, however, what is the alternative? Without such a program, kids with a temperature will go to school, or, the parents will lose their job.
7. the school should conduct daily temperature checks of all children arriving, and if any have a temp, those kids need to be diverted to the above mentioned observational room.
8. Do not just open the schools and hope for the best.

Proposed Phased Reopening of schools this fall.

We, the educators, school staff, family, community members, health officials, Propose a Phased Reopening of the Hawaii Department of Education, Schools, and other school-related services. The movement from one phase to another should be determined only by the level of COVID-19 disease spread and should solely be based on health and safety concerns, not on the impact that in-person school closures has on our economy.

The three main Phases must include an option for parents to keep their kids at home and be provided full online schooling conducted by REAL teachers.

Phase I should last until a threshold of at a minimum of 1 month rolling average ≤ 3 new cases/day and be Fully Remote with no option for in-school learning.

Phase II should be a hybrid that schools have already designed for the upcoming school year once the threshold of at a minimum of 3 months rolling average ≤ 3 new cases per day with a smaller percentage of students on-campus and others remote with a rotating schedule.

Phase III should be a return to in-school instruction but with the option of remaining fully remote based on the families' wishes.

In this way, we will be able to carefully determine the impact of each change and avoid any potential outbreak in a school. So, for example in Phase II, if a school has a student test positive then the impact will be on less than half of the other students and staff, than if we just open the schools completely right away.

We feel it is critical to always allow families the option of fully remote school because each family situation is different.

Our greatest concern is for our teachers, their families, and the families of our children. Although it has become clear that COVID-19 generally has little (known) impact on children in the near term, we simply don't yet have the information about how the disease spreads among children that we need in order to make good decisions. Additionally, we don't know the long-term impact of the virus on the human body. Until we learn more I strongly support the phased return to school as outlined above in order to mitigate the risks about which we are currently aware.

Dennis B Miller
2215 Aloha Drive Apt 5J
Honolulu, HI 96815

Testimony BOE

From: Victoria Ayala <vickyayala0329@gmail.com> on behalf of Victoria Ayala
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:30 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Aiea-Moanalua-Redford Complex

Schools are not ready to safely open.

Teachers are not prepared nor are supporting staff throughout the school.

I have not received any training at all in regards to our new protocols nor have I even seen the new school setup where I work.

It doesn't make sense to expect students and teachers to do exactly the opposite of what the CDC is recommending in regards to the three C's.

It is unsafe, and completely irresponsible to send teachers and students back to school before we have cohesive plans and guidelines from our own state government.

Testimony BOE

From: juli shinn <julishinn@yahoo.com> on behalf of juli shinn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone Reopening and Continue Pay Differentials

Dear Board of Education,

I am an educator and I am writing to you today to express my concerns for the reopening of schools and the talk of removing pay differentials for hard to staff positions. I understand that the state wants to continue progression of reopening the economy. However, even with our gradual reopening of businesses and restaurants, we have seen a spike in cases and deaths that could possibly have been avoided. I live in a multi-generational home with several high-risk individuals. Everyday, I thank God that they are well. I fear that the reopening of schools will endanger the people whom I love the most.

As we continue to learn about this virus, we see more and more innocent children falling victim to this dangerous, deadly disease. Regardless if children are more resilient, they rely on the adults for support, food, shelter, etc. If we send our keiki back to school, there's no telling what will happen to our kupuna.

We all want schools to reopen, but we need clear, concise guidelines prior to reopening. You are using our teachers and children as test subjects to see how well we do on the half days during the first two weeks. Then deciding what else needs to be done and what other measures need to be put into place before the students come back for full days. We are not lab rats.

In all honestly, we should not even be discussing cutting pay differentials at this time. Removing pay differentials will be a grave mistake. There will be an even greater shortage of teachers if you take away the differentials. We love our students and we love what we do, but we need the support and the personnel to continue what we love doing. With the virus closing the school year early - now, more than ever, we need experienced and qualified teachers for our children.

Superintendent Kishimoto said that teachers need to do their part and move forward with the reopening of schools because the state postponed the reopening tourism for us. As an educator, I would not be doing "my part" if I sat by idly. As an educator, I need to speak out regarding the lack of safety for our students, teachers and the community. As an educator, I am my students' advocate and this is not okay. The questions and concerns that HSTA has are not unreasonable and out of the ordinary and the public deserves to know as this decision will affect everyone. We all need answers, and we need them quick.

We need to postpone the reopening of schools until we have assurance of the safety of everyone on campus.

Sincerely,
Concerned Educator

Testimony BOE

From: Steven Nichols <steveo2323@yahoo.com> on behalf of Steven Nichols
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:28 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Written Testimony Opposing the current plan to Re-open Schools in Hawaii
Attachments: BOE Testimony.docx

Dear Board of Education Members,

I have attached my testimony to this email.

Thank you

Steven Nichols

TO: THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: Steven Nichols. Attorney

RE: General Business Meeting and the Re-Opening of Schools

POSITION: Opposition to Current Plans of Re-Opening

My name is Steven Nichols and am an attorney working here in Honolulu. I was born and raised here in Hawaii and am a product of the public-school system. I have 3 children, with the 2 oldest going to public school this fall. I am writing to oppose the current plans to Re-Open the schools and to ask that the return of students be DELAYED until at least September, in order to create a more unified and coherent plan to protect against the spread of COVID-19. The current plan, which appears to the public and to teachers (the ones who will actually have to work the plan) is to let each individual school decide for itself. This is a failure in leadership very much akin to how the Federal Government has responded to the Covid Pandemic and left it to each State to essentially fend for itself. Everyday we see proof of the ineffectiveness of this approach.

As Board members and more importantly human beings I ask you what is the most important thing about sending a child to school? Is it to ensure that the child learns? While learning is important it should not and cannot be the MOST important. The most important thing in sending a child to school is that they are kept safe. That when they return to their families at the end of the school day, they have been kept safe. It is a failure of a school if any child goes home feeling bullied, depressed or harassed while they were at school. Safety of our children should be of paramount importance and that should be the PRIMARY factor, along with the safety of teachers and staff when deciding when and how to re-open schools. Requiring children to sit in a classroom amid a worsening global pandemic is not putting their safety or that of teachers and staff first.

In listening to Ms. Kishimoto's video to teachers the motivation to Re-open schools seems to be one that is driven by finances. And while financial health of the State and its citizens is important, it DOES not and should not trump the safety of our children. Ms. Kishimoto said that the State delayed the start of tourism in order to allow schools to safely re-open. I take issue with this statement as that has never been the public message for the delay in tourism. The public message was that tourism was being delayed because of the rising numbers of positive tests here in Hawaii and the overwhelmingly large numbers of positive results in the mainland, in particular California, Arizona and Florida. I do not believe her statement to be a true one, but let's assume for argument's sake that it is. IF a true statement she is asking for courage and sacrifice (her words) in sending our children to school because the State sacrificed to allow for Re-Opening. It is not courageous to expose your children or their teachers to Covid 19 and its wide array of life altering effects. Its foolhardiness. It's not courage to sacrifice the health of our children and their teachers for financial gain. It's greed. In watching the video, it is clear that the entire piece is political propaganda. We MUST STOP politicizing the health and safety of our fellow citizens, especially that of our children. My soon to be 6 years old asked me just yesterday in discussing her return in person, everyday learning, "Why don't they care about us kids? Don't they care about us getting sick?". I wish I could have told her that they do. Unfortunately, it appears that the DOE and other government officials are accepting of certain percentage of our children

getting ill. Betsy DeVos herself seemed to indicate that a death rate of .02% (roughly 14,500 students nationwide) are acceptable losses. This is appalling and yet this also seems to be the approach that the DOE and certain government officials here have also taken.

Our children are not soldiers. They should not have to have courage just to simply go to school. They should not be required to sacrifice their health or lives just to go to school. There should be NO acceptable death rate for children to attend school. There is so much about Covid 19 that is still unknown. New studies detail clear inferences amongst Covid positive children and life threatening MISIS (Multi System Inflammatory Syndrome). I have not heard any of our public health officials and certainly not Ms. Kishimoto discuss the potential dangers of these complications from Covid in our children.

The current plan from people that I have spoken to appears to be rushed and haphazard with each school principal tasked to decide what works best for his or her school. With all due respect to each principal, and I know they are trying their best, they are not public health experts. Public Health Experts should be the ones making decisions for each school. Contrary to what Ms. Kishimoto said about schools having everything they need, they do not. Teachers are being asked to turn over laptops and other items that they acquired through outside sources and on their own to schools because there are not enough. There is no uniform plan in how to deal with our Special Needs students. Outdoor teaching should be explored and with more time, this could be a realistic possibility. What we do know about Covid is that poorly circulated and enclosed environments with more than a handful of people, especially if unmasked, will lead to super-spreading events. Recent studies have confirmed what we already knew is that Covid lives in microscopic aerosol droplets that will just linger in enclosed environments. I urge the Board to follow epidemiologists such as Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding, Dr. Scott Gottlieb and Dr. Fauci and to those such as Andy Slavitt, a former health care lead in the Obama administration.

Demand from MS. Kishimoto answers to harder questions than she is being asked. Demand that she allow public health experts (not politicians) to best decide how to safely re-open our school system. Demand that she and everyone involved in the process, hold the safety of our children as their utmost priority.