

Testimony BOE

From: Nicholette Ito <nrito@weis.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nicholette Ito
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY: Delay Student Return to School Campuses

Honorable Chair and Members of the Hawaii Board of Education:

This testimony addresses the current return date for students to Hawaii Public Schools Campuses. I urge you to postpone student return to campuses in order to give staff and teachers the time to adequately plan and implement new routines and protocols. By the time this scheduled meeting is held, teachers will have already returned to campus, however, two (2) Administrative Days and two (2) Teacher prep days is not enough time to ready ourselves for the return of students. Teachers can be on campus meeting virtually and I'd like to urge the board to adopt the August 18th student return date - effectively giving schools two (2) full additional weeks to plan.

At an absolute minimum a safe return to schools for students and staff would include:

- Social distancing signs and markers across every campus
- Hiring additional cafeteria staff for staggered student breakfast and lunch and to aid with grab-and-go breakfast and lunch
- Hiring additional teachers to ensure social distancing in classroom and true "bubbles"
- Hiring additional support staff for staggered recess and to monitor restroom capacities
- The acquisition of PPE, sanitizing equipment, and health equipment BEFORE students return - so many of these items are still "on order"
- Standardized and nonnegotiable health protocols including masks and temperature checks along with health screenings
- The construction of outdoor classroom spaces on campuses where space is limited and who are applying for exceptions to the 6ft social distance requirements
- Hiring more school health room nurses or aides - we need more bodies on school campuses, additional district staff does not provide daily and in person student support
- Professional development for all staff regarding the implementation of new procedures and protocols

While I realize that under budget constraints most of these things will not be possible I must ask "Are we really saying that the unwillingness to properly fund public education is preventing us from mitigating risk and contagion of a highly communicable, severe, and deadly virus amongst students and staff in our schools?"

I ask, why does it feel like we are always playing catch up? Did the people in charge of Public Education in Hawaii really believe that when COVID19 shut down the public schools in March that it was just going to disappear by August? And now I ask: Do the people in charge of Public Education in Hawaii really believe that COVID19 will be eradicated by the next school year? Has anyone looked at the historical trends of deadly viruses?

Why does our leadership always have us running to play catch up? Where are the forward thinkers? We need leaders who are looking forward, anticipating and planning contingencies so that we aren't in the exact predicament that we are in now, next school year.

Finally, I'd like to make a statement about the last meeting that the Board held. Board Member Voss continued to articulate the importance and necessity of returning vulnerable students to schools as scheduled. However,

listening to the lack of empathy in his statements about Special Education Differentials for those teaching those very students he's so concerned about really makes me wonder about his sincerity regarding his concern for these students. How can one care about the education of vulnerable students while simultaneously holding the belief that if there's no money for qualified educators then it's acceptable that those same students should be serviced and educated by people not trained or qualified to do so? I'd like to ask Board Member Voss to examine and reflect upon this glaring example of cognitive dissonance.

Thank You,
Nicholette Ito
6-8 Special Education English Language Arts
Waimanalo Elementary and Intermediate School
(808) 259-0460

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"One does not simply walk into Mordor." - J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

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Testimony BOE

From: glendaile santos llamelo <glendaile@yahoo.com> on behalf of glendaile santos llamelo
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 7:13 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

Name: Glendaile S. Llamelo
position/title: Teacher
organization: Kapolei High School

Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar for additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Michelle Fujie <mjfujie@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Fujie
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 7:44 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Board of Education July 30th TESTIMONY

In regards to agenda topic #1 I am in FULL support for the Board of EDUCATION to take action and revise the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar to provide additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools. We need more TIME!

As much as I want to be back in the class to teach my students, there are so many things weighing so heavily on my heart. I've been so hesitant about posting anything that would rub people the wrong way but I need our community to know that our school, our teachers, administrators, custodians, staff members are preparing as much as we all can. Regardless of what the BOE decides teachers are preparing to provide the best educational experience given ALL the limitations and in whatever time we are allowed. But NOT ALL teachers will be ready! Many have NOT received any training or professional development. We NEED more TIME!

Sure kids are the lowest group to have severe health complications from COVID-19, sure there are studies that show they have low transmission rates BUT that is because MANY of them are still AT HOME!!! Our school is kindly advising parents per our back to school handbook to pay attention to their children and monitor them for symptoms and not send them to school if they look sick... BUT multiple studies show that kids are more likely to be ASYMPTOMATIC.. Front-line teachers KNOW and have caught illnesses because parents send their obviously sick kids to school ALL the time.

Who will be left to teach our students if TEACHERS get sick? We are already short staffed, teachers are retiring early, some straight up just simply leaving the profession (I know I've considered it).

So many QUESTIONS:

Who will monitor our students' health when our school has not officially hired a health nurse?

Who will monitor/sanitize our restrooms regularly when DAILY once a day cleaning / restocking is already a challenge?

What will recess & lunch supervision look like when we can barely supervise all the areas during the regular school day?

Who will care for my family if I get sick? I am a single mom with pre-existing health conditions AND also a caregiver to my papa who has a pre-existing illnesses that puts him in the high risk category. I have contacted my life insurance companies, put my bank accounts under joint-holders, and have held multiple family meetings to ensure that my pre-teens know where to find all the "important" documents. I AM doing EVERYTHING I can to plan for the worst but am praying for the best. WE NEED MORE TIME.

Will the BOE be held responsible for the inevitable consequences of a RUSHED re-opening? Would you gamble with the lives of our keiki KNOWING that schools across the state are saying that we are NOT prepared?

We KNOW two alternating days in school is not enough and not the ideal, we KNOW that distance learning will be a challenge for families, teachers and students to manage. That SAFETY should always come first and socially-distanced desks, plastic barriers, PPE and sanitation is necessary for in-class learning environments.

Our school is uncertain if we have enough funds in our budget for everything that is necessary. Our PPE orders are backlogged, we need to hire more staff to sanitize BUT there is a HIRING FREEZE!!! How are we going to keep enough safety / sanitization supplies in stock at all times. NOT all our classrooms have PPE installed, WE demand more TIME!

ALL of this is extremely difficult to even wrap my mind around what this will all look like for our students in a little less than two weeks..

I feel for all the families (especially for the families with little ones) as the experience of being back in school will be sooo different than what anyone has ever experienced. I understand that our students and families need the schools to re-open so families can earn a living... BUT everyone also must feel adequately trained, prepared in order for learning and teaching to happen in a SAFE environment. A handful of teachers were given TWO (2) days to provide input before our schools reopening plan was due! We REQUIRE more TIME!!

But WOW... nearly 4,000 pages of testimony needs to speak for something! Thank you for hearing Hawaii's concerns.... Multiple unions & organizations associated with our schools & Hawaii's families are weighing in.. I agree WE simply need more TIME!

Testimony BOE

From: Cortney <cortneypg@gmail.com> on behalf of Cortney
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 8:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re-Opening

Aloha,

I am writing to you as both an educator and a parent of school aged children. Teaching at home virtually with my children present is NOT easy nor is it something I want to do. However when posed with the alternative which is walking into a building with a 100+ people in it. I chose the former and not because it's easier but because I can't imagine what pain and irreparable damage will be caused in the community when a student or teacher comes down with COVID or worse dies. If you have to have a virtual meeting because it is unsafe to meet in person and this meeting is less than a week before teachers are expected to report for work in person, how do you justify that? Teachers should not have to return to work in person until you are able to hold a meeting in person.

Additionally, at this point in time I wouldn't go to a concert, even a small one with say a 100 people in it for a couple of hours. And yet that is the size of the populations that will be in school and for 7 hours.

Also what happened to the idea that schools wouldn't reopen until we hadn't had a new case in a couple of weeks? If you are going to reopen school- teachers and staff should be allowed to decide whether or not they want to work remotely.

I would strongly urge you to reconsider re-opening schools especially since our COVID numbers continue to grow, schools do not have the appropriate PPE or cleaning staff in place, and it is simply not worth risking anyone's life over.

Thank for your time,

Sincerely,

Cortney

Testimony BOE

From: hawaiiibrothers <hawaiiibrothers@aol.com> on behalf of hawaiiibrothers
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 8:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Testimony to Delay The Start of School for Students

The very fact that a record numbers of emails and individuals have sought to be heard concerning when school should start for students and what might a safe educational environment look like should provide enough cause to delay the opening of schools for a week maybe two.

This time would be used to provide additional training and allow for the necessary PPE supplies to arrive and be distributed before the students return to school . Acquiring and disseminating PPE supplies after opening of school to students can not be seen as anything other then adding an additional and unwarranted risk to students, faculty, staff, support personal and the community at large.

The fact that several unions who's personal contribute to the educational system have come together to ask for a delay for better preparation and planning also strengthens a very reasonable request for a delay.

We all have an interest in getting this opening of the schools correct as much as possible.
We are all constituents supporting as safe a reopening of schools as possible.

The B.O.E itself has shown compassion and wisdom in extending the time to further hear the resounding echo of overwhelming concern about the opening of schools prematurely from all sectors of the community.

This decision must be made to reflect what all parties wish from the B.O.E., understanding that to be prudent means to err if need be on the side of caution and to act with an abundance of caution, that is the only (pono) and righteous thing to do.

In delaying the start of the school year for students to achieve these goals the B.O.E does not have a decision to make in the normal sense of addressing it duties. This decision is derived from extraordinary circumstances and needs to be made from a solemn sense of duty and of responsibility which impels the B.O.E. to act to protect not only the educational system but the entire community as well.

Charles Manning
Instructor: Pahoehoe High & Intermediate School

My Thoughts

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Testimony on Delaying School Opening

The very fact that a record numbers of emails and individuals have sought to be heard concerning when school should start and what might a safe educational environment look like should provide enough cause to delay the opening of schools for a week maybe two.

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This decision must be made to reflect what all parties wish from the B.O.E. understanding that to be prudent means to error if need be on the side of caution, act with an abundance of caution that is the only (pono) and righteous.

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Charles Manning

Instructor: Pahoa High & Intermediate School

My Thoughts

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: John Bethancourt <jbethancourt@gmail.com> on behalf of John Bethancourt
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 8:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This is testimony for the JULY 30, 2020 general business meeting.

Topic: Masks guidance.

I have seen no mask guidance from the schools that will reopen except for "Face coverings for adults and students must be worn when outside the classroom."

This is inadequate.

POINT 1: Masks should be worn in the classrooms as well by teachers and students to the maximum extent possible.

The CDC recommends that masks should be considered even if students are seated at least 6 feet apart in the classroom. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>)

We should be seeking the MOST protection for our children, not the MINIMUM.

POINT 2: Valved masks should be disallowed by the schools as they allow the wearers to breath uninhibited air on everyone else.

The schools should release guidelines concerning "valved masks."

Valved masks only protect the wearer, yet allow the spread on exhalation.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

For more information see here:

<https://healthnewshub.org/health-news-hub/top-news/do-not-use-a-mask-with-a-filtered-valve-it-can-spread-covid-19/>

Thank you for your time,
-John Bethancourt

Testimony BOE

From: Ember Freitas <emberfreitas@gmail.com> on behalf of Ember Freitas
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 9:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of schools

Aloha,

I'm writing against the delay of school starting especially for students with special needs. I am a special education teacher and mother of 2 children on the spectrum. I was on the parent panel for reopening. Myself and other parents raised concerns over the lack of instruction and support for our special needs children during the closure. Distance learning did not work well for my middle school child with autism. I absolutely do not support a delay in school start or a waiver to reduce the amount of days student are required to attend. My son attends a multi-track school so he was still in 3rd quarter when schools closed. Not only did he lose all of 4th quarter and also missed part of 3rd quarter. These multi-track students had more instructional time lost than single track students. You will be taking away so much more from these students and asking students with special needs to participate in a learning design that does not provide equitable learning.

Please also consider that these students with IEPs have required services for a reason. They NEED them. What about students with ESY services? Many of these will need to be serviced as well. There are so many factors that need to be considered. Please please please I beg of you don't let these exceptional learners fall through the cracks. Get them back on school campuses where they need to be! Vote against the waiver and vote against delaying the start of school. Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Gill Charles <charlesgill1050@gmail.com> on behalf of Gill Charles
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Pine, Kymberly Marcos; Fukunaga, Carol A; mayorcaldwell@honolulu.gov; Twaters@honolulu.gov; ianderson@honolulu.gov; jmanahan@honolulu.gov; kobayasi@honolulu.gov; All Reps; All Senators; editor@hawaiiifreepress.com
Subject: Testimony re: opening of public schools in Hawaii scheduled on August 4, 2020.

Aloha Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Findings from the study

- [Institut Pasteur June 23, 2020](#) are:

"Overall, the results of this study are comparable to those of studies carried out in other countries, which suggest that children aged between 6 and 11 are generally infected in a family environment rather than at school. The main new finding is that the infected children did not spread the virus to other children or to teachers or other school staff. These results need to be confirmed by other studies, given the low number of introductions of the virus in the schools under study," commented Arnaud Fontanet, lead author of the study, Head of the Epidemiology of Emerging Diseases Unit at the Institut Pasteur and a Professor at the CNAM.

"Once again, the willingness of the people of Crépy-en-Valois to take part in this study gave us the opportunity to further our knowledge about the virus so that we can be as well prepared as possible for children to return to school," continues Arnaud Fontanet.

"The study also confirmed that younger children infected by the novel coronavirus generally do not develop symptoms or present with minor symptoms that may result in a failure to diagnose the virus. The highly characteristic signs of loss of taste and smell were not observed at all in children under the age of 15, despite being experienced by half of the adults," adds Bruno Hoen, last author of the study and Medical Research Director at the Institut Pasteur."

This research was entirely funded by the Institut Pasteur and carried out in cooperation with French health authorities.

HSTA and other unions representing people working at schools have done an excellent job representing their members. However, these same unions DO NOT represent our Keiki and their families, and sometimes the interests of teachers conflict with the interests of our Keiki and their families. If the BOE does not represent and put the interests of our Keiki and their families first, then who will?

Teachers are more likely to catch Covid-19 shopping at Costco or Sam's Club than they would be wearing a mask and/or face shield in a classroom with windows open.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to be the voice of our Keiki and their families and open All schools as scheduled on August 4, 2020. If opening the schools as scheduled does not work out as hoped, changes can be made later. I have great confidence you will rise to the occasion.

Mahalo,

Charles Gill

Testimony BOE

From: Alder Olive <alderolive@gmail.com> on behalf of Alder Olive
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Alder Olive
Kaelepulu Elementary School
Special Education Teacher

I'd like to address agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

As we think about what is best for our Keiki as we navigate these unprecedented times, I strongly feel that it is in their best interest to postpone their return to school so that their teachers and administrators can spend that time carefully preparing for a well planned, safe return. If this is not done and the time is not taken upfront here at the beginning of the year, you can guarantee that our schools will only remain open for a short time. During a traditional year, teachers are provided 4 days to prepare for the year. This is sufficient. However, nothing about this year is normal and there is no way that 4 days is unknown to plan and prepare for the unknown.

Education and the loss of it can be recouped with time. However, death and damaging illness cannot.

Please consider my plea.

Alder

Please excuse any errors or typos, this message was sent from my iPhone.

Testimony BOE

From: sarah <sarahstone316@yahoo.com> on behalf of sarah
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 meeting

I'm writing to you as a concerned parent as well as a concerned employee of the DOE. I have 2 children in Hawaii Doe schools in Pearl City. My daughters school is the ONLY school in the whole district planning to open face to face every day. This is highly alarming to me. My daughter has spent the last year dealing with breathing issues. We are currently still undergoing treatments to even figure out what it causing it. I can not afford for her to catch Covid19. I do not feel comfortable sending her into a classroom that is too small without social distancing procedures to begin with. I also have worked at the school for the past 5 school years so I'm very familiar with the classroom size of our school. Many of the children that attend our school are military families, this is important because our so called "Ohana bubbles" are huge. My husband works in a building with hundreds of other members some of who have tested positive for covid 19. There is no way possible that opening face to face everyday isn't going to lead to increased cases of covid 19 just due to the places parents go for work. I can't risk my daughters health and send her to school every day with the full school in attendance. That to me is a ticking time bomb. Kids, especially elementary level kids don't understand the meaning of social distancing. There's going to be the ones that are going to joke and make other kids feel uncomfortable like oh watch out, I'll give you corona. You'll have the kids that lick other people's things, and stupid things like that kids do. The teachers are unable to control all the kids in their classrooms without a pandemic to deal with so I surely don't see how they'll be able to keep everyone safe during. The cases continue to rise and are at levels far beyond what they were in March when schools originally closed. Please look at this data and make the decision to postpone the face to face reopening until it is safer for our keiki and our teachers. A small academic setback is worth even just one life saved. My next concern is for myself. I have been a PPT for the DOE for the last 5 years. I love my students and my job however my job requires me to be right next to the students in order to properly help them. I need more information on how Covid19 affects my position. Obviously we need to social distance. How can I help my students from 6 feet away? I'm typically inches away in the classroom. How does this work? I do believe that there needs to be a phased reopening of school where the students are not brought into the classroom until it is safer. Covid19 cases are currently exploding and have been the highest the state has seen yet! How can it possibly be the time to reopen the schools. How many cases in schools will there be before it's deemed unsafe for our keiki and teachers to be there?

Concerned Parent and DOE PPT
Sarah Whitehurst

Testimony BOE

From: Elissa Gathman <el.gathman@gmail.com> on behalf of Elissa Gathman
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 7:20 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - CDC

Aloha,

In advance of the board's emergency meeting next Thursday, I wanted to make sure the CDC's strong guidance in favor of re-opening schools is considered in the decision making. Here is the link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>

I am a teacher at Kahakai elementary. For all the reasons laid out by the CDC, I feel strongly that school should continue opening as planned.

Best,
Elissa

Testimony BOE

From: Stacie Nakamura <snakamura117@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacie Nakamura
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 7:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board Members,

My name is Stacie Nakamura and I am a 12 month special education resource teacher in the Leeward District. I am also the parent of a 4th grader who will be returning to public school under a blended learning system.

The purpose of my testimony is to call out the inconsistencies and hypocrisy of the DOE "telework" and "safety" policies. I am extremely grateful that the DOE has offered me telework options during school building closures. And I worked hard everyday supporting schools and students.

As you may know, the DOE closed school buildings and canceled student activities including summer programs and extended school year (ESY) for Monday, July 27 for safety reasons due to the approach of Hurricane Douglas. 12 month employees (including administrators and school clerks) however, were told to "work from home." This sets a dangerous precedent. What's next? Distance learning during natural disasters?? I support returning to in person school and plan to send my daughter when the year starts. However, I am appalled that the DOE can say that it is safe for teachers to return to in person work and school during a pandemic when the number of COVID cases is rising but telework is a MUST when a hurricane is PROJECTED to make landfall. This is a major contradiction.

And what happened to the argument students needing in person education and socialization? We know there's a pandemic. We don't know whether or not the hurricane will have a negative impact. How is it that students can be in school with COVID out there but need to stay home when a hurricane is "likely?" Why is it okay for students to miss out on their special education services because a hurricane "might" hit but it's not okay when there's a global health crisis? Further, since student programs are canceled for Monday, July 27, even virtual ESY and summer programs are canceled. How does that make sense when employees are working from home anyway?

I have been a dedicated employee of the DOE for almost 20 years. I've worked hard and supported the DOE vision and mission. But for me, this is going too far. I have the right to protect myself, my family, and my property on Monday. I have worked tirelessly from home throughout building closures and deserve this ONE day to ensure my safety. And since I was not given the respect I deserve, I am forced to take a sick day on Monday so that I can do this.

Board, I implore you to question the DOE on their policy inconsistencies in this situation.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Stacie Nakamura

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Acacia Awai <acaciaawai@me.com> on behalf of Acacia Awai
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30 meeting

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony to ask that the BOE also include some kind of 100% distance learning for students at every school.

My child's school (University Laboratory School) which is a DOE/Charter School does not give any option for 100% online learning. Their only remedy is for students to unenroll from the school. This is Unacceptable. I am pleading with you to give us another option. We have zero guidance and no faith that our child's Health and welfare matters to anyone but us.

Our household has been very careful to wear our masks and social distance. We don't gather with anyone outside of our home. My husband and I are in our fifties and fortunate That my husband is working and is able to social distance at his job as a project manager for a construction company. We have done our part. We have held our children accountable to do their part as well. We expect our schools to do the same.

Our fear is that our 17 year old will go to school and bring Covid home. It would be catastrophic for us. The possibility of illness. The possibility of illness spread to one another. The possibility of death. The possibility of losing our income.

Allowing families to have a choice is your job. Please. Please. Please.
Do your job.

Acacia Awai

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Alison Adams <ahadams426@gmail.com> on behalf of Alison Adams
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 10:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony of the return to school

My name is Alison Adams and I am a special education teacher. I agree that the students need to be back in school but it needs to be done safely and gradually. We need to return in phases. Special education (perhaps ELL too) needs to be in the first phase of face to face instruction. Everyone else should be distance learning especially with our daily Covid cases in the 50s and 60s. I teach 5th and 6th grade resource and I only have half a classroom. It is very difficult to get 6ft distancing for 8 students and 2 adults in that limited space. If sped goes back first we should be given a whole classroom. If the Covid cases decrease and we don't get too many cases with just the Sped doing face to face then you begin the next phase. The next phase may include kindergarten. Each phase should last at least one quarter but preferably 1 semester until a vaccine is available. Since the Sped teachers will probably be in the first phase we should not have our pay compensation taken away. Sped teachers have a unique job. We are a combination of instructional teacher, data collector, report writer, researcher, collaborator, liaison between parents and school, career and behavior counselor etc. I have been teaching for 20 years so I am nearing the end of my teaching career. I want the younger generation to see Special education as a viable career.

Testimony BOE

From: dkoko313 <dkoko313@gmail.com> on behalf of dkoko313
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 10:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone please

Aloha,

My name is Diana Koko and I teach at Makakilo Elementary. On behalf of teachers, office staff, custodians, principals, and most of the keiki, I urge that the start of the school year be postponed until classrooms and staff are adequately prepared to function safely.

I spent a whole day only moving furniture and desks to allow for proper social distancing in the classroom. I attended webinars, searched for online resources, and watched numerous videos online, on my own time, to educate and prepare myself for virtual teaching. I was lucky that my school recently offered 2 days of virtual training. Some teachers have not even been offered this.

I, as well as others, have other children that we will be needing childcare for on virtual days. My son is autistic so it is even more challenging to find appropriate care. I have been scrambling to find a proper center to place him, once a week, which will involve time for testing/evaluation from the center. I am terrified of the financial hit this could also take on my household. Definitely more time is needed for us teacher parents to arrange safe placement for our own keiki.

With the recent spike in Covid cases, it really scares me to think of coworkers and especially students falling ill and how it will impact everyone!

Please allow us more time as schools and push for the DOE to give us more clearcut guidance and procedures to follow during these uncertain times.

Mahalo!

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

Testimony BOE

From: Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com> on behalf of Richard Stange
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 11:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Richard Stange. I am a seventh grade English Language Arts and Family and Consumer Science teacher at Mililani Middle School. I want nothing more than to be able to be back in the classroom with my students again. Unfortunately, I do not get to make that decision. COVID-19 makes that decision right now. I am highly concerned at the recent spikes of COVID-19 cases. Our islands have not seen recorded cases this high up until now. I find this alarming, because I have two loved ones nearly sixty years old and a relative who has asthma in my household. If COVID-19 was to find its way into my home, all three family members who I share living space with are at risk of mortality.

I urge you to please reconsider children returning to school on August 4, 2020.

- For July 23, 55 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 24, 60 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 25, 73 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
 - Numbers courtesy of KHON2 News Facebook

That is an alarming 188 new cases over the course of only three days. Our islands have NEVER seen spikes like this up until now.

I am not confident in the concept of “bubbles.” We are talking about children who, by the time they arrive back to school, have not seen one another in nearly five months. They are NOT close contacts.

In order to facilitate a SAFE environment for children and their ohana as well as school faculty and staff and their ohana, we must proceed with caution by implementing the following strategies to perpetuate a secure space for teaching and learning:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real teacher if learning from home, not just a program
- School nurses should be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community needs to be launched

The following is a suggested 4-phase strategic plan with the end goal being to have children back in classrooms with teachers on a full time schedule:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

Mahalo for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,
Richard Stange

Testimony BOE

From: Kate Werner <ekatewerner@gmail.com> on behalf of Kate Werner
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 11:48 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay open in person yes!

Please delay in person opening until there is clarity and safety for students and teachers. The charter schools have already made that call. Please do the same.

Testimony BOE

From: Elena & Chuck Hill <chuckandelenahill@yahoo.com> on behalf of Elena & Chuck Hill
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 12:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Elena Obituary.docx

I wrote out my obituary in the hopes that it will NOT need to be used by my family. Please use this as seen fit.

Maria-Elena Martin Gonsalves Hill, 50 years old at the time of her death, passed away on [insert date here] due to complications arising from COVID-19 and pre-existing conditions of thyroid disease and . She died alone, isolated from her family.

Elena self-quarantined after contracting the virus at her job as a teacher during the State of Hawaii reopening of schools. Elena's dying request was not to spread the virus to her family, especially her 77 year old mother who lived with her and her husband.

Originally from Waianae on the island of Oahu, Elena moved to Illinois in 1998 where she met and married her husband Charles Hill. She graduated in 2002 with advanced degrees in Elementary, Middle School, and High school (K-12th) English composition and creative writing. Elena was an advocate for special needs and at-risk students so she returned to college in 2008 and got a degree in Special Education and an LBS1 (Learning and Behavior Specialist Level 1). She did all of this with the plan to return to Hawaii and teach where she grew up. She and her husband returned to Hawaii in 2011 when she was able to fulfill her lifes dream of teaching and served her local Pahoia, HI community until her untimely death. Students remember her for her upbeat personality and the love she showed not only to her Fully Self Contained Behavior students but all students who crossed her path. She was a coach of both the Cheerleader Team and the Flag and Dance Team for her alma mater school of Pahoia High and Intermediate, where she started working in 2014 up until her untimely death. She was known to tell her students "Be proud of who you are and let your spirit shine". She practiced what she preached as she was highly involved with school spirit as she hosted and co-hosted many school assemblies, coached spirit teams, and participated in spirit events. She wanted nothing more than to see her students succeed and return to "normal" classes outside of the FSC setting. While working full time as a special education teacher Elena returned to school at the University Of Hawaii Manoa to obtain her Master's degree in Special Education, she graduated in 2019. But she wasn't done helping Hawaii's youth so she returned to UH Manoa for a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analysts) certification so she could specialize in Behavior treatments that would allow her to further her horizon and help not only school age students but their families too. She was taking the last course she needed when COVID struck and changed her family's lives forever. Imagine what she could have done for Hawaii's youth had she not been forced back into face

to face teaching before corona virus 2019 had been eradicated or at minimum a vaccine had been created.

Elena was the first in her family to obtain a college degree in 1995 (an Associate of Arts Degree). She was the only one in her extended family that had obtained multiple degrees. She got her Bachelor's of Science in education in 2002 and a Master's degree in Special Education in 2019. As stated earlier she was working towards a BCBA certification

Elena is survived by her loving husband of 22 years, Chuck, her 77 year old mother Gaela who lived with her, Her 2 hanai daughters Tabitha and Sabrina, her sister Angelica Gonsalves (California) and her son Dakota, her brother David Martin, along with his children 2 nieces Nanea and Becca, and 5 nephews Brandon, Bronson, David JR, Manuwa, and Shiloh.

A Virtual Celebration of Life gathering will be held on [insert date here] and her ashes will be spread on [insert date here] at the Hawaiian Beaches cliffs where she often went to sit and watch the water. Her family is asking for donations to the HSTA teacher's union in lieu of flowers.

Testimony BOE

From: Darselle Cossey <darsellec@yahoo.com> on behalf of Darselle Cossey
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 2:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools we're not ready

I am a head custodian at WES, I believe we will need proper procedures/protocols in place for all schools. We didn't get any training for Covid-19, I have asked questions to the superintendent of custodial services and no reply yet. I have my mom who is 84 years old that lives with me, I can't bring this home to her. We all should have the proper tools and training before you plan to reopen schools. And I firmly believe we the custodial staff are the front line people of these schools reopening. How are we suppose to do everything that the BOE/DOE is asking us to do? We ALL need to be in this together to help one another in this time of crisis 🙌 Our custodial staff deserves better!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Marjana Helton <20084736@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marjana Helton
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 2:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Respectfully BOE members,

I am opposed to any face to face teaching to begin at this time.

Reasons:

1. It's novel and NO ONE can speak with conviction what IS the complete facts as it is still evolving.
 2. It's (COVID-19) now considered airborne by WHO and can live up to 8 hour.
 3. The very real reality is we ,as educators that have spent DECADES in the public school sector, know that the amount of cleaning that will NEED to be present is just not likely to ever happen.
 4. The WHOLE country IS watching. Can we PLEASE as ONE place in the country that HAS the chance to get it right ,STAND UP for OUR families and communities health and well being. We can feed hungry people ,we can't help those that died unnecessarily. You are literally deciding the fate of the whole counties educational system. At least make the effort to appear you have our best interest at heart.
 5. With our testing capabilities being lessened, I do no believe we have the resources to handle the spikes this will cause. Can you show me the facts that support we do?
 6. Allowing schools to piecemeal a plan and optional safety controls make this an uncontrollable environment.
 7. Households with multiple age children will become mini Petri dishes bring home germs from multiple environments. The scienc on how easily it's spread is not debatable now.
 8. substitutes Will now be admin and counselors. Who will be doing their job? Because we WILL NEED them to be doing those positions for support of ours.
 9. Is anyone even thinking of our nurses ?
- So many reasons to not go back to face to face surely outweigh the one of convenience and socialization.

I will be 56 this year and TWO years away from retirement. I've been plagued with diverticulosis for the last 4 years. This summer has been particularly stressful and I've had 3 flares already ,one of which , sent me to the hospital. I do NOT believe I would survive this novel illness at this time in my life even though I've spent the last FIVE months trying to "shore up " my immune system "knowing" what was coming in spite of the real and present danger going back puts us all in. "Teaching"our youth is a contact sport! (less than 6 feet to do well.) OUR working part of this industry KNOWS that. Why don't you?

We are NOT talking about the flu. This is NOT the flu.

Please, reconsider opening any schools face to face teaching! Spend a minute to realize teachers need training. No ones saying we can't do it(teach remotely) just that to completely change the industry requires some in-depth training.

At this point I don't think I'll know in my heart what I'll do come the 29th until I'm faced with my first none mask wearing person.

I'M THE PERSON THAT STAYED HOME

IM THE PERSON THAT FOLLOWED ALL THE RULES.

FOR WHAT?

So YOU could throw me back into the mix because it's convenient?

Because the world is dying?

Because we are the backbone of our countries workforce and THEY need to go back to work?

HAVE YOU SEEN MY PAYCHECK???????

I'm poor. I'll likely be broke before I'm dead if I survive this but at least I'll have a chance. Even the thought of poverty (I've been homeless before) isn't as scary as this. This is NOT about my paycheck. Was just making a point. No amount of money, except early retirement would be sufficient to take this on as is. I've said it before but bares repeating.

Our country has made a mess of something other counties have ,at least ,made more progress than we have. It's embarrassing to say the least. NOW ! RIGHT NOW IS THE CHANCE TO "GET IT RIGHT"
DON'T SEND OUR YOUTH INTO THE FIRE with this.

The **emotional legacy** for these youth that they were placed on the front lines first can not be measured yet. Are you really willing to risk or even considered the emotional ,life changing and long lasting repercussions this decision will leave with our youth to cope with the rest of their lives?

Last question.

WILL ANY OF YOU BE THERE TO COMFORT THE ASYMPTOTIC CHILD THAT KILLS HIS KUPUNA OR PARENT OR TEACHER? HOW WILL I RECONCILE IF IM ASYMPTOTIC AND INFECT MY CLASSES AND THEIR FAMILIES?

Opening face to face teaching is not safe in any context.

Respectfully and pleading passionately for this to be resolved with clarity and safety for all. I WANT TO LIVE!

Marjana Helton

P.S. PLEASE OPEN ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICES ON THE SAME DAY. You can close your office after conversing with 130 other people and can't "make anyone stay away or wear a mask..... because that's the reality you're sending us into. WE ARE NOT FRONT LINE WORKERS.

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: Michelle Fujie <mjfujie@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michelle Fujie
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 5:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am copying and pasting a previous posted testimony as I feel it is solution oriented and reflects many of my own personal concerns and views.

I want nothing more than to be able to be back in the classroom with my students again. Unfortunately, I do not get to make that decision. COVID-19 makes that decision right now. I am highly concerned at the recent spikes of COVID-19 cases. Our islands have not seen recorded cases this high up until now. I find this alarming, because I have two loved ones nearly sixty years old and a relative who has asthma in my household. If COVID-19 was to find its way into my home, all three family members who I share living space with are at risk of mortality.

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That is an alarming 188 new cases over the course of only three days. Our islands have NEVER seen spikes like this up until now.

I am not confident in the concept of “bubbles.” We are talking about children who, by the time they arrive back to school, have not seen one another in nearly five months. I do not feel confident that they will have the self constraint to practice Social distancing, when even adults have a difficult time maintaining appropriate 6ft distancing.

In order to facilitate a SAFE environment for children and their ohana as well as school faculty and staff and their ohana, we must proceed with caution by implementing the following strategies to perpetuate a secure space for teaching and learning:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
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- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the QUALITY of education students will receive (so that it will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)

- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers. TEACHERS need appropriate devices and programs to teach!
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
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Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

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- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety
- guidance.

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

Mahalo for considering ALL our concerns!

Testimony BOE

From: TODD AND KIM RATLIFF <toddankim@aol.com> on behalf of TODD AND KIM RATLIFF
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 6:34 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 4 Phased Approach

I have a middle schooler and a freshman in HS this year. As a concerned parent for my own child wren and the community I strongly support the the Initiating the Phase Four Plan. Please hear and listed to our pleas. There's no congregating for large groups more then 10. Why should our kids go back right now with face to face learning at the get home while there's spikes in cases also??? I hope my email is proactive in the states/county/towns "choices".

Mahalo's

Kim Ratliff, Ewa Beach.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: TODD AND KIM RATLIFF <toddankim@aol.com> on behalf of TODD AND KIM RATLIFF
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 6:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Four Phase Plan for HI Schools

Aloha

I am a concerned parent of a 7th grader at Ewa Makai Middle and freshman at Campbell (already over crowded). I'm writing you my testimony to urge schools to open, utilizing the Four Phase Plan for the safety of our children's and communities. It is a much safer plan than the schools have in place right now. Let's not give COVID-19 the satisfaction of gaining numbers w our children. In-class learning will be hindered anyway w 1/2 the classes tuning in virtually. They should all start the entrance into school 100 virtual w the exceptions as described in the Phase Four Plan. I hope this email adds to "Good Choices" for our states schools in a couple weeks! We are running out of time to do this Right and with caution and set a good example for the rest of the nation.

Mahalo's

Kim Ratliff, Ewa Beach

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Ann Keeler <ann.keeler@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ann Keeler
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2020 8:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postponment

Aloha Esteemed Board Members,

I'll put it simply,

"Unless and until you are willing to join me every day in my classroom, you must delay students' return to my classroom".

Please take care of yourself, stay safe and healthy along with all the students and all school employees.

Parents will figure it out just like they did all summer long.

Mālama Pono
Ann Keeler,
4th grade teacher
Kaua'i

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: Patricia Suenaga <psuenaga@yahoo.com> on behalf of Patricia Suenaga
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 1:56 AM
To: BOE Testimony
Subject: Mask wearing in schools

Hi, my name is Patricia Soeda and I am a teacher at Moanalua High School. I am writing regarding mask use in schools. Below is a letter I wrote to my administration.

Hi everyone,

I hope you are all doing well. I know you are dealing with a lot but I wanted to share my concerns with you. According to the MOU, it states that it is up to teachers to determine if masks or face coverings will be worn in the classroom. I feel that it should be consistent schoolwide. It will be difficult to enforce if some teachers don't require their students to wear masks.

The DOE website says, "*Wearing a Face Covering or Mask in the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask.*" I'm sorry, but I don't think this applies to high school since the students change classes, hang out with different friends, and are part of extracurricular activities. They are exposed to so many students and teachers. If one person gets covid, it could spread like wildfire.

This is something I wrote on my exit pass for the PD days:

During the PD Days, I, along with some other people, were concerned about the fact that teachers were told they could take their masks off during the training, which many of them did. With the amount of people gathered for the training indoors, and the coronavirus having the potential for airborne transmission, we were putting ourselves at risk by attending this training. Just because we are sitting 6 feet apart doesn't mean we are safe from being infected. The AC and wind can carry the airborne aerosols. As I sat in the café and library, I thought about the Hawaiian Airlines training where many people got infected and one person passed away. I do not want that to happen to our staff.

There are staff members and students who have underlying health conditions, compromised immune systems, and elderly parents and children who may be at high risk. I help to care for my father-in-law who has a neurodegenerative disease called progressive supranuclear palsy. My in-laws rely on me to help them sometimes. During the PD days, I was very uncomfortable being surrounded by people who didn't have masks on and was upset that I ended up getting sick after the second PD day and could not help care for my father-in-law.

Masks should be worn at all times to stop the spread of covid whether we are indoors or outdoors. They should be worn to protect everyone. We have a moral responsibility to keep each other safe.

As educators, we not only teach math, science, etc. We also teach our students about the realities of the world we live in. This includes setting the right example for what we must do as individuals to keep one another safe from this virus that has affected every aspect of our lives. What kind of example are we setting when we allow ourselves as educators, to let our guards down simply because it is uncomfortable or inconvenient to wear a mask.

As the infection rate continues to climb over the last 3 days, we must do everything in our power to keep each other safe and healthy.

Thank you,

Patricia Sorda

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Kato <jessicakato80@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Kato
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 10:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Embracing the Future

Aloha Board of Education,

Thank you for listening and providing an additional thought partner and solution seeker to the Department of Education.

It is time we embrace the new normal and begin thinking with future ready minds.

Distance learning and remote work are the future, not just during the pandemic, but in the world in which our students will enter upon leaving the K-12 school system, the notion of 'work' and 'learning' are most likely changed forever. We often discuss preparing our students to be 'college and career' ready. I contend that the colleges and careers of our students' futures will require them to work and learn virtually in some capacity.

In fact, we would better prepare our students for that world by focusing teacher training on best practices in distance learning and allowing all of their energy to be put into making that work. Administrators can focus on equity issues for the new world, instead of trying to make our old system safe (which it seems may not even be possible with current resources).

Furthermore, the Department needs to reconsider its stance that no teachers are allowed to telework and, even if attending meetings or teaching virtually, they must be on campus. Not only is this an unnecessary health risk, but it does not prepare teachers for distance learning in an authentic way. As a person who is tasked with providing many of the distance learning trainings for my Complex Area, I believe that modeling best practices in distance learning and supporting teachers in using the platforms while we train is a more authentic way to set everyone up for success. Additionally, we all know Maslow before Bloom-**if humans do not feel safe, they cannot learn.** If teachers do not feel safe on campus and students may not feel safe on campus (especially when they encounter the new protocols)-how can we expect learning to occur?

I support the plan of providing training to school level personnel for the first weeks of school in best practices in distance learning (in any setting in which they feel safe) and then opening for a full distance learning model through first semester. Schools can plan to open learning hubs for students to do their distance learning on campus as needed, but if the expectation at these learning hubs is to focus on virtual learning, it will be much easier to socially distance than if the expectation is to teach in a face to face manner.

The new normal requires creative thinking and bold leadership, as well as collegial discussion and debate from differing point of views. Thank you for allowing this discussion to happen and for approaching this issue with an open mind and full heart.

Jessica Kato
Campbell Kapolei Complex Area
Continuous School Improvement Resource Teacher

--

Testimony BOE

From: Kristina Anderson <adcopycat@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristina Anderson
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:36 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in favor of Phased-in School Opening
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf; IMG_2399.jpg

Dear BOE members:

Thank you for taking our testimony. I am a 61-year-old Substitute Teacher II who has been subbing all levels and all rooms in the South Kona area for a decade. I have twin boys who attended all levels of public school here in Hawaii and are now both graduates of UH Hilo.

I am very concerned about our schools opening way too early here in Hawaii, as we currently have cases spiking as we speak, and in fact, more daily cases in the last five days than in all the previous five months! People are not being careful, it seems, and are attending gatherings without taking precautions. They just think the pandemic is over?

Opening schools right now is the most intense type of 'gathering' you could think of. Plus, kids being kids... they love being social. We all know how hard it is to keep students compliant when there is no pandemic!

Further I do see the irony in the way government officials (including the BOE) are still meeting virtually for safety's sake about the necessity of sending us all in the classroom next week when it clearly isn't safe.

I know I speak for a lot of subs when we emphatically state we are NOT willing to enter classrooms right now and take a huge risk with our health (many of us are older) for the per diem rate of \$165 before taxes. I have enjoyed my years subbing and love having the chance to make a difference in children's lives. However, I am not willing to die for it. I know several subs who are done with subbing as of right now.

Hanging up their hats and done. We don't get paid enough to risk our lives in a dangerous enclosed classroom with little social distancing and masks optional, since we get zero benefits such as health care (even though many of us put in well over 20 hours per week at work, which is the minimum needed to receive health insurance.) So if I got covid from a classroom, this would literally mean I am not insured and could not afford the cost of ICU or 5 weeks on a ventilator should that be necessary. I guess I would need to just suck it up and die. (That said, the only type of room I would consider taking right now is a SPED FSC room with very small numbers of students who don't leave the room or have contact with others during the day.)

There is already a huge shortage of subs in our state. We need to be just as safe as anyone else; we are not expendable 'essential workers.'

Don't leave us out of the discussion!

I'm in agreement with the phased re-opening plan as outlined in the attached PDF. (The only thing I would change is to add that subs need to be PAID for training if they are asked to participate. The only way we get paid now is if we obtain a job number to fill in for a missing employee on a day when students are present. I am happy to attend as a paid trainee -but I will not participate as a volunteer trainee.)

There are also a number of unanswered questions regarding what would happen if a teacher, staff or students tested positive for Covid 19. Are there protocol for steps to be followed next? If so, what would that look like?

In my opinion, schools should not open in person until we have gone 14 days without a transmission. Please, please do the right thing and delay the opening of in-person school and allow live virtual learning until conditions are much safer. It's not ideal, but it's just temporary. We will not die from it. If we get Covid, we very well could die.

Sincerely,

Kristina L. Anderson

South Kona

808-328-2462



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Emi Eno <emieno@hotmail.com> on behalf of Emi Eno
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:51 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30 meeting

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am submitting testimony for the July 30, 2020 Special Meeting of the Board of Education, commenting on agenda action item A (Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools) and opposing action item B (Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar).

I am a parent of 2 children at Pomaika'i Elementary School on Maui. I am a proponent of children returning to the classroom, but I am concerned about the apparent lack of communication that is occurring between the DOE, schools, and teachers. Although the DOE appears to have a plan to ensure faculty and student safety, this information has not been sufficiently conveyed to staff. In addition to learning and implementing health and safety protocols, teachers will likely need additional time to prepare for distance learning. Therefore, delaying the start of school is reasonable. If a delay is necessary, each complex or district should be able to assess their own risks based on the number of local COVID-19 cases and determine the reopening date accordingly.

However, it is important that instructional time not be eliminated from the year. If 1080 student instructional hours have been deemed necessary for students to meet designated standards, decreasing this will only make it more difficult for students to achieve. Last year, students at Pomaika'i Elementary School lost 46 instructional days. To even consider decreasing the number of instructional hours for this school year is absurd. In addition to the loss of learning that occurred during the last school year, students will need to learn and adapt to the new blended online learning model. Instead of considering decreasing the number of instructional hours, the Board should be contemplating an increase in instructional hours in the best interest of our students.

I urge the Board to respect the local data, science, and guidelines instead of bowing to political pressure when deciding the fate of our students and families.

Mahalo,

Emi Orikasa

Testimony BOE

From: Mara Saltzman <artistmarasaltz@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mara Saltzman
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha BOE Officials,

I am a public school special educator on the Big Island of Hawaii at a charter school.

We have not received any trainings yet regarding covid-19 procedures at all and have not received any trainings about blended learning or virtual instruction since the week of March 13. The superintendent is not being truthful when she says that teachers have received trainings: please ask to see the evidence.

I am afraid the burden of cost for PPEs is on the charter schools, as far as I have been informed, the state or superintendent has not sent PPEs to charter schools on the Big Island. Please ask to see the evidence.

I am greatly concerned about the safety of children, extended multigenerational families, and staff during this pandemic. I am especially concerned for older staff and those who are high risk due to medical conditions, including students with medical conditions such as the very common condition of asthma among children in Hawaii.

I am seriously concerned for the safety of staff working with students who have high needs in the area of personal hygiene, like those that help students toilet and eat.

I do not think young or highly disabled students can socially distance or wear masks all day. And so mask protocols are left up to the teachers, which brings up liability questions and safety questions. I do not agree with my union on this point, which allows teachers to decide when students will use masks. This is arbitrary, unsafe, and brings up liability issues.

The state position on class bubbles is based on false ideas. Specialists (special ed., service providers, EAs) who visit multiple classrooms will still be allowed to travel room to room, and will be exposed to multiple classes of students and will expose multiple classes. High schoolers switching classes will be in same situation of multiple exposures.

There is no established protocols yet, or at least a plan has not been made public, for minimizing shared materials such as books and laptops.

This is a very new disease where new research emerges everyday. There is some research showing that toilets release droplets of covid into the air. Do all DOE and charter school toilets have lids and will students use them? How can air be cleaned in restrooms?

The list of challenges and unaddressed items goes on and on. Parents and teachers are asking for a delayed opening. Even the principal are crying out for help from the BOE.

Families will need supports for childcare if school should be delayed.

Please delay the start of in-person instruction to allow for training and supports to be delivered.

Thank you for your concern.

Mara Saltzman
Teacher at The Volcano School of Arts & Sciences.

Testimony BOE

From: Sienna Makarewicz <ohanamaka@icloud.com> on behalf of Sienna Makarewicz
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 12:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

In the middle of hurricane preparations I am stopping to send my testimony in case we lose power and internet. Kishimoto says a lot of things are done, trained and in place. NONE of that is true at my school. None of us have been trained for safety protocols or distance learning. We do not have personal protective gear. We do not even have soap. Soap dispensers have been ordered but will not arrive before the students' start date. We should start the students later after protocols are in place for arrival, recess, corona outbreak, lunch and going home. You do realize this is a HUGE bubble you are telling me I have to be a part of to keep my job? You make these decisions from your WebEx meeting from the safety of your home. Will my home still be safe for my 70 year old husband with no spleen? Will I be safe? Can you guarantee me that? Why rush this, when no one is ready?! We can start from the safety of our homes. Then at least the little kids could see our faces. Why would we start when we have more cases than when we closed? Please delay the start date? When we do start please let us begin with distance learning? When it is safe we can transition back to face to face instruction. Thank you to the Board of Education members that are truly trying to protect us. I appreciate it!

Thank you,

Sienna Makarewicz
Second Grade Teacher
Kapaa Elementary School

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Skye <mrs.ikedarce@gmail.com> on behalf of Skye
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 1:41 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development reopening plan days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

Aloha,

My name is Skye Ikeda-Arce, and I'm a parent of a soon-to-be 2nd grader attending Waimalu Elementary School. I'd like to discuss agenda item #1, and I'd like to ask for the postponement of the reopening of the 2020-2021 school year. I think it's obvious that there are a lot of worried parents, but what's more concerning to me is the amount of anxious teachers I've come into contact with. You're asking teachers and staff to become experts in the spread prevention of a highly contagious virus, with NO time to be trained on how to do this. You are asking teachers and staff to become enforcers of covid policies with NO training on how to do this. You are asking teachers and staff to become nurses and doctors to detect and diagnose an infected child with NO training on how to do this. You're asking teachers and staff to go beyond educating, helping to feed, cleaning up after, and caring for our kids with no direction or support. The fact that none of you seem pressed to want to do anything about this is highly disturbing. You do realize that you are all holding this entire session remotely for the same reason why the parents, teachers, staff, and community are worried? Do not become hypocrites in the eyes of those who are directly affected by this, which is everyone. Please give our kids, the teachers, and staff what they deserve, time to prepare and plan for a safer school year. In order to do this, Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools has fleshed out the following plan.



HAWAII FOR A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOLS

4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Changing schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process by health & local communities based on public health and scientific expertise.

Again, please delay the reopening of schools until further training has been implemented. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Skye Ikeda-Arce

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Silverman
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:33 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until we have 4 weeks with 0 new cases of COVID-19 in our county.

I am a science teacher at a middle school in Kailua Kona, and I am at an increased risk for a serious illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical issues. I also live with my parents who are in their seventies. I just got my teaching license in May 2019 after completing my SATEP at UH Manoa with help from the GOO initiative. I come to teaching as my second profession, I worked as a biologist and environmental educator for many years before deciding to teach in the classroom. I love teaching, I love my students, I love my community but I am having trouble getting on board with the idea risking my life or my health or that of my parents in order to teach. The lack of a concrete plan or direction from the DOE makes me feel incredibly anxious and is causing a huge drop in my enthusiasm and morale for teaching.

I have been physically distancing with my family since March, I do not go out to eat, I always wear a mask, I wash my hands incessantly, I am super careful. But when I do go out to get groceries or swim in the ocean I am shocked and disappointed to see the amount of close socializing that is occurring in my community, naked faces everywhere. With the number of visitors that arrive daily, both inter-island and exempt workers, it is inevitable that we will see more Coronavirus transmission. We need to take drastic action now as we did in March in order to avoid a predictable yet massive spike in Covid-19. You already made tough choices in order to protect our communities, we need you to do it again. Stand with our educators, students, principals, administrators, staff, substitute teachers, nurses and implement the same protection measures that kept us safe in March.

If you move ahead with in person learning without a contingency plan about when to close again or without properly training everyone in the school setting(students, teachers, administrators, custodians, parents) we will have school COVID-19 clusters with staff and students getting sick and dying or bringing the disease home to their families. You must listen to the cacophony of voices or you risk causing irreparable harm to the trust we have in your direction and leadership. Not to mention the responsibility you will have in causing sickness and death in our communities.

The evidence is clear, with the increasing cases in our communities, it is unsafe for in-person learning.

I recommend that we follow a 4 phase plan of reopening as is documented by the group Hawaii for a Safer Return to Schools at <https://sites.google.com/view/hawaiiforasafereurntoschools/four-phase-reopening-plan>

This a real plan that has specific parameters for contingencies and makes safety of our education communities the most important metric.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Mahalo

Rachel Silverman

Testimony BOE

From: Derek Bishop <derek.bishop@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Derek Bishop
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:33 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in Support of Regular School Opening: Board Action "A" July 30. 2020

Dear Esteemed Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

This letter is in support of a regular school opening for students and staff (Board Action "A," July 30, 2020). My name is Derek Bishop and I am a special education teacher of 30 years, currently employed at Paauilo School on the Big Island.

Children's cognitive, emotional, and social development are best met through in-person learning without face coverings. Children should be encouraged to play and interact normally. Children are not at risk, and the people succumbing to "COVID" are pushing 80 years old, typically, and have one or more co-morbidities like pneumonia or COPD. The government's response to the current "COVID-19" concern has caused tremendous damage socially and financially to our nation. The death rate for people who test positive for COVID-19 is less than that of a seasonal flu. 1.5 million people died of tuberculosis last year. Why no shut down then? You do not quarantine the healthy. That is not "following the science." The Gates Foundation and the pharmaceutical giants have enormous financial ties to the CDC, WHO, and President Trump's infectious disease czar, Anthony Fauci. We cannot let our keiki become the victims in this global play for power.

I know that the State of Hawaii is under intense pressure from various agencies and influencers to follow the ever changing and increasingly draconian CDC guidelines. I know that federal moneys will likely be tied to the State's acquiescence and compliance. So, we are walking a thin line. I urge you to create as much wiggle room as possible for those under your jurisdiction, so that we can create as humane and as pro-social a learning environment as possible.

If you are interested, may I ask that you consider some alternative media and science sources as you craft school opening guidelines:

Physicians For Informed Consent:

<https://physiciansforinformedconsent.org/covid-19/>

Bakersfield, California Doctors Erickson and Massihi Give COVID-19 Press Briefing to Bakersfield KGET TV17, April 22, 2020:

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/NkiM9fo1Ba0h/>

Corbett Report: Who Is Bill Gates (4-part video series):

<https://www.corbettreport.com/gates/>

Mercola.com: CDC Guidelines for Going Back to School in 2020:

<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/07/23/school-guidelines-coronavirus.aspx>

Taylor Raine: In Response To The CDC's School Reopening Guidelines - One Parent's Concern:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=43&v=0TDYpEpa3M4&feature=emb_logo

Del Bigtree: Mask Test Proves Toxic For Children - Levels of Carbon Dioxide Inside A Mask, Face Shield, and Cloth:

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/pICQnZVzhmQq/>

Off Guardian: 12 Experts Questioning the Coronavirus Panic:

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/03/24/12-experts-questioning-the-coronavirus-panic/>

Max Igan: Are You Ready For The Great Reset? : <https://www.bitchute.com/video/joUIWybJvHY/>

Jon Rappoport's Blog:

<https://blog.nomorefakenews.com/?s=covid&submit=Search>

David Icke's Explosive Interview With London Real - The Video That YouTube Doesn't Want You To See (this live interview was pulled by Google mid-stream despite 87,000 viewers watching):

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/H4W7FwBy0Ukh/>

David Icke: How They Pulled Off The "Pandemic:" An Animated Explanation by David Icke:

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/vPHlo2P3TG22/>

I am grateful to the Board of Education's time and consideration of my input. I wish every stakeholder in this very important matter the very best in navigating a path forward that not only safeguards our health, but maintains our humanity, our hope as a people, and a recognition of the sacredness and essential goodness of the human community.

Derek Bishop, Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School, Big Island

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Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Verizon <rachelsilverman@verizon.net> on behalf of Rachel Verizon
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:37 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

Please DO NOT return students to in-person learning in school buildings until we have 4 weeks with 0 new cases of COVID-19 in our county.

I am a science teacher at a middle school in Kailua Kona, and I am at an increased risk for a serious illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical issues. I also live with my parents who are in their seventies. I just got my teaching license in May 2019 after completing my SATEP at UH Manoa with help from the GOO initiative. I come to teaching as my second profession, I worked as a biologist and environmental educator for many years before deciding to teach in the classroom. I love teaching, I love my students, I love my community but I am having trouble getting on board with the idea risking my life or my health or that of my parents in order to teach. The lack of a concrete plan or direction from the DOE makes me feel incredibly anxious and is causing a huge drop in my enthusiasm and morale for teaching.

I have been physically distancing with my family since March, I do not go out to eat, I always wear a mask, I wash my hands incessantly, I am super careful. But when I do go out to get groceries or swim in the ocean I am shocked and disappointed to see the amount of close socializing that is occurring in my community, naked faces everywhere. With the number of visitors that arrive daily, both inter-island and exempt workers, it is inevitable that we will see more Coronavirus transmission. We need to take drastic action now as we did in March in order to avoid a predictable yet massive spike in Covid-19. You already made tough choices in order to protect our communities, we need you to do it again. Stand with our educators, students, principals, administrators, staff, substitute teachers, nurses and implement the same protection measures that kept us safe in March.

If you move ahead with in person learning without a contingency plan about when to close again or without properly training everyone in the school setting(students, teachers, administrators, custodians, parents) we will have school COVID-19 clusters with staff and students getting sick and dying or bringing the disease home to their families. You must listen to the cacophony of voices or you risk causing irreparable harm to the trust we have in your direction and leadership. Not to mention the responsibility you will have in causing sickness and death in our communities.

The evidence is clear, with the increasing cases in our communities, it is unsafe for in-person learning.

I recommend that we follow a 4 phase plan of reopening as is documented by the group Hawaii for a Safer Return to Schools at <https://sites.google.com/view/hawaiiforasafereurntoschools/four-phase-reopening-plan>

This a real plan that has specific parameters for contingencies and makes safety of our education communities the most important metric.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Mahalo

Rachel Silverman

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kileigh Sanchez <kileighsanchez@gmail.com> on behalf of Kileigh Sanchez
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:46 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony 7/30 BOE

I appreciate all of the kind words the BOE shared regarding the differential pay cuts and delaying the beginning of school. I actively listened to the entire 6.5 hour meeting last week through WebEx, eagerly trying to ascertain what the outcome of our testimonies would be. I think that the fact that we are all expected to go back to work in person in 3 days is scary enough on its own (my school has over 125 adult staff) without considering bringing students back part-time or full-time. I think it's insane that we are attempting to enter into this school year with a "business as usual" approach when we have over 100 active cases of COVID-19 that have popped up in the LAST THREE DAYS. Why are we even CONSIDERING sending our teachers back to school, much less the students, when there is such a rise in cases? We are not asking for an arbitrary date to be selected (August 18th is RANDOM) so that teachers can have two weeks to "train". We are asking that schools take a PHASED approach to returning to school which would look like the following:

PHASE 1: TRAINING (ALL TEACHERS & SUBSTITUTES W/ONLINE LEARNING, EVALUATE CAMPUS SAFETY, TRAIN STAFF TO DEAL WITH SICK STUDENTS/PARENTS)

PHASE 2: 100% DISTANCE LEARNING (CLASSROOM VENTILATION MODIFICATIONS PUT INTO PLACE)

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING: IN-PERSON AND ONLINE LEARNING (NO MORE THAN 12 STUDENTS PER CLASS MAX)

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS WITH ONLINE OPTION

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IycKcJXHPfz4k-aJd6ETic7ybyq3WqRx1/view>

We believe that there will be a CATASTROPHIC rise in cases and illness across our schools if we choose to haphazardly open because we think it's time to open up the economy. Sacrificing our teachers and our keiki in the name of our economy is unacceptable. If you think that cutting differentials will cause mass teacher shortages, you have no clue what not caring about our students' and teachers' health and well-being will do to our entire state. As a teacher entering my 7th year of teaching, I believe our students deserve better than this. Why isn't Superintendent Kishimoto responding to our concerns? Why does it sound like the other BOE members care more about the teachers and the kids than our own leader? She posted her video and literally asked that teachers have courage. This is completely out of touch with reality as a GLOBAL PANDEMIC IS NOT THE TIME TO HAVE COURAGE AND GET BACK TO WORK. We believe the DOE has skipped two CRITICAL steps in the reopening of schools plan and do not believe it is safe or wise at all to move straight into phase 3. I personally don't understand the fact that we are starting school on Wednesday and this is still up in the air. Please hear us. Hear the cries of our students being separated from their parents WHEN either or both of them fall ill to COVID-19. I am not willing to sacrifice the health of my family and I don't understand why you all are so quick to push us forward into the front lines from the safety of your VIRTUAL meetings. If it's so safe, why not conduct your business in person? Quarantines are lifted from island to island. Sit in a poorly ventilated boardroom for 6.5 hours and you'll get a small taste of what we will be facing every single day with CASES ON THE RISE.

DO SOMETHING. Our lives depend on it.

--

Kileigh Sanchez, M.S.Ed.
Art Educator, Waianae Intermediate School
Vanderbilt University '14, Communications and Studio Art
Johns Hopkins University '16, Master of Science, Education

Phone: (808) 305-2738

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Testimony BOE

From: Marybeth Baldwin <marybethhamilton808@gmail.com> on behalf of Marybeth Baldwin
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 3:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Hello,

I am a teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy, a Hawaii Public Charter School, and my son is a student at Hahaione Elementary. While both our schools have done as best they can to prepare for our reopening, I do not think schools should be opened yet. Not much has changed (aside from an increased case count) since we shut down in March. The only thing I perceive having changed is that families are ready for a return to "normalcy" and parents need to get back to work. While I am in agreement with both these things, **I don't think opening schools up for all students should happen for some time.**

I'm sure you've heard all the concerns, so I'll just bring up the ones that are most important to me. Firstly, teachers are not prepared for our eventual return to virtual learning. More training needs to happen. We can't have a repeat of quarter 4 distance learning, but very little training has happened over the past few months. Quarter 4 was spent responding to immediate concerns and trying to reach out to students. This summer there was some training offered, but it was not mandatory nor systematic. Teachers should be instructed in best practices for hybrid and virtual teaching. As a third-year teacher at a blended learning school that has virtual classes, I know that this type of teaching is very different from in-person teaching. I am worried about starting the year totally online and most of my students already have the skills needed for success in that format. I imagine teachers who are new to hybrid teaching are feeling extremely nervous and unprepared right now. They need our support and they need training.

Secondly, I don't think schools are ready to keep up with the cleaning/sanitizing needs required to keep everyone on campus safe. All schools should have a clear procedure and the needed amount of staff and supplies to clean high touch surfaces multiple times a day. In addition, all schools should have air filtration systems in every classroom and indoor space that is used. I know my son's school was working to make that happen but I haven't heard much about air filtration systems in my conversations with other educators. I think about the activities my family has been engaging during the pandemic--they are all outdoor activities with freely flowing air. I am so concerned about students in classrooms, ones that we know are already stifling hot in August and September. Our students will no doubt overheat with their masks on, yet if they take them off, they will potentially be exposing themselves to a virus. My school has air conditioning, but we don't have windows that open. I am so concerned about the potential of recirculating air sharing the virus among many students in a classroom.

Thirdly, while many schools are switching to schedules that allow for smaller classes, not all have made that needed switch yet. If the recommendation is still that we gather in groups of no more than 10, it makes no sense that there are more than 8-9 students in a classroom at any given time. Right now, my son's school is trying to have 100% of students back on campus in smaller classes of about 20. That is way too large even if social distancing is encouraged. I totally understand the economic impact of not having kids in school but I don't think having large groups of students in the same room is the answer. When school administrators and board members feel it's safer to meet virtually than in the same room, it certainly says something about how they value student and teacher lives that they will send them back into schools together.

All this to say that **I don't think schools should reopen to students on August 4.** I do support a phased reopening that you have surely seen mentioned in other testimony. You can find that [linked here](#) and explained here:

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: **NO CONTACT**

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: **MINIMAL CONTACT**

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: **NEW EDUCATION MODEL**

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Thank you for your time. I trust that you will do your best to keep students, teachers, and school staff safe.

-Marybeth Baldwin

Testimony BOE

From: Greta Gallardo <gallardo.greta@gmail.com> on behalf of Greta Gallardo
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 4:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: image0.jpeg; Untitled attachment 00221.txt

Aloha,

As a parent of two students at Hahahione elementary school, I'm writing to request that the consideration of the well thought out 4 phase approach be taken into consideration as schools begin to reopen.

This approach will prepare teachers, students, and parents to return safely to school. As it stands, we are asked to return on a rotating schedule August 5th and then to a full time, 5 day a week schedule on August 17th with no confirmation of reduced class sizes or specific safety measures or protocols.

This four phase approach makes sense and outlines a safe and responsible return for students and teachers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Greta Gallardo
Parent



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: HEATHER BROWN <barenekkidlady@aol.com> on behalf of HEATHER BROWN
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 4:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Support for Phased Return to School

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Heather Wolfenbarger. I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because I think more time is needed to properly train faculty and staff and to develop contingency plans should anyone at the school test positive for COVID-19.

This is my son's senior of high school. I am concerned for the health, safety, and general well being of all students, faculty and staff. Coronavirus cases are on the rise in Hawaii. Instead of rushing to start school on August 4th with even a hybrid plan, more time should be taken to properly prepare. I do not believe schools are equipped at this time to do any in person instruction. It would be terrible to have a COVID outbreak at any school. The risk of such a thing is very real, but can be mitigated with more time and planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,
Heather Wolfenbarger

Testimony BOE

From: Alicia Jacobson <asjmaui@gmail.com> on behalf of Alicia Jacobson
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 5:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE Special Meeting Thursday July 30, 2020

Honorable Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

We need time. Please extend the student return to school date by at least one week for the 2020-2021 school year. We need time to communicate with our families, with our colleagues, with our students, and to make a plan. We have NEVER had a year like we are about to have. If we want this to go well, we need a plan, we need to be heard and respected as educators. We need to set up our rooms, campus, and virtual learning platforms.. We need to make schedules and safe spaces. We need to sit down and call every ohana and connect. We need to create on-line materials and train our parents how to use these and the existing on-line programs. This will be a year like no other and time can make it a year of growth and collaboration or a year of frustration and avoidance. You have the power to set the tone for this year.

Awoke at sunrise with thoughts of the school year swirling in my mind. There is never enough “contract” time given to prepare for a new year. For 25-30 new little humans with their families and their problems and their gifts and their questions and their needs. Never enough time to communicate and organize and plan and reflect for another year to change a child’s life.

This year is the same, and yet, different, very very different. It is Sunday July 26 and I do not have my class list. I do not know if I will be teaching virtual or a hybrid of face to face. I do not have my room set up. I ordered clear shower curtains on my own. There has been no direction. Desks sit piled in the corner and trash bags are filled with opala from last school year from the one day I was able to access my room last week. Our school’s reopening plan is dated July 1 and puts us in the recovery phase. There were 73 cases of COVID yesterday, a record. I personally know of parents from my school who attended a drum party and a yoga studio with an infected person. Not following protocol, and now, after months of practicing safely myself, I will be placed in a space with children from these families? No plexiglas like the cashier at the store, no temperature check like the doctor’s office. I am scared. We need safety measures and ohana accountability. We need a plan.

We have a new Principal this year, the fifth Principal since I transferred to Haiku Elementary in 2013. She has never been a Principal nor worked at an elementary school to my knowledge. I have not met her, but will start the year with her this Wednesday. We have four days to prepare for our school year. We are on our fifth math program too, and our last Principal also rolled out a new writing program in addition to the writing program embedded in our ELA program. More curriculum, less time. Is this efficient? Are good choices being made. More reasons to be scared.

Last year our Principal of one year, put our staff in two days of non-stop training for a Science program that was sparsely implemented. We got trained from 8 am to 2 pm, we got books, and passwords, and boxes of materials. We needed to plan our lessons, set up get to know you activities, call our parents, but we sat packed like sardines in our tiny library as it was the only air conditioned space, except the office. We tried to engage, we tried, but we had so much to do. Many of us stayed beyond sunset to do what we know needed to be done, others had families, and second jobs. We did our best to prepare for our students with the limited resources and time.

This year will be no different, but it will be very different. We need a plan to keep our keiki and ourselves safe. We need to keep vigilant about social distancing, mask wearing, and cleaning. It will be very challenging as our jobs are all consuming, and to remember to keep a distance, to wear a mask, and learn new ways will be a task like none before. And if we do not, and if one ohana does not share the same belief in social distancing, mask wearing, and hygiene, then we will all have a consequence. If one ohana does not do what is asked, then we can all be affected.

I humbly ask you for time. Time for our staff to make a plan. Time to create our classes from a survey sent out less than a week ago. Time to schedule our day. Time to plan lessons on a rotating schedule. Time to plan on-line lessons. Time to mark our areas for distancing. But most importantly, time to contact each and every ohana. To engage these families in our commitment to help their keiki learn and stay safe. We need to educate our parents on how to help these kids. That is something that has been neglected. We have been buying new programs and setting up computers and passwords and websites, but the families have not been personally engaged in all this. After 20 years in the DOE, I see a HUGE disconnect. This has all happened quickly and without much communication. Now is our opportunity to communicate, to slow down and help parents understand and embrace all the changes that have been happening. Happening so fast.

I also urge you to reflect on all the stories that teachers are telling you. Why are we moving so fast, spending so much money? To pass tests that take away so much of our learning time. Tests and curriculum being implemented with little thought or teacher input and a lot of money. Tests for the state and diagnostic tests that schools use to guide instruction. Why so many tests? Can we change our system to be more efficient? Can we take more time to

communicate with our ohanas and involve our students in projects that reflect real world skills? Would the results be even more powerful than a new math program? Teachers know our standards, we do not need more big box curriculum. We need time. This is the year to make connections and plan for our safety. Give teachers, administrators, and staff at least an additional week to plan for the return of our students and monitor the trend of the Covid 19 spread in our communities. Our lives just might depend on it.

With warm aloha,
Alicia S. Jacobson
Mrs. J
Grade 4
Haiku Elementary

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With warm aloha,
Alicia S. Jacobson



Testimony BOE

From: allan cunanan <allanc23@yahoo.com> on behalf of allan cunanan
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 5:38 PM
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 a UHM graduate and part time resident of Royal Kunia in Waipahu who has a long list of family members in the medical profession. Please reconsider the opening date for the new school year set for August 4th 2020.

Where I currently reside in California, schools are not reopening for classes for online learning until the end of August or beginning of September.

I would also like the Board to adopt the FOUR-PHASED APPROACH Highlighted below.

Here are some key points that I feel need to be addressed

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system(s)
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons. These substitutes will also need training on best practices and school safety protocols
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (the distance learning model will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher)
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers (technology needs)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place home (not just an educational program)
- School nurses should be trained to provide care and make critical decisions for potentially ill students and staff
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community
- Pay substitute teachers for training days to receive similar and relevant training as teachers

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Sincerely,

Allan Cunanan

Testimony BOE

From: Rhonda Comet <rhondacomet@gmail.com> on behalf of Rhonda Comet
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 6:55 PM
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov; testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for school reopening
Attachments: Testimony.pdf

Please find my letter/document attached. I beseech you to read each line. Mahalo! - Rhonda

Aloha Governor Ige, Superintendent Kishimoto and Hawaii Board of Education:

I am Rhonda Comet, 8th grade Special Education Teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School. First and foremost I miss teaching and I miss my students. I will say though that in the best interest of them and myself I believe that COVID is more important as it will take lives and most certainly is fatal. We have had very recent scary spikes in the past couple of days. I find it irresponsible that we are not thinking of students, their families, teachers, teachers families, and those with comorbidities that could create an increase in those numbers as students are not responsible enough to distance themselves, wear masks, when in a group with friends. Our keiki may be strong enough, but their families are not. Our communities are not. None of us are ready and we must be responsible for our kupuna.

I have underlying conditions and my doctor is not happy about me returning to school. I am told if I do not go back on July 29th I will not have a job or be able to teach the school year. I'm just ask for more time to ensure the safety of all my co-workers, students, and their families. I do not want to die.

See the numbers!

- For July 23, 55 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 24, 60 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 25, 73 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- None reported for Sunday due to the Hurricane

We have never seen these numbers before and I am scared out of mind to think I will be clustering with all the families in my community through the possible spread of one child being strong enough to not have symptoms but be near me when I am unable to get them to keep their masks on or stay distanced. I am not confident in the protocols in place for our schools which are more relaxed than Costco, the airport, the grocery store.

Our own mayor is concerned. He is asking for more quarantining, not less. Also our Maui District Health Officer says that we should not be in groups of people. Schools are groups of people. Schools are not safe spaces at this time and we are not ready as

teachers. Students are going to see us scared and I don't think that's such a great start for them.

That being said, we need more time for the following items:

- Safety protocols in place that explain in detail how to handle a COVID case as we are not nurses and I do not want to take temperatures of students as I would not be six feet away from them to do so.

- Our heat abatements have sat unworking for over seven months and have now growing mold which will cause immune systems to be lowered for anyone in that room and need to be completely sanitized and working.

- Parents need training for online programs to help children navigate systems.

- Subs do not know how to use technology to deliver instructions when covering for teachers who may have gone into quarantine.

- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home-schooling, distance learning, and virtual learning (with teacher present)

- Teachers need time to transition their lesson plans into digital lessons which they are capable of doing, they just need prep time to make that happen.

- PPE needs to be mandated and provided for all on campus

- Disinfected classrooms often (not teacher responsibility unless we change the schedule to include cleaning times into the student learning time and transition times)

- Disinfect bathrooms throughout the day

- More than one school nurse at each campus to be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions.

- Public health education

The following does not come from me, but at least it is a plan to consider. I am not ready as a teacher and I do not feel safe. I do think a plan of any kind would make all teachers feel better and safer, please at least consider the following:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Mahalo for your time and attention in this matter. We are beseeching you to consider your responsibility to hear our voices and help us with our fears. We love our community but we are letting you know that things are not safe in our classrooms and in our schools yet. Thank you for your time.

Rhonda Comet

Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Jon Burnham <jon.burnham3@gmail.com> on behalf of Jon Burnham
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 7:42 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

As a special education co-teacher it is hard for me to wrap my head around how I am supposed to do my job without infecting a large part of my school even on the current "B" model that was chosen.

For example, say I have one student in my first period on Monday who has COVID and is asymptomatic. They pass it along to me which I then spread to the rest of my classes that day. Students in those classes then spread it to other classes they are in.

On Tuesday, I have my classes and then spread it to each class that I am in and to my co-teacher.

By Wednesday, many students have been exposed or will be exposed by their peers when they return to school on Thursday.

How am i supposed to do my job safely and ensure the safety of my students during the day in any of the models that we were allowed to choose from?

Additionally, when we initially shut down in April for distance learning we had a "peak" on April 3rd of 34 cases. How are we even considering sending students back when we have been setting new records each day for number of COVID cases?

Is this a risk that we should be taking with the lives of our keiki, our kumus, or our Kupunas?

I hope that you do what is right and delay students returning to school campuses until we get COVID under control.

Mahalo for your time,

Jon Burnham
Special Education Teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School, Maui.

Testimony BOE

From: antonio andres-lopez <sunexhi@att.net> on behalf of antonio andres-lopez
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 9:13 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: maggie Chiu
Subject: Reconsider Reopening the Public Schools in Hawaii without Professional Advice

Re: Reconsider Reopening the Public Schools in Hawaii without Professional Advice

Anyone following the unfortunate development of the current emergency affecting Hawaii cannot avoid the vacuum of unprofessional handling by the State's Governor.

Governor Ige has shown a complete disregard for professional advice, giving exclusive interest to the international hotel industry, an industry that by and large does not pay taxes in Hawaii.

To cover up his erratic behavior, Governor Ige's suspension of the state open government laws blocking access to information, evicting transparency from political practices, turning Hawaii into the likes of authoritarian regimes in Asian countries

Furthermore, the current growth of Covid-19 infections affecting our community with 73 new cases reported yesterday, July 25th, shows that one of the main requirements for the schools reopening, containment of the infection rate, is completely out of control.

As reported by the Washington Post on July 25, 2020, health professional experts board members of the Infectious Disease Society of America, gathering to inform on the subject of reopening schools have clearly moved away from the political expediency of President Trump's upcoming General Election concerns and Governor Ige's order taking from the international hotel industry. A [video recording of the full town hall](#) along with the [slide presentation](#) are available online.

Here, from the Roundtable's bulletin, are 10 key takeaways from the town hall:

1. Schools cannot be opened safely for in-person instruction if the virus is not contained in the local community

Ideally, local communities are following mitigation strategies including masks, social distancing, hand washing and ventilation protocols. Examples of schools opening safely in Denmark and Finland are drawn from societies in which the virus was under control.

2. The decision to open schools has to be a local decision based on the latest available, local scientific data

The fact is individual communities don't know where the virus will be in September. Everyone wants all students back in school in traditional brick-and-mortar settings, but that has to happen safely based on local science and data. Some argue that a local daily infection rate of less than 5 percent is an indicator that the community has the virus in check. Armstrong thought in terms of trends: Even with small numbers the disease could be rising. She preferred to see a downward trend of at least a few weeks. (CDC guidance calls for a downward trend for 14 days.)

3. Infection rates for children aged 10 to 19 are similar to infection rates for adults 20 to 49

Although it is often said that children are less likely to contract the [coronavirus](#) than adults, the finding breaks down when children are disaggregated by age. Children from 5 to 9 are less likely to be infected, but that is not true of children of 10 or older.

4. Schools need well-developed protocols for reopening and for steps to follow if the virus appears in a school.

Schools need to be transparent about their procedures for taking students in each day — temperature checks, hand washing, sanitation procedures and the like — as well as procedures to be followed in the event the virus strikes a student or staff member. Protocols for both intake and treatment need to be agreed on in advance, not invented amid a crisis.

5. Schools should consider strategies that encourage cocooning, staggered drop-off and pickup times, social distancing on buses and making best use of ventilation

If children can be “cocooned” during the school day into small groups of 6 to 10 students, it is easier to quarantine the “cocooned” group than the entire school if an infection appears. Staggered times of arrival and departure and staggered days for students in different grades might make sense. Everyone on school buses must wear a mask while students are socially distanced.

Ventilation is another important consideration. Improving HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) filtering, opening windows if needed and even holding classes outside (in playgrounds inside tents) are all sensible precautions, if possible.

6. Is a vaccine likely to bail us out?

The issue of a vaccine needs to be off the table right now. There is no possibility of a vaccine appearing in the next 6-8 weeks.

7. Teachers in schools need protection but so do nonteaching staff.

All adults in the school need to focus on masks, hand washing and social distancing. Cafeteria workers, counselors and administrative staff might not have extended interactions with students, but they require protection, perhaps in the form of face guards and Plexiglass barriers. Break rooms, where teachers and staff remove masks and perhaps eat together in confined spaces, need attention.

8. Extracurricular activities are going to be an extremely challenging area for school safety.

We have already seen community outbreaks in choral groups and choirs, activities involving expelling a lot of air. We may need to put a hold on them. Band and orchestra don't present the same problem, but frequently instruments are exchanged, so that may be a challenge. A golf team doesn't have the same risks as basketball, football or soccer, where players are exerting themselves in close proximity to each other. These teams will be major concerns.

9. The costs of attending to all this are astronomical, at a time when state and local revenues will decline due to the crippling unemployment and recession accompanying the pandemic.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has estimated that schools will need between \$150 billion and \$250 billion to ensure that schools can do what is required to open safely. Congress and the federal government need to step up. Fully 98 percent of those following the town hall agreed that Congress should provide additional emergency covid-19 relief funding for K-12 public schools.

10. The town hall audience was skeptical that it would be safe for students and educators if all schools fully reopened at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

Governor Ige's forcing the reopening of Hawaii's Public Schools without consideration to the current infection escalation and lack of attention to professional advice is another blatant example of authoritarian practices being imposed on our community, political practices typical of undemocratic societies common in many of our Asian neighbors run by military regimes and other despots.

Reconsideration of Governor Ige's authoritarian demand to reopen schools for the benefit of the international hotel industry is urgent. The wellbeing of our children, teachers, families and neighbors come first.

Thank you very much

Antonio Andres Lopez

Testimony BOE

From: S. Kawena Kaniho <zaysha_89@yahoo.com> on behalf of S. Kawena Kaniho
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 9:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: ari_ernestberg@kapoleimid.k12.hi.us; richard_fajardo@kapoleimid.k12.hi.us
Subject: Testimony

Shelly K. Cummings-Kaniho
SHA II @ Kapolei Middle School

BOE Special Meeting on July 30, 2020
Testimony is reference to Action Items:
III.A, III.B and III.C
I support Action Items III.A, III.B and III.C

Aloha Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne and members:

Mahalo for allowing me to submit my written testimony. My main focus is Action Item, III. A, as I'm a School Health Assistant II, SHA II at a Multi-Track Year Round School, MTYRS. On July 22, 2020 I received an email via my school account regarding the **Back to School Training for School Health Assistants** informing participants that they must registrar by Monday, July 27, however 10 month SHA's do not report back to school till Wednesday, July 29, 2020 the day before the online training. I did inform the SHA Office Assistant for the Leeward District of this discrepancy. The training is in collaboration with the Hawaii Keiki program and Hawaii State Department of Health, Public Health Nursing Branch. There will be **two new** training topics: COVID-19 Considerations in the Health Room and How to Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in addition to Student Health Requirements and Reporting, Medication Administration, SHA Manual Updates and HealthOffice Anywhere, HOA. According to Wikipedia there are 283 public schools in the State of Hawaii, each public school is assigned a SHA, I'm not sure of charter schools. Of the 283 "SHA's" three MTYRS SHA's replied to the email, of the other 280 SHA's I know of 3 others who sign up, because they happened to be on their respective campuses last week. Once again 10 month SHA's do not report to work till July 29, two days after the deadline to registrar for the statewide four hour online meeting. I'm hopeful that other SHA's throughout the State of Hawaii received information about the meeting and were/are able to register as there are two every important COVID-19 topics that we desperately need training on. Substitute SHA's should have received the notice via their personal email, as they don't have a home school nor are they allowed the log on to a SHA/DOE computer.

Chairman Catherine Payne and Board Members with the passage of these Action Items this will allow SHA's the opportunity to review, train and organize our Health Rooms and Isolation Rooms as needed for our keiki. Four days prior to receiving our students is insufficient, especially for 10 month SHA's, two of those days are Administrative days. SHA's are vital to the culture of our schools as are keiki, and all staff. Per Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan Health & Safety Handbook, Version 1, July 2020, page 12 "Student is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should be separated from other health room visitors". "To ensure social distancing, temporary barriers (e.g. shower curtains, flexible partitions) should be installed and procedures for health room visits should be in place prior to the start of the school year." The school year starts on August 4, 2020, Most Teachers and Health Aides are 10 month employees that gives us/them 2 days to plan the layout of our rooms for social distancing, order/purchase temporary barriers and ensure PPE's recommendation for SHA's are met.

Once again Chairman Payne and Board Members by passing these revisions, waivers and expectations your allowing the Department of Education SHA's, Teachers, Administrators, Custodial and Support Staff the opportunity to "ensure the health and safety preparedness for schools". Thereby, Action Items III. A, B and C will afford schools the fortuity to better meet our stakeholders, our communities, families and keiki with the ability to submit a report detailing "consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar", "(2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode" and "(4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health".

Lastly "Hawaii sees third consecutive record high of new coronavirus-related cases, 73, per Star-Advertiser, dated Saturday, July 26, 2020. How many cases are there among our military and civilian work force? Has/is the person sitting next to you been exposed to someone who is asymptomatic? Or is someone near and dear to you unknowingly soon to receive a phone call regarding contact tracing? Why is the SHA meeting to take place online and state wide whereas in the past

the yearly meetings have been held by complex and in person? Yet our keiki are to report to school on August 4, along with teachers and other school personal and practice social distancing by 6', how is that possible when almost all other DOE/BOE meetings take place virtually. Please know that it's situation we are all in that we dislike not the BOE, the DOE nor DOH. Mahalo Board Chair and members for your time and commitment to the State of Hawaii, the Board of Education and Department of Education we truly appreciate your love and support for our keiki.

Sincerely,

Shelly K. Kaniho, SHA II
Kapolei Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Serena Nishihara <snishiha@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Serena Nishihara
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:58 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY.....

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am a teacher at Hilo High School and I think we need to have a plan of action and what steps should DOE take if a child or several students should come down with the COVID 19 there needs to be some plan in place if students or teachers contract that virus in school. What would the school do? It may shut down the whole school system once again and I am thinking that the best way is to do distance learning at this time until COVID 19 is not a threat anymore. For some teachers who do not know about technology could learn from the schools Techie people how to run Google classroom and once they do know how to run it it should be quite easy to even teach through ZOOM. One can upload zoom to google classroom also. Techie people can teach them how to use Zoom in Google Classroom. We should go 100% distance learning at this time until COVID 19 is no longer a threat to anyone. We truly need a plan of action instead of opening school once again to shut it down again would be devastating and a waste of time for teachers and students as well. I remain, Kumu

Testimony BOE

From: Kevy B <kbulicz@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevy B
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I was part of the last BOE online. I realized when I was in the meeting the following, which is kind of laughable if you actually think about it. I'll write in caps so it makes more sense. "AS I SAT AT MY COMPUTER LISTENING TO TESTIMONY, I REALIZED THAT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD INCLUDING THE SUPERINTENDENT WERE NOT SITTING IN THE SAME ROOM, IN ORDER TO KEEP THEMSELVES SAFE, BUT THEY WERE DISCUSSING HAVING US, THE TEACHERS, TO SIT IN CLASSROOMS WITH STUDENTS. WOW. THAT SEEMS KINDA FUNNY DOESN'T IT. THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO SIT WITH PEOPLE AT A MEETING, BUT WE ARE EXPECTED TO DO EXACTLY THAT. HMMMM. LET THEM EAT CAKE? So maybe think about how ridiculous it is that you are fighting to have us be unsafe while you remain safe. Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Genevieve Javier <gennajavier@gmail.com> on behalf of Genevieve Javier
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:32 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Special Board Meeting on July 30, 2020

Aloha,

My name is Genna Javier and I am a parent to a 6th grader at Sunset Beach Elementary school on the North Shore of Oahu. I am writing to OPPOSE the delay of the 2020-2021 school year, OPPOSE requiring masks the whole time on school campuses, and OPPOSE shortening our children's learning year.

The Sunset Beach Elementary principal listened to her community and decided to offer the children at the school to return to school full time, with any children/parents not feeling comfortable with this situation being able to participate in 100% full distance learning. The North Shore has one of the lowest Covid rates on all of Oahu, per the map with confirmed cases shown here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/eb56a98b71324152a918e72d3ccdfc20>.

Every school in the state of Hawaii, through the agreement made with the teacher union, is giving students the option to participate in 100% full distance learning. THERE IS AN OPTION FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. Why should the majority who want their children to return to school be punished by this minority who already has a viable option??

The peer reviewed science and evidence from around the world is showing that children are not driving the pandemic and they are less likely to become infected and seem less infectious.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0962-9>

and

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200710100934.htm>

It seems every meeting the teachers and the teacher's union comes out with a new request? They were not happy with spacing issues in classrooms, so that was changed. Now they want to require masks for children the entirety of the time on school campuses and delay the school year. I fear if we keep going down this road, there will be no school ever because nothing is ever going to be just right.

With Aloha,

Genna Javier
Concerned Parent

Testimony BOE

From: L. Low <llo08@gmail.com> on behalf of L. Low
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@BOE.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 BOE mtg.

Dear BOE,

I'm a teacher for 21 yrs that does not want to get Covid due to having a compromised immune system. I would rather use up my sick leave or take LWOP then retire early in Dec. 2020 if school is not virtual. The only way to save lives is to go virtual now and then hybrid in Jan. After safety concerns are met and PPE is provided daily to all teachers with training. Don't rush back or there will be no teachers Alice to teach in the near future.

L.Low

Kaimuki High School

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Donna Hallock <donna.hallock@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Donna Hallock
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:18 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay opening schools

Aloha, my name is Donna Hallock. I am a teacher at Na'alehu Elementary School. My principal is doing everything possible to make our school ready for opening next week but she is facing an impossible task. There has not been enough time to prepare classrooms for safe distancing.

There has not been enough time for teachers to be trained

There has not been enough time for teachers to prepare for different daily schedules, rituals and routines.

We need more safety equipment.

All students should have their temperatures checked before they even get on a bus.

I am now looking into early retirement because of this.

My husband is moving out to stay safe.

You are risking our lives.

Donna Hallock

ELL and MEP Coordinator

Na'alehu Elementary School



Practice random acts of kindness and senseless beauty!

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Testimony BOE

From: L K <gakkoo058@yahoo.com> on behalf of L K
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:22 AM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Action Item C

Testimony for Action Item C. (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

Aloha. I am a first grade teacher at an elementary school in Ewa Beach. I am asking you to push back the start date for students so that teachers can prepare and get training. I strongly urge you to consider mandating our schools start the school year in distance learning mode for at least first quarter for the safety of our keiki, school personnel, and the community.

Schools are trying their best to reduce class sizes by having half the class come in on specified days. However, the teacher is the constant factor. If someone in Group A has the virus, it can potentially spread to Group B when the teacher sees them in person. During our faculty meetings, the virus can then be spread to the whole faculty. Does it make sense for us to resume school in person?

It chills me to the bone as I read about the 3 Arizona teachers who contracted COVID-19 while teaching summer school. I read they were wearing masks and gloves, using sanitizer frequently, practicing social distancing but they still contracted the corona virus. I recently read that there were no children present in the room they shared! They shared a room for a couple of hours a day to do distance learning. Imagine that! 3 adults, practicing distancing, frequently sanitizing, wearing masks and they still were infected. One of those teachers never did recover. Now imagine a classroom with kindergarten and first graders. Do you think they will be able to do as well of a job with wearing masks, frequently sanitizing their hands, keeping things out of their mouths as well as staying at least 6 feet away from one another?

I agree that a child's education is important, but at what cost? Our daily number of positive cases has been rapidly rising. We've had 55, 60, and 64 cases in the last few days. This is way more than the single-digit numbers we had back in March –when the decision was made to close schools. Does it make sense that schools would re-open, in person, with such a high number of cases?

According to the CDC, they recommend settings with natural airflow. Our classroom has air conditioning. Is air conditioning ideal for the use in school with the corona virus? Will the air conditioner can easily spread the germs to everyone in class?

Our school personnel may be in a high risk category of catching this virus due to underlying health factors or by being over 50 years old. Many of us care for our own family members such as children, parents, grandparents. Are we expected to now stay away from them because we have increased our risk by being intimately exposed to a class of 20+ children on a weekly basis? Is face to face learning the safest option for our community?

Why is it that parents are given the option to choose virtual learning and teachers have no choice? Are our lives less important than theirs? It may be easy for DOH and DOE authorities to say that it is important for children to go back to school and that schools will be following safety guidelines but **are they going to be the ones in the classroom every day?**

Do you really believe that our youngest learners will be able to maintain distance and stay in their seats all day? I humbly ask you to push back the start date of school so teachers can get training and prepare for distance learning. I strongly urge you to consider mandating distance learning, (at least for 1st quarter) for the safety of our keiki, school personnel, and community.

Testimony BOE

From: John Johnson <john@onebreathphoto.com> on behalf of John Johnson
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:27 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I DO NOT agree with reopening schools next week(this week, really, since we are supposed to drop off supplies tomorrow). My school just got their new principal two days ago. I was just informed Sunday that if we want to do online instruction that it would not be related to what they learned last year or tied to what their peers will be learning in class this year. It will involve no contact with their peers or teacher virtually. So this will be "busy work" to keep my kid out of trouble, essentially. I don't understand the point of Common Core if its point was to standardize education so that you could do things like this. We should be able to take a unit for 5th grade, 1st semester and have them do equivalent work. That is not the case. Furthermore, the Distance Learning Coordinators that my child has to report to daily haven't been designated. They haven't been trained. And even if they are designated and trained instantaneously, what my children learn won't be what their peers are learning. This IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. It was better last year with the teachers teaching via Google Meetups. Why can we not do that but have the whole day virtual?

It seems that nothing has been planned out by DOE, even though they have had all summer(really since our kids were sent home from school at the end of last year early). All of this time, and no satisfactory planning. We aren't ready to open. The teachers' union is saying the same thing. There aren't proper plans in place, no contingency planning, etc. And nobody can explain why we sent everyone home early last year when we had a couple cases of viruses, but now that we have hit record highs, it's time to bring them back. What did we sacrifice last year for? This makes no sense. I would appreciate it if Hawaii at least deferred reopening until September when the mainland goes back to school because it looks like many states with common sense there are starting to balk at the idea of sending their kids back to school and I would prefer we not be the guinea pigs.

Sincerely,
John Johnson
Parent of two children at Kahala Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Libby Lenzer <libby.lenzer@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Libby Lenzer
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Revisions to the DOE 2020-2021 School Calendar

I am a special education teacher at Kainalu Elementary School. I support the delay of opening of public school campuses and providing training for teachers, and delaying students' first day at school. I support the need for detailed, written, publicly posted guidelines from the Department of Health, and mandating masks on campus. I support the reduction of the 180 day school calendar and 1,080 student instruction hours.

I am frightened for my life. The number of COVID 19 cases are higher now than when the state mandated stay at home order was implemented. Oahu is now deemed "unsafe to travel to from the other islands" by some health officials. Cases on the windward side of the island have risen, which is where my school is located. Our school hosts a large population of military families, some of which are not required to quarantine when arriving on our islands, which is a threat to all of our health.

I have heard that the children are "not a risk for the serious effects of COVID 19", but what about the teachers? Most of the teachers at my school, including myself, are above the age of 50 and are at risk for the most serious effects of COVID 19, including death. The current CDC guidelines are not going to be enough to protect us from airborne droplets of the virus, nor is the "non medical safety equipment" we have been provided with. We need to be treated as first responders are and have the proper training, equipment, and cleaning supplies before we all step into the classroom.

I do not feel safe going back into the classroom. I need the time, training, guidelines, safety equipment, and support of the state and the BOE. I feel that delaying the opening of our public schools will allow for this to happen.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Libby Lenzer
Special Education Teacher for 18 years for the DOE
Kainalu Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Julia Sterling Weldon <jpearlsterling@gmail.com> on behalf of Julia Sterling Weldon
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:47 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Special Board Meeting on July 30, 2020

Aloha,

My name is Julia Weldon and I am a parent to a 2nd grader at Sunset Beach Elementary school on the North Shore of Oahu. I am writing to OPPOSE the delay of the 2020-2021 school year, OPPOSE requiring masks the whole time on school campuses, and OPPOSE shortening our children's learning year.

The Sunset Beach Elementary principal listened to her community and decided to offer the children at the school to return to school full time, with any children/parents not feeling comfortable with this situation being able to participate in 100% full distance learning. The North Shore has one of the lowest Covid rates on all of Oahu, per the map with confirmed cases shown here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/eb56a98b71324152a918e72d3ccdfc20>.

Every school in the state of Hawaii, through the agreement made with the teacher union, is giving students the option to participate in 100% full distance learning. THERE IS AN OPTION FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. Why should the majority who want their children to return to school be punished by this minority who already has a viable option??

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<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0962-9>

and

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200710100934.htm>

It seems every meeting the teachers and the teacher's union comes out with a new request? They were not happy with spacing issues in classrooms, so that was changed. Now they want to require masks for children the entirety of the time on school campuses and delay the school year. I fear if we keep going down this road, there will be no school ever because nothing is ever going to be just right.

With Aloha,

Julia Weldon
Concerned Parent

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Rachael Callahan <rccallah@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachael Callahan
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:49 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Agenda item #1- revisions to school calendar

Aloha,

My name is Rachael Denessen and I am the ELA department head and the 12th grade ELA teacher at Maui High. I write today with testimony regarding Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

There are a myriad of reasons schools cannot open to students on August 4th, but I will limit my focus.

First, human safety. Everyone that walks onto campus next week will be putting their lives and the lives of their loved ones at risk. Cases throughout the state are spiking daily. There is still talk of reopening to intercontinental flights. The inter island quarantine is in discussion, but not happening yet. This and more are red flags of warning: should we open schools, the virus will spread. If the virus spreads, children will die. Devos has acknowledged this and while we have come to expect this kind of evil from her (for that is what accepting the preventable deaths of children is) I do not expect it, nor to I accept it from Hawaii.

Not only will students get it, but teachers will contract the virus too, crippling a system already stretched too thin. They will expose other students, their peers, and their families. This particular point is what scares me most. My one year old son has already had to have lung surgery for an unrelated issue. If I bring this virus home to him, there is no telling what kind of decimation to his pulmonary system we can expect given that he's already immunocompromised and missing part of his lung. While I love my students, I cannot risk the health or life of my son.

Despite Kishimoto's statements, schools and teachers have not received training. They have not received all of the supplies we need. Have we been doing the best we can with what we have anyway? Of course, but that is not the point. The onus has, again, been put on the teachers to solve problems that are not ours to solve. I implore the BOE to readjust the school calendar and implement the multi-phase design that is not dependent on dates but on benchmarks. This makes the most sense, and in a nice twist of irony, is what teachers are asked to do— not move on in our curriculum until all the benchmarks are met.

Please give our students, teachers and schools a fighting chance. Do not bring students back until they will be safe to do so.

Mahalo for your time,

Rachael Denessen

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Christopher Ho <christopher.ho80@gmail.com> on behalf of Christopher Ho
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30 Meeting

Aloha and mahalo Board Members,

My name is Christopher Ho, Student Activities Coordinator for Kea'au High School and I'm speaking as an individual. I would like to address Action Items A, B and C of the Special Session meeting for July 30, 2020.

Action Item A: I am full support of sending students, teachers, administrators, and school staff back to campus, **fully trained**. At this time we are about to start the school year in a little over a week and for the past two months I have been feverishly working with our Administrators to prepare our campus for the return of our staff. How have we been doing? Horribly. With little to no guidance from the State, say a complex and rather antiquated document, we have tried our level best to ensure we are fully ready to return to work. Our Faculty has received extremely limited training on programs that are supposed to help them educate our students virtually from their classrooms. Approximately 5 teachers have been going through Blackboard training, sponsored by the school. We have around 72 teachers on our campus. When I listened to our Superintendent state that all teachers have been trained, I was taken aback. I am one of those teachers and I have never received the training she speaks of. In fact, I have spent the majority of my summer, as a 12-month employee, not preparing for the classes I have to teach. I have been working to organize and prepare our campus to bring students onto the campus consistent with the chosen option for our campus. As of now, we are poorly ready to explain to all members of our campus community how we will provide the excellent education we do, while maintaining and ensuring a safe campus for our students, teachers, administrators, and school staff. Additional time and specific guidance is required.

I would not assign work to my students without proper prepping of the material, a rubric to outline expectations, and exact instructions on how to start and complete the assignment. Why do we, as adults, think it is ok to rush to do something with the expectation that it will be done with fidelity? This is not the example I want to show my students and I truly hope this is not how you want history to remember you!

Action Item B: I fully support this action item; however, I would not like to have the days missed or the instructional hours missed to be tacked on at the end of the 2020 - 2021 school year or spread throughout the other school years to make up for supposed lost time.

I understand instructional time will be lost, it was lost at the end of the year last year when we were kept home and told to educate the students using virtual means only to have it stated that the work being given was just enrichment. Once you say enrichment to a student, they shut down and will not do work. This is similar to telling an adult they do not have to pay their bills for a few months, but it is suggested they do so.

Action Item C: I am in full support of additional training and professional development, starting in distance learning and moving to in person when it is safe to do so, mandating mask use on the campus, and a written guidance posted at every school.

Training and professional development of any kind is the cornerstone of a great educator. Continuing to educate yourself and learn is how we as educators strengthen our craft and ensure we are ready to meet the challenges of the world. At this time all 10-month employees are to return to work in 2 days. We are to learn material, set up our classrooms and curriculum with the new material, test out the material to ensure it works, go over all Admin

directed material, and be ready to educate students 7 days after all of this, 5 days if you are not in our Complex. How is this amount of time appropriate and safe to ensure we are fully ready to provide a safe environment for all members of the campus community? This amount of training only speaks to the curriculum and instruction, it doesn't say anything to prepare the campus community to handle the state of our students mental health. We have been so focused on getting them back into the classroom and back to receiving education that we haven't even stopped to consider the ramifications of this pandemic, the violence occurring throughout the Mainland, and loss of lives, has impacted the emotional well-being of all our students. Teachers are not trained or equipped to handle this level of mental health assistance across the state. How will we prepare for this? A one day training, with the hopes that everyone will understand and be able to implement it with fidelity? Seems to be the norm with programs released to teachers from the DOE.

I can't express enough in the written word, how important it is to effectively and appropriately train and prepare your front line workers to handle what is coming. I understand the need to listen to the community, the local and state government, and the federal government; however, none of those individuals are in the classroom providing education to the students. None of them have to consider how to keep their own families safe while worrying how they are going to safely and appropriately provide education to someone else's child. If you aren't going to listen to those at the front of line who are seeing what is coming, why would you expect the students to listen to anyone. As leaders it is our responsibility to live our truths, live our values, and show our students that we can and will stand up for social justice for all.

I thank you all for your time and I have faith you will do what is right for our students, our communities, our families, and for our state.

Christopher N. Ho
Student Activities Coordinator
Kea'au High School

Testimony BOE

From: Aoi Shinagawa <aishinagawa@gmail.com> on behalf of Aoi Shinagawa
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the State of HI Board of Education:

My name is Aoi Shinagawa and I am a teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I am writing to submit my testimony regarding items A, B, and C on the Action Items portion of the July 30 meeting agenda. I am writing in support of all of these Action Items.

Regarding item A: revisions to the 2020-2021 school year calendar to add additional staff training days and delaying the student start date.

I fully support this. I believe that it is essential that educators and support staff on campuses receive the proper training necessary before we welcome back our keiki. We want to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for our students and are currently not equipped to do so. This is why we all feel uneasy about the reopening of schools - we have received no training and have no idea what to expect. These are unprecedented times and are stressful for all parties involved. There are lives at stake. Especially in situations like these, it is the most responsible choice to train and prepare for a variety of possible scenarios.

A perfect example of how disastrous a lack of training can be is last year's "enrichment period" after the initial closures of schools. With no warning and no prior experience to draw from, educators were scrambling to figure out how to adjust their curriculum to fit a distance format. This was unavoidable due to the sudden closure of schools. However, we now have the upper hand in the form of advanced preparation time. It is apparent due to the exponential increase in cases that physical schooling is not a safe choice - because this is clear and schooling has not started yet we should take full advantage of this time to properly train and prepare our teachers and staff for the new "normal" for schools. In addition to this, teachers will be helping students and their families through what is an unbelievably trying time. Teachers need more training in order to be sensitive to each students' needs while maintaining safe procedures. Normally, teachers can use physical proximity to ensure students focus or to give a shy student extra help without making him/her feel self-conscious. In the current times, we are unable to do this. We need to learn how to adapt our procedures so that we can still support our keiki while maintaining safe practices.

Regarding item B: general waiver on reduction of 180 days requirement/1,080 hours requirement

I fully support these decisions. Under normal circumstances this would of course be unacceptable. However, we must remember that these are not normal circumstances. Currently we are seeing more cases of COVID-19 in a single day than what our overall total was at the time schools were closed. This should be evidence enough that it is not currently safe for students to have face-to-face schooling, meaning the only realistic option to continue schooling is distance learning. Unfortunately, this would require adjustments to the 1,080 hours requirement in order to allow for teacher training and curriculum adjustments. This is a sacrifice we should all be willing to make in order to ensure safety for all in our state while maintaining a high-quality education for our keiki. Nobody wants students back to school more than teachers - I miss my students dearly. I would love to see them again. But this should not be at the expense of the health and well-being of our students, their families, and the members of our community. Waiving the requirement for 180 days/1,080 hours in school is necessary in order to help Hawai'i remain safe and healthy in the midst of a global pandemic.

Regarding item C: Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

I strongly urge the board to vote in favor of ALL of these issues. This is the only way to keep Hawai'i safe. Schools should be started in distance learning mode to ensure the safety of ALL citizens in the state of Hawaii. This would require additional training and professional development days for all staff on school campuses. In order to ensure the safety of all peoples on campuses, masks MUST be required. Especially in settings where students and teachers are indoors and in close physical proximity, we must reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases in all ways possible, including the mandating of masks on school campuses. Detailed, written, and publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health is a NECESSITY before reopening schools. This will allow everybody to have guidelines to refer to when looking at the situations of each county and school. Publicly posting the guidance is also necessary to give the public peace of mind and hold the Department of Education and Department of Health accountable for adhering to the proper guidelines. Currently the Board of Education and Department of Education appears to be flying by the seat of their pants and taking an attitude of "We'll figure it out as we go." - is this really the way we want to portray ourselves in the public eye? Publicly posted, detailed, written guidance will make everybody feel at ease knowing that there is a specific procedure being followed that has been researched by the properly trained parties.

Mahalo for your time,

Aoi Shinagawa

--

Aoi Shinagawa
(808)439-5093

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Archibeque <amy.archibeque@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Archibeque
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:14 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns for Reopening for Substitutes

Aloha,

My name is Amy Archibeque. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns.

As a substitute teacher, I have many concerns about the lack of information, protocols, and plans for reopening schools for substitutes. There are many unanswered questions, such as what are the protocols if a teacher is sick and we are called in? What extra precautions will we be expected to enforce for those students while we wait for COVID tests to come back? What guarantees do we have that we know all contact tracing has eliminated the risks of possible infected students? Should we be limiting our schools and job opportunities to help keep "ohana bubbles" contained? What expectations do we have now for controlling classrooms with new COVID protocols?

I have called schools asking these questions, and they are unable to offer me any answers. I am concerned that we will be sending our substitutes into our schools with no training or information, leaving them overwhelmingly unprepared and as a result creating chaos in a time where we can't afford missteps. I am terrified, and I am sure many others share these concerns.

I don't believe we should be opening up schools until we have these answers and strong plans of action in place for sick teachers, as well as information and training provided for substitutes.

Mahalo for your time.

Amy Archibeque
amy.archibeque@gmail.com
575-635-3353

Testimony BOE

From: Jolie Wanger <joliewsumayasa@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jolie Wanger
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jolie Wanger and I am a parent of two public school students.

I am submitting testimony for the Board of Education Special Meeting on Thursday July 30th at 1:00pm.

With regards to Action item A., I am **in support** of delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

With regards to Action Item B., to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours, I am **in support**.

With regards to Action Item C; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode and (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health, I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of these actions.

I would like to emphasize that I am in support of any actions that will protect our keiki and teachers.

Mahalo,
Jolie

Testimony BOE

From: Joanna Lee <joannalee8@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanna Lee
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: Testimony

TESTIMONY BEFORE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RE: Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

Chair Catherine Payne and members of the Board of Education:

My name is Joanna Lee. I am a 7th grade science teacher at Washington Middle School in the Honolulu District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in favor of changes to the 2020-21 school year and increased training and professional development days to ensure the health and safety of all students, staff and faculty at school.

After 34 years of teaching, I have never felt so compelled to submit testimony this year as I feel the voice of the Hawaii's teachers has not been heard. Personally, the following common sense facts should be enough evidence that schools are not ready to open on August 4, 2020.

1. Three unions stand on setting back the school start date because their members are ill-prepared in training and knowledge to deal with the safety requirements and consequences dealing with COVID-19 cases on campus.
2. Not enough communication from the DOE and school administration to parents and teachers in a timely manner to make vital decisions in regards to their children's health as well to make plans for child care infrequently during the week.
3. Lack of training for teachers and educational assistants to learn/plan/meet for the various requirements of curriculum planning vertically and horizontally.
4. Lack of time to get proper PPEs delivered to schools in time for school opening. Administration has stated, "we hope to have proper supplies in time for school opening however you know there's a shortage of supplies."
5. This "new normal" with only $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of students on campus on a given day includes a "revised" curriculum that will NOT include the previous standards. Therefore, a

mandatory 180 days (or longer school year) will never be enough time to make up for the missed class days.

6. COVID-19 has changed everything regarding Hawaii's education system. I implore the Board of Education to listen to the needs of the teachers and administration (in the schools and not in the DOE offices) to hear our voice that more time and resources are needed at the school level to make sure our keiki and staff are safe on school campuses before reopening.

Mahalo,

Joanna Lee, Honolulu District, Oahu

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joanna Lee** <joannalee8@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 9:34 AM

Subject: Testimony

To: <BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY BEFORE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RE: Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

Testimony BOE

From: Abi Hobbs <abigail.hobbs@gmail.com> on behalf of Abi Hobbs
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Special Meeting

Aloha,

My name is Abigail Hobbs, and I'm an occupational therapist with the Department of Education. I am writing to provide testimony in support of the three action items to be considered during the special meeting on July 29th.

In addition to the general concerns about the lack of specificity in the re-opening documentation provided by the DoE, I have two specific additional concerns I would like to raise.

First is the lack of a set policy with regard to actions to be taken if a positive case occurs within a class "Ohana Bubble." If we are treating these classes as "family units" then everyone within that bubble would be potentially exposed, and a mandatory 2 week stay-at-home quarantine would seem to be an obvious necessity, but this is not laid out in the DoE plans, instead deferring to whatever guidance the DoH might issue. In this situation, quick, decisive action would be needed to effectively communicate with families and staff; this would need to happen within hours, not days. Forcing principals to decide what to do should they not hear back from DoH in sufficient time is an unfair burden and puts them in an unnecessarily difficult position. The guidelines need to be updated to set clear, consistent policies at the state DoE level.

In preparing to re-open, there have been ongoing questions from staff, teachers, and administrators about guidance with regard to special education students and services, and we have consistently been told (as recently as last week) that those were in progress or waiting on input from the Attorney General. With less than 2 weeks before students are to return, we've been making things up ourselves as best we can, but we also know that, as things stand now, there is no possibility that we would have time to prepare to make changes to meet the guidelines before students return, or to make those changes on the fly if they are delayed until after school resumes. This is also an unfair burden and responsibility, and leaves us in the difficult position of having no further official justification for choices than "what I feel comfortable with." We need not just guidelines but clear policies, and we need them with sufficient time to understand them and put them in place before students return.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Dr. Abigail Hobbs, OTR/L

Testimony BOE

From: Nichole Tomas <kumuniki@gmail.com> on behalf of Nichole Tomas
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:06 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha!

This testimony is in reference to Agenda Item #1.

I am writing to you as both a concerned teacher and parent. I am asking to not only delay the start date for students but to also consider allowing teachers the choice to teach from home or to teach in class.

Allowing each department/grade level to work together to address the needs of as many as possible. This would allow teachers to decide what is best for them and their families while providing an option to students. School admin can work together to create a space for those students who have no other option than to come to school. After all, creating a safe space is what we are doing now, isn't it?

I will be working with medically fragile students. Although we can't suggest for parents to keep their children home due to the current health related issues at hand, as well as, our concern of creating a completely sterile environment because of the population I serve, I am completely filled with anxiety considering we will be responsible for possibly exposing them to Covid even though it wasn't our choice to have them attend school! Yes, it is the parents choice but where does the teacher input come in?

I know I'm not alone when I say I am pacing daily with anxiety. I am one of many teachers who will not be sending their child to school due to the Covid-19 issues and, yet, I will have to attend school in a classroom setting? Seems a little contradictory to why I will keep my son home.

I am also the parent of a medically fragile (bed-ridden) son age 27. Is it that important to have teachers be in class and exposed to health risks then bring them home and expose our families? Others have elderly parents and family in their households to worry about.

With the increase in numbers, we are not considering that teachers need options right now as much as parents do because we are the ones who will be on the front lines once the numbers plummet and we can get back to a full in-class setting. We need to know we are considered as professionals and entrusted to carry out our duties as passionately and diligently as we always have.

I am not asking to halt the year and still get paid for doing nothing. I am asking to allow teachers to choose the best method of delivery (in class or at home via distance learning) and to give us the professional development and understanding necessary to implement new strategies and methods as we progress through these times. It is obvious that education is changing...we just want to be an active part of it.

Mahalo, for your time.

Nichole Tomas

Testimony BOE

From: Maria Rossman <mrs.mariarossman@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Rossman
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: DOE calendar /children in schools

Please look at the facts from Florida today. From July 16 to July 24 the numbers of children with COVID went from 23,170 to 31,150, From July 16 to July 24, children who were hospitalized from COVID went from 246 to 303. A nine year old child with no underlying health conditions died from COVID. Ask yourself: is reopening schools worth even the life of ONE child (not to mention staff). Anything you can do to help spread the facts regarding the dangers of reopening would be appreciated. (CNN: "Child hospitalizations from COVID-19..." July 27, 2020)

Testimony BOE

From: Alyse Bright <abright@ipes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alyse Bright
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:26 AM
To: Testimony.Boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: RE: SY 2020/2021

Aloha, my name is Alyse Bright, and I have been an Educational Assistant at Iroquois Point elementary school for 15 years. I do strongly believe that all students need to be back in the classroom. BUT, health and safety SHOULD be a number 1 priority. Although the DOH and the BOE have specific guidelines for this ongoing pandemic, I do NOT feel that we as educational leaders are ready. We have NOT had any type of informational training on the procedures on how to handle a potential positive sick child or even a coworker for that matter. This might seem a little petty to anyone who is reading this but, as I have gotten older, my immune system is not as strong as it was when I first started many years ago. Although I truly LOVE my job, I am afraid. When students are sick, I tend to ALWAYS catch what they have, and it's usually just a cold with some sniffles and congestion. But when I am hit with the flu, I am out for at least 1 week. I am positive that I speak for many of my coworkers, and colleagues throughout this state. Before we ALL head back to the classroom, we need to get a firm grip on this virus and we need to be MORE PREPARED.

Mahalo, Alyse Bright

Testimony BOE

From: Holly Takahashi Miskella <hollytm1@gmail.com> on behalf of Holly Takahashi Miskella
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: July 30th Special Meeting

Aloha e Board of Education,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express my opinion regarding the scheduled school opening. I am a parent of a child currently attending a DOE school and would like to request push back of the scheduled start of August 4th. While I believe that the schools and teachers are doing all they can to prepare, I also believe that during extraordinary times, ordinary actions cannot be taken. Additional time for teacher/staff training, school prep, and community action is warranted. I do not fully understand why the Governor and Ms. Kishimoto seem so adamant about keeping the start date; While it may not be the case, it appears they are not open to other options.

The communications from my child's school has been poor. I don't even know what days my child will be attending face-to-face. I attribute it to the dynamic nature of our current environment, where decisions are being made and acted upon daily. I am confident people are working hard but this is a very complicated matter...and it seems schools and/or complex areas are making decisions independently with some guidelines from DOE. It is creating a disparity between schools that is based upon differences in administration, parental involvement, etc. This is not pono.

I fully realize that this is a complex matter in a very dynamic environment. I am not naive that there are ripple effects of a delayed start date. I also realize that there are many in the community: staff, teachers, parents, and keiki who are feeling uneasy. Acknowledging this rather than seemingly refusing to compromise does not allay fears, but rather intensifies it. The positive goodwill created by a delay, even a minimal one, will be great! As a parent, I want the staff and teachers to be overly prepared and absolutely comfortable and confident. If they are not, students suffer.

This is an unusual and stressful time. While the economy is important, it cannot be more important than the physical and mental well-being of our keiki and school personnel.

Mahalo

Holly Takahashi Miskella

Testimony BOE

From: Robyn Kailiponi <robynkailiponi@gmail.com> on behalf of Robyn Kailiponi
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:09 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Name: Robyn Kailiponi, parent and DOE substitute teacher

Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

I believe that it is in the best interest of both the students, teachers and staff for the school year to be delayed until there are more sound policies in place for the health and safety of the students and staff, and the teachers have had sufficient time to learn about and prepare for the new modes of teaching.

As a parent and as a substitute teacher, I have spoken with several teachers and administrators, and even one week before school is supposed to be starting, there are still no clear answers. We have been waiting all summer to find out what the plan for the return to school would be, and even the limited plan was not introduced until a few weeks ago. Schools have been scrambling to figure out how to implement this limited plan and make it work.

I would love for my children to be able to return to school, to be with other children their age, even if it is different than before. However, I also believe that both the teachers and the students will have a better experience if the teachers have more time to plan than the allotted 4 days. As it stands now, the teachers return to school July 30, giving them only 4 days to prepare. In that four days they are supposed to have school wide training meetings, department/grade level curriculum meetings, and then they now have to add training on safety during the pandemic. This leaves 2 days at most for the teachers to set up their room for social distancing and safety protocols (which they may or may not have), and to plan a syllabus for both face to face and distance learning. This model is very different from anything they have ever done before, and they are being thrown into it.

The teachers need more time for training and planning. There needs to be a stronger plan in place for health and safety protocols as well as for all the possible situations that might arise at school during the pandemic. What screening process, if any will take place? Will teachers be given the opportunity to get free testing? What happens if/when a student or teacher (or family member) tests positive, will the whole school shut down and go to distance learning? Will just the one class go virtual, and for how long?

If there is a plan in place for all this, great. I have not seen any information about it, there has been little communication from my children's school. We as parents need to have more information about health and safety protocol, as well as how distance learning will look before being able to make an informed decision about whether or not to send our kids back to school.

For these reasons, I humbly ask that you consider adjusting the school calendar for 2020-20201 by delaying the start of school. During that time, teachers can have more training and time to plan, and more sound protocols for health and safety and teaching curriculum can be formed. This information should be given to the parents so they are able to make informed decisions about sending their children back to school.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robyn Kailiponi

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Beruan <jenniferberuan1@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Beruan
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30

I am writing on behalf of students who attend schools that will not follow the 6' distancing recommendation. Why is it that schools can submit a waiver for this? Why have a rule that isn't being followed by all schools. Some schools are submitting a waiver even when ample outdoor space is available.

I am also writing on behalf on students who will sit in a small, enclosed air conditioned classroom with no filtration system. Why isn't the state purchasing filters for the air conditioners? There are enough studies that show how fast the virus can spread in an environment such as this. Some teachers are opting out of the use of outside fresh air since they teach in hot areas near highways, etc.

In addition, I am writing on behalf of students who will intermingle with other students from other classes during recess hours with no face covering requirement. Why say you will have "ohana bubbles" if students will mix outside the classroom?

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Bobbie Wilson <bwlhikairoad@gmail.com> on behalf of Bobbie Wilson
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of schools for students

To whom it may concern: Please rethink the reopening of schools to let the teachers and administrators have more time to prepare for the students. They are not ready and even though it is an work in progress there are many unanswered questions. On a regular school year they are given two days to prep and although they have two days to prep this year it is NOT a regular school year. One of the unanswered questions is what they do with too many students in the class. My daughter has told me that even though there are supposed to be only 12 students in her classroom at one time that if more students (this is high school) show up at her door she has no choice but to let them in even if she doesn't have enough room for them. If she sends them out of the class she is still responsible for them. This plan puts the responsibility right on the teachers. How can that work?? There needs to be an alternative plan for this situation. Please give the teachers more time. Many of them are very worried right now especially teachers with pre-existing conditions like Asthma. Mahalo, Bobbie Wilson, 107 Lihikai Road, Hilo.

Testimony BOE

From: Kristina Lum <kpp20@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristina Lum
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30, 2020 Special Meeting

- Name with position/title and organization, if applicable; **Kristina Lum, LMFT, Behavioral Specialist, Department of Education**
- Meeting: **July 30, 2020, 1pm Virtual Special Meeting**
- Agenda item; **A**
- Position (support, oppose, or comment).

1. Usage of masks: I have concerns regarding students not being required to wear masks in the classroom, but that they must wear it outside of the classroom. The idea of "bubbles" is good in theory, but students do not exist in just their classroom bubble. They interact with their families, extra-curricular activities, and the community. These are additional areas of exposure for them as their family members work and interact with others and so on. We also know that children are more susceptible to being carriers of Covid and so this is putting staff and each child's family members at risk. Wearing a mask reduces exposure by up to 70%.

2. Temperature checking: I think all students should have their temperature checked every day. This could be done when students arrive on campus or at the door of the classroom before students enter. Just doing a visual check of a student is not going to inform us if they are sick. Many people with Covid are asymptomatic so that is not a viable screening tool. We also know that if money to purchase thermometers is an issue, that there are many community partners that would gladly help to support this as it is in everyone's best interest to reduce exposure and keep people healthy and safe.

3. There is no set protocol for what happens when a student tests positive and there should be 1 clear response to how the schools will handle this. Many schools are coming up with their own protocols and this is not safe.

Private schools are requiring students to wear their masks the entire day and are doing temperature screenings. This is not unreasonable to ask of schools, staff, and students. I would gladly make myself available to help with this as I know others would as well.

If schools are concerned about the mental health effect on students from not being able to see facial expressions, there are masks that have a see-through covering over the mouth so that you can see someone's mouth while still being safe. As someone who works at schools across Honolulu District, including the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind, this type of mask would be very important to have as reading lips and seeing facial expressions is an important part of communication in the deaf community.

I am also immuno-compromised. Therefore, what I am asking for is to make sure we are addressing everyone's safety and well-being so that we can keep schools open and kids attending in person.

Thank you,

Testimony BOE

From: Robyn Kailiponi <robynkailiponi@gmail.com> on behalf of Robyn Kailiponi
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:32 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

Name: Robyn Kailiponi, parent and DOE substitute teacher

Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

I just submitted a testimony and then realized I left a few important details out that I wanted to add to my testimony.

1. Benchmarks based on reliable science need to be set
2. Masks need to be mandatory for all students and staff, unless they have a valid medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask. Even small children are capable of wearing masks all day if their parents, teachers and other around them are supportive of the idea. Masks, properly worn, are one of the best tools for preventing the spread of the virus.
3. Substitute teachers also need to receive proper training on health and safety protocols as well as distance learning teaching methods. They should be paid for training days.

I support the 4-phase plan that is attached in this e-mail.

Thank you for your consideration of this plan.

Robyn Kailiponi



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Stein <lauren.stein@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lauren Stein
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Items A, B and C for July 30th meeting
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lauren Stein. I am a 2nd special education teacher at Waipahu Elementary School. First off, I want to thank you for hearing our testimony last week and scheduling this emergency meeting. It truly shows that you have listened to the people and heard our frustration.

I would like to submit additional testimony on Action Items A, B and C. I am aware that there is a general ask for a phased reopening, and I will say that my thoughts might be a bit different than the general opinion on this matter.

A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

I am in favor of having additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff. By starting on August 18th, teachers would have time to learn how to do distance learning well and train parents as necessary on the programs grade levels/schools would be using. Collaboration is a wonderful aspect of the field of education and I value that time so much with my coworkers. These days would be of immeasurable help to allow teachers to prepare adequately for the start of the school year. This would mean a delay of the start of the school year until August 18th or later.

B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

I am in favor of allowing a reduction in the number of school days. By starting on the 18th, we'd still have about 170 days. If schools were to open on August 4th, students would likely have 180 days of ill-prepared instruction that is constantly changing and shifting because potential re-closure would be looming over head. If we were to delay the start and waive the 180 school days, we'd be able to have 170 of the best possible instruction that is well-prepared for any potential reclosure.

C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

1) I think it'd be best to use July 29-Aug 3 for the typical start of the school year stuff (SPED meetings, opening of the school year meetings, mandatory videos, etc.) I would like the next ~4 days to be training and PD on distance learning and new health protocols. And ~5 days to collaborate with coworkers/colleagues possibly even from other schools on how to do distance learning well and provide training to parents who need more familiarity with school distance learning programs. Schools could provide reports on whether they've received the necessary sanitation supplies and teachers have received XX days of training.

2) It is my understanding that many people would like to start with 100% distance learning. I am *mostly* in favor of starting with distance learning but I do have some concerns that I'd like for you to consider. Full distance learning can be difficult in some complexes with higher populations of low-income students. Access to devices and Wi-Fi make it difficult and in some cases, lack of technological literacy amongst parents and kids. Distance learning is also difficult for families who need to work full-time and it is difficult for families with students with special needs. That being said, it is also the safest way to prevent the spread of the virus to students, their families and teachers. To make distance learning effective, schools would need to provide training to help parents understand the technology required. This will be difficult to accomplish in my school. While I think most of the state could start with distance learning, I ask that consideration to the following allowances be made. I would like to ask that schools be allowed to have students and families on campus to provide support with technology. These might be in-person appointments/office hours or small group trainings, based on the school's needs. I would also ask that allowance be made for special needs students (especially lower-functioning students) to receive in-person services during the Phase 2: 100% Distance Learning.

I think the big question though is when would we move to each of these phases. I think one thing to consider is to regionalize the benchmarks. Oahu by far has the highest count of COVID cases whereas Moloka'i and Lana'i has had far fewer. So if the island has less than X cases for a rolling month they can continue their schools to Phase 3: Hybrid Learning Model. This will allow islands to move forward without getting held back by Oahu's high case numbers. On Oahu, maybe we'd have to allow it by complexes or complex areas. If the Waipahu or Pearl City/Waipahu complex has X cases or fewer, it can move to phase 3. I ask that these benchmarks be based on disease trends and co-created with multiple stakeholders (including teachers and admin from a variety of school and health professionals)

3) I think that masks should be mandated (not just recommended) when outside the classroom, when needing to move around the classroom and social distancing is difficult (getting supplies, indoor recess etc.), and when people (admin, service providers, etc.) come into our classroom bubble. For small group instruction, I think an allowance for face shields to be made in lower grades so that teachers can provide appropriate phonics instruction, but otherwise masks should be worn. I do think that masks shouldn't be required during more strenuous physical activity as long as social distancing can be maintained.

4) I also humbly ask that we demand from the Department of Health for a clear set of protocols that we should follow to report cases and a list of steps that we can expect from them before moving to Phase 3 in area part of the state. ACCOUNTABILITY IS KEY. As a teacher, my status as a highly-qualified teacher is known. My school's test scores and statistics are known. My roles and responsibilities as a special educator are known. Parents know what they can expect of me and schools are held accountable (via due process) if we do not meet those expectations. We are public servants, but so is DOH. If we are held accountable with regards to what parents and community members can expect from us, DOH needs to be held accountable with regards to what we can expect from them. I do not want to be left in the dark about any potential cases in my class or school because I have to make the best possible decisions for my own family and friends. Please help us increase accountability of our local government.

Thank you for your time,
Lauren Stein
2nd Grade Special Education Teacher
Waipahu Elementary School

P.S. I have attached below the 4-Phased Reopening Plan that I am referring to in my email.

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.



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

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Testimony BOE

From: Erin Kowalick <inspiration47@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Kowalick
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: July 30th Meeting Testimony

RE: Agenda Items II and III

To Whom it May Concern:

This is my 3rd attempt to get the BOE and DOE to hear the cries of your families, teachers, school staff, bus drivers and principals all around the state. I just had several friends become exposed because of the current outbreak on Maui. Now those people, plus all of their friends and family must quarantine for 14 days, miss out on work, etc. Can you imagine what is going to happen in a school setting with hundreds of people potentially exposed? We won't even have enough staff or substitutes to manage this. It's not even about being sick, just exposed! And all of this to consider with absolutely no guidance for schools on what to do if this were to happen.

I originally was just in favor of a 1-2 week delay to help staff with training, hopefully get in the PPE and cleaning supplies that we were promised and to give teachers time to thoughtfully plan lessons for students who will be at school and at home learning virtually. Now that this is hitting so close to home for me, I am actually now a proponent for the phased reopening in which certain benchmarks are obtained before moving into the next phase. I absolutely don't see how we can do this safely otherwise. I will include an attachment of the plan that many have proposed to make sure we are safe.

I could go on and on about all of the problems opening schools up right now but I am tired. I am tired of fighting for my right to stay healthy. I am tired of fighting to be treated with respect and that teachers matter. Please do the right thing. Postpone opening. Make the DOE uphold their end of the MOU. I am scared to think of the consequences, both to the educational system itself as well as the health and well being of our staff and families.

Sincerely,

Erin Kowalick
Teacher- Kihei Elementary School

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Everyday is a gift....That's why they call it the present.

Testimony BOE

From: Axel Beers <axel.beers6@gmail.com> on behalf of Axel Beers
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Extend the opening date for schools

Aloha,

I am testifying as both a parent and public school teacher. Given the recent outbreaks and days of record-setting infection, I urge the BOE to delay the start date of school to allow parents, teachers, and students to adapt to virtual instruction.

Thank you,
Axel Beers

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Wright Pere <katiehawaii@mac.com> on behalf of Katie Wright Pere
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:03 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Opening

Hello,

We are incredibly concerned with our children's education at this point in time. Our elementary school, Sunset Beach El, has done the best they can in very challenging times BUT my children are slipping. It is very clear. We have soon to be 2nd and 6th graders. I am extremely concerned if they don't go back to school what will happen to them.

I fear we will have to take them out of public school in order to be taught by someone. Myself and my husband are desperately trying to make ends meet and cannot use our day attempting to teach two different grades of study.

Please do NOT make them wear masks all day. Please let them come back to school. The teachers will need safety measures for themselves of course but children have NOT proven to be carriers. They should be allowed to learn.

Thank you
Katie

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Bonnie Colle <bcolle@pueo.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Bonnie Colle
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:06 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am responding late to this email, but wanted to share my feelings about school reopening nonetheless. As an Educational Assistant, I am extremely concerned about returning back to school physically. These past months have been challenging with social distancing, wearing a mask when out in public, and restraining from any large social gatherings. I believe that due to following these guidelines, mine and my family's health have remained good, and we've all been able to avoid contracting the virus. Now that schools are preparing to start up again by physically being in the classroom, playground, and lunchrooms, I am concerned, especially as someone in my position, of getting the virus,. As an Educational Assistant, I will be in a very vulnerable position. I am expected not only to work with students in my assigned classroom, but also to monitor recesses and also monitor the cafeteria which in my school this year, apparently will include Kindergarten through 6th graders. I do not feel comfortable at all being exposed, even with a mask on, to so many students, who come from such a variety of families with different living, working, and socializing conditions. There also could be family members who travel for work or pleasure, who could potentially be exposed to the virus, thus passing it on to a student. Especially for my family, I am not feeling comfortable taking a chance with my health with the current situation. As we know, masks aren't foolproof, and based on my 13 years of working with students, I can predict that keeping students at a distance from each other is going to be a huge challenge in itself.

Thank you for letting me share my concerns about the reopening of school. I'm so passionate about education and have always loved working with children, but for me, it's not worth putting my life on the line or my family and loved ones either.

Mahalo,

Bonnie Colle

Testimony BOE

From: Dawn Shirota <dfaith808@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dawn Shirota
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:07 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of public schools

Aloha Board Members, My name is Dawn Shirota and I have worked for the Department of Education for 23 years in various Bargaining Unit 5 positions.

I am currently a High School Counselor at King Kekaulike High School on Maui. I am writing you to urge you to delay the reopening of in person learning and instead support a phased approach to the opening of schools. You recently witnessed an outpouring of cry from teachers, administrators, and parents in our community. The concern of safety is real. You heard it from the Superintendent that PPE was expected to be given to schools from other agencies and donations and that schools was told to get their own PPE with their own funds. Testimony at the latest BOE meeting revealed otherwise. At the BOE meeting Administrators and teachers stated that their schools was not outfitted with PPE to reopen. The numbers of people contracting Covid 19 are real in Hawaii. Our children, DOE faculty, and families should not pay the consequence of their current health, lifelong effects of the disease or even death because the economy is the states priority. The Department of Health staff have stated that we can safely open with a bubble concept and practicing social distancing. Children can be spaced 6 feet apart in the classrooms. Do they realize children are not robots and will not be able to stay in their square of footage area allotted. Has any of them taught in a elementary classroom or even intermediate and high school? Do they realize that high school teachers teach over a hundred of students a day? How about my work bubble as a high school grade level counselor of about 350 or more students? And has the DOH realistic to think the schools with thousands of students and how will their breaks look like for toileting, recess, and lunch? I have heard comparisons of doctors, fast food service, retail organizations have to work and expose themselves to the risk of covid 19. Our Superintendent also made reference to it in one of her social media broadcasts. I have not yet seen a doctors office where medical personnel that services 20 children at once in one room for 7 hours. Nor have I seen workers at Burger King in a room with 20 plus children supervising them. Also I see at Burger king plexi glass between workers and patrons and they can refuse business to someone not wearing a mask. In addition some fast food restaurants has discontinued dine in service. Teachers cannot refuse service to children not wearing a mask. When I have shopped at Target in the recent weeks, they are security staff ensuring the 6 foot distancing and mask wearing to patrons that usually try to get in and out of the store. They also have staff supporting them by cleaning high surface areas throughout the day. I also understand that these businesses are doing temperature screenings of the employees. These measures are not in the DOE plan. In addition to these concerns the island of Maui has only 1 major hospital which is Maui Memorial Medical Center that I understand has 219 bedspaces. Will our hospitals be able to take care of our children and staff and families if an outbreak like Oahu occurs here? An article in the Maui news in March 2020 said they could possible handle a surge in the single digits but not if in the double digits.

Lastly, it is estimated that 1/3 of our educators are considered to be high risk for serious illness and complications to exposure to Covid 19, not including numbers of children with underlying health conditions that may not be made known to the DOE. These children may be the unknown vulnerable that is unspoken of. Many of my colleagues who can retire will retire early. Many substitutes who are retired teachers will not return to work this school year. Some educators may take a leave of absence this year. Others will exhaust their leave and then who will be providing these children with education or support services. Other teachers will move back to the mainland due to these concerns and the Department of Education system will collapse. I urge you all to please make the right decision to delay the reopening of in person instruction with a phased approach until we have no cases for 30 days as the Superintendent has stated earlier in her plans for reopening. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Moku <jenmoku@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Moku
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am veteran teacher of twenty five years and the librarian at Ala Wai Elementary School. I love my students and can't wait to see their smiling faces and feel their big wonderful hugs. With the growing number of Covid cases it is not safe to return to school yet. I strongly support the proposed 4 Phase Approach to returning to school this year.

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Phase 1 includes training for all stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) who will be in school with the keiki of Hawaii. Currently I will return on Wednesday, July 29th with zero training on safety procedures or technology and curriculum.

Phase 2 gives schools ample time to discuss plans with those who will be implementing instruction. We have had little to no communication with administrators on what is currently being done.

Phase 3 allows for some contact with students in small numbers with hybrid instruction so we can safely be with the students we love.

When it is safer we can return to school full time. It is our goal to have face to face in person instruction with our students. We know that is the best situation but we cannot risk our lives by jumping into a haphazard plan.

I am still contemplating a leave of absence this year. I am not confident with the DOE's plan and know for a fact that my school does not have all the supplies needed to start on August 4th.

From the age of 4 all I wanted to do was teacher. I come from a family of teachers and love kids more than anything however, I am not willing to risk my life or my family for this job. I know of other teachers who will leave, not show up on Wednesday, or retire. What will the state do then? Please hear our pleas and take them into serious consideration. The proposed plan is the best plan to save the lives of all in Hawaii. The lives of others should be the utmost important factor in your decision.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Moku
94-550 Halekuai Place
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

Testimony BOE

From: Caroline Freudig <carolinefreudig@gmail.com> on behalf of Caroline Freudig
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:24 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30th BOE Meeting

Aloha BOE Chair Payne and BOE members,

Thank you for hearing the concerns of many at the July 23rd BOE meeting. I appreciate that a meeting was scheduled for this week to address the reopening of schools.

I presented oral testimony on 7/23rd that provided you with Kaua'i specific data showing that many of our schools are not fully prepared despite Supt. Kishimoto's assurances via the 7/21 video that she sent teachers assuring us that ALL schools are ready. I could provide you with this data, however, I'm sure there will be much written testimony to read over yet again. So, I'll keep it simple.

WE ARE NOT READY FOR STUDENTS TO SAFELY COME ON CAMPUS AUGUST 4th.

Thank you,
Caroline Freudig
1st Grade Teacher Kalaheo Elementary, Kauai
HSTA Kaua'i Chapter President

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda F Haley <amandafhaley@gmail.com> on behalf of Amanda F Haley
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE

Please don't open schools now.

I am a physician at a major hospital on Oahu and a mother of an entering 3rd and 6th grader. The increase of COVID + cases in recent weeks in the state coupled with limited testing supplies and increased hospitalizations should halt the opening of schools. Although the risk of infection to children may be lower than adults schools are still an optimal arena for spread of COVID-19. The teachers, staff, family members and loved ones of the children attending schools may be high risk and lead to an overwhelming of our healthcare system. Furthermore the lack of testing and lag in testing time will result in excessive absences by sick children and family members that will not be allowed back to work until their child tests negatives . My hospital will not allow me back to work if my child is sick until my child tests negative and results may take up to 10 days to return.

Please use caution, prudence, and care when deciding to put our population at risk.

Mahalo,
Amanda Haley MD

Sent from my iPhone

Reopening Plans

Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com>

Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 12:25 PM

Reply-To: Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com>

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



Elizabeth M Benson

[444B Mauna Iho Place](#)

[Hilo, Hawaii](#) 96720

RE: Reopening Plan

July 27, 2020

To the Hawaii Board of Education;

I want to first of all, extend my gratitude to the board for heeding the concerns shared by our teachers, administrators, staff, and the public during this unprecedented chain of events we are dealing with. Thank you for taking the time to hear everyone's concerns. There are many. As a secondary, social studies teacher, on the front lines, I'd like to share some ideas about the potential reopening plan that is currently being discussed.

Since teachers worked hard to transition from traditional learning models to distance learning and telework during the last 5-6 weeks of last school year, allow us to continue to hone those skills as we open the Fall semester. Let's commit to a distance learning model for the entire Fall semester while schools work on preparing campuses to work out the minutiae of what that's going to take on a realistic level. There is lots of work to be done before students return. Schools were understaffed and overworked before the pandemic. I, personally, still have a paper towel dispenser I purchased three years ago that still sits on my classroom sink. If we can't get a paper towel dispenser installed in a single classroom, does the board really think we will be prepared to invite students into our classrooms anytime soon during a pandemic? We are sorely unprepared at this point in time and we all know it. Changing the instructional model to the blended and hybrid plans proposed by the board in the middle of the fall semester would only serve to cause more uncertainty and confusion in our classrooms PLUS all teachers and staff are expected to learn and adapt to the new protocols and implement them in the midst of the chaos. I implore the board to commit to a distance learning/telework model of instruction for the entire fall semester. It's something we are already familiar with. We have broken previous records of infection and the numbers continue to rise. Changing the instructional model midstream would only exacerbate the problem. If we are to do right by our children and communities, let's take the time to mitigate the situation properly and with great care. These are our keiki.

Give administrators the freedom to work with their teachers on their instructional plans. Teaching Social Studies and PE will have different needs and requirements and teachers should have the freedom to develop those plans as they see fit. Trust that teachers know how best to teach their students. This could serve as everyone's IPDP this school year.

One thing that has always given me great pride about being from Hawaii is that we have always been at the forefront of legislative change...well ahead of our cohorts in the states. Let's continue to move forward along those lines and set the example for the rest of the country and not feed in to the rhetoric coming out of Washington DC. Let's do what we know is best for our people. This is an airborne virus, the deadliest kind. It is the one type of virus epidemiologists around the world feared most. That is our red flag. As pharmaceutical companies work feverishly toward developing an effective vaccine, let's put our students and parents at ease and ensure them that we have our kids best interest in mind even if it means staying put a little longer.

There have been questions about accountability. Fortunately, technology has gifted us with a myriad of tools. Zoom meetings can be recorded and kept in teacher file folders for anyone to view. Attendance could be factored in to grades this semester to assure student engagement. Those teachers utilizing platforms like Google Classroom can share their class codes with administrators in their IPDPs and join Zoom meetings at any time to check accountability, if needed. Educational web sites like Khan Academy keep track of individual student progress on assignments and spit out data sheets to show how individuals are doing as well as how well students are doing as a class. It also enables teachers to “see” which students need additional support while others continue to move on in the curriculum...differentiation at its best! There is so much available to us. We can do this.

Thank you again, for allowing us input. Oftentimes, this doesn't happen at the school level. We know that teachers are givers and will do whatever it takes to support our kids, but this is different. It's literally life and death. Please commit to a distance learning/telework instructional model for the entire Fall semester so we can all feel good about opening this school year. Everything is still in flux in regards to the virus. So little is known about it. As our scientific community works toward a solution, let's do our part and work in the best interest of our kids and communities.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Benson

Anthropology Teacher

E.M. Benson

444-B Mauna Iho Place

Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Mobile: 808.238.4885

"In a world where you can be anything, be kind."



Yahoo Mail Stationery

Testimony BOE

From: Nohea Goo <ngoo@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Nohea Goo
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

I am giving testimony regarding, Agenda Item: #1 Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

My name is Nohea Goo and I have been a teacher at Dole Middle School in Kalihi in the Honolulu District for 18 years.

I would like to request the board consider the negative repercussions of starting face to face learning without properly preparing the adults on campus. With the Covid-19 numbers on the rise, I feel that having a plan to address the entire school day is very important (from when students arrive in school, to cleaning chromebooks, lending out pens and pencils, moving students from class to class, turning in hard copy work vs. electronic work, etc.). Having a plan in place will also assure parents that schools are safe for students to return to.

I am a single person and have waited a few months for sanitizing supplies to be delivered to my house. I am unsure if my school has enough sanitizing supplies on campus so that each adult and student will be provided with a safe environment. School administrators are going to need time to receive the supplies and make plans on how the supplies are going to be used in order to sanitize the school.

I have applied for medical accommodations but I was told by someone from the CRCB that my best option is to go through my sick leave since my school is not offering a 100% virtual option for students. My students will not have a teacher since I have medical issues. The availability of substitute teachers also makes me very unsure if I should go to work, while risking my health, so that my students will have a teacher.

Delaying the date for face to face learning will give schools time to plan for students safe return, train teachers for distance learning, give teachers time to modify their curriculum to accommodate students needs based on a modified schedule, and give teachers time with underlying health conditions a chance to be provided with an option to not go through all of their sick leave so that they could be there for their students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nohea Goo

Testimony BOE

From: Kaleb Loo <kalebloo26@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaleb Loo
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Shelby Loo
Subject: I don't feel safe

Dear Board of education

I don't feel safe about going to school because I don't want to get sick. I also feel scared because every day the covid-19 cases go up. I can't imagine me staying away from my friends or my teacher during school. I also don't like how we are going to have to wear a mask all day until the bell rings. At our school we start at 8:00 in the morning and end at 2:15 in the afternoon. That is 6 hours of wearing a mask. I would rather learn at home and feel safe.

Kaleb Loo
5th grade
Waimea elementary school

Testimony BOE

From: Blaine Stuart <findbgs@gmail.com> on behalf of Blaine Stuart
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Emergency meeting Thursday, July 30

In favor of opening schools as scheduled

It is imperative that we return our Keiki to normalcy. The demands of the teachers unions are not in line with guidance from the CDC or the AAP. If the board decides to delay school opening then they will specifically be going against the guidance of these medical and science based organizations, and they will be acquiescing to union demands based in fear. The board should base its decisions based on the recommendations of science, medicine, and in the best interests of the children.

Blaine Stuart
Hilo HI

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Kekoa Bay <mapledellwillow@gmail.com> on behalf of Kekoa Bay
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opposition to changing the Opening of School timeline

Aloha,

First I want to take the time to thank you for hearing the many testimonies last week and withholding action on the promised hard to staff differentials.

In regard to the agenda items for this week, I am opposed to pushing back the education of students and adjusting the educational days within the school calendar. My testimony is not the same as much of the prevailing testimony coming from HSTA members because of that, I would prefer to remain only identified as a concerned parent and High School teacher. HSTA has heard many concerns coming from teachers who have been on summer break and are unaware of preparations that have been done at the school levels.

From the experience I had assisting with the on campus Hub for our school, there have been many precautions taken and there has been much planning for training within our first week back to ensure we as teachers have the training and our facilities are ready to handle students. I understand there are some schools that are not ready, but the DOE has done their due diligence to ensure the schools have what they need. If the school is not ready, that is on the Administrators and leadership of that school.

If Principals would like additional time, that is what the half day provisions were for so we could spend the first week without students on safety and sanitation training. Distance Learning training can be done during the Half-days that were agreed upon for the first 9 days of school.

As a Parent of DOE students, it does not make any sense to delay my children going back to school. If my children cannot be in school, neither can I. There is not childcare in place for my children. I cannot be in school doing my training, so we remain in the same place of not having appropriate teacher training. With the DOE salaries, it is not feasible for us to pay a daily rate for the essential worker childcare that has been available (daily rate was \$40-\$50 per child last I heard).

I understand there are concerns about many teachers within the at-risk population. There should be flexibility for those teachers, but our students need to be in school. They need to be learning and progressing.

The largest problem we have is not COVID19 it is the reporting and fear mongering that our media and political leaders are doing. One of the best responses to illustrate this was given by Mike Rowe when he responded to a critic about getting back to work. (Following text was taken from Mike Rowe's site <https://mikerowe.com/2020/07/im-not-ignoring-covid/>)

Mike. In a recent post, you said you've been to Tennessee and Georgia, giving speeches and filming for your new show. Before that, you were on the road shooting for Dirty Jobs. Is it really so important to film a television show in the midst of pandemic? Is it responsible of you to encourage this kind of behavior when infection rates are spiking? Don't you watch the news? More and more cases every day – aren't you concerned? Darlene Gabon

Hi Darlene

Of course, I'm concerned. I'm just not petrified.

On March 15th, the day after my part of the country was locked down, I posted a link to an interview with Dr. Michael Osterholm. I'm posting it again, because I believe you and everyone else in the country would benefit from listening carefully to what he has to say. <https://youtu.be/E3URhJxONSw>

Dr. Osterholm is the Director of Infectious Disease Research and Policy. This is the same epidemiologist who ten years ago, predicted a coronavirus would come from China and turn our country upside down. In his book "Deadliest Enemies," he described the utterly irresponsible way in which the media would report on the situation, the completely opportunistic and shamelessly political way our leaders would likely react, and the unprecedented chaos and confusion that would arise from all the mixed messages from the medical community. His resume is unexampled, <https://bit.ly/3jvzQTW>, and his analysis of the situation is the most logical and persuasive of any I'd heard so far. He's also the only expert I know of who hasn't walked back his numbers, reconsidered his position, or moved the goalposts with regard to what we must do, what we can do, and what he expects to happen next. I say all of this because Dr. Osterholm also predicted that we could easily see 100 million COVID cases in this country, with a very strong possibility of 480,000 fatalities – even if we successfully "flattened the curve."

It took me a few weeks to accept this scenario, because 480,000 fatalities is a frightening number, and lot of other experts were saying lots of conflicting things. But eventually, I came to the conclusion that Dr. Osterholm was probably correct, and quickly navigated the four stages of grief that usually precede acceptance – denial, anger, bargaining, and depression. By late April, I had come to accept Dr. Osterholm's predictions as a matter of fact. Since then, I've had three full months to come to terms with the fact that, a) I am probably going to get COVID-19 at some point, b), I am almost certainly going to survive it, and c), I might very well give it to someone else.

I hope that doesn't sound blasé, or glib, or fatalistic, or selfish. Four-hundred eighty thousand deaths is an obvious tragedy, and I'm deeply sympathetic to all who have been impacted thus far. I'm also very concerned for my parents, and everyone else in a high risk category. But when Dr. Osterholm says that COVID can be slowed, but not stopped, I believe him. When he says a vaccine will not necessarily hasten herd immunity, I believe him. And when he says that "flattening the curve" and eliminating the virus have nothing to do with each other, I believe him.

Thus, for the last three months, I've been operating from the assumption that this is a year-round virus that's eventually going to infect 100,000 million people and kill roughly 1/2 of one percent of those infected. I've gotten used to those numbers in much the same way I've gotten used to the fact that 40,000 people will likely die on the highways this year. That's why I'm not panicked or surprised by tens of thousands of daily COVID cases; I've been expecting them. Unfortunately, many others have not.

Every day, millions of people watch the same breathless coverage by the same breathless journalists, who seem determined to do all they can to foster uncertainty. And so, millions of people are still paralyzed by fear, because they haven't been given a chance to digest the truth, (or, what I believe to be the truth.) Fact is, we can accept almost anything, if we're given the facts, and enough time to get our heads around them. But if we don't have an understanding of what's really happening, we simply can't get past denial and bargaining, where so many seem to be stuck, understandably so.

Imagine for a moment you had no idea how many people would die in car accidents this year. Now, imagine that every single accident – over six million a year in the US alone – were reported on, the same way that every new COVID case is reported today. Imagine every day you were told in hysterical tones, that another 16,000 accidents had occurred, resulting in another 90 deaths per day. What would that do to your willingness to drive? Six million accidents is a lot of accidents, and 40,000 annual fatalities is a lot of death – especially if you don't know how high that number could get. But we DO know the dangers of driving, and we've accepted those numbers. Consequently, we're able to make a grown-up decision about whether or not we want to assume the associated risk of operating a motor vehicle.

Again, don't misunderstand. I'm not ignoring COVID, and I'm not pretending the risks at hand aren't real. I don't want to get this disease and give it to someone else, any more than I want to be in a car wreck and hurt someone

else. So, I take precautions. I get tested often. If I can't distance, I wear a mask – especially around higher risk people. I also wear a seatbelt, obey the speed limits, and check my mirrors before changing lanes. I'm aware that we'd all be a lot safer if we kept our cars in the garage. I'm also aware we'd be a lot safer if we all kept ourselves in the house. But that's not why cars, or people, exist.

Anyway Darlene, that's a long way of saying that I have accepted Dr. Osterholm's numbers, and now, after three months of acceptance, I've made a decision on how I wish to live my life. Sooner or later, you will too. We all will.
Mike

Of course there is danger in starting school up. There is danger every day as our students get a ride to school in a car. We cannot responsibly perpetuate fear and terror in our generation, or they will not learn how to appropriately function in real life situations. We prepare our schools, we make the adjustments that have been prescribed through the Memorandum of Understanding. We keep track of what is happening to keep our schools safe. If there are people who are at a higher risk, we make adjustments to best help them, and we allow parents the decision regarding whether they feel they can send their students, or if they will do full distance learning.

Delaying the opening of schools would be irresponsible and will perpetuate this culture of fear that our media and politicians are pushing. Listen to the medical professionals, listen to those who have a grasp on this situation, not the biased media and the politically motivated organizations (including my union HSTA).

Mahalo,

A concerned parent and High School teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kaia Loo <kaiakulealoo@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaia Loo
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I want to learn. But do not feel safe going to school ! I can't imagine going to school and not being able to go by our friends at recess even when we are in the classroom. What will we do if a teacher gets sick? Who will want to even sub for us, and who will help us learn! And as a kid I also can't imagine wearing a mask all day even if it is a shield!

From,
Kaia Loo
3rd grade Waimea Elementary school

Testimony BOE

From: Dawn Marquez <lovely2dawn@gmail.com> on behalf of Dawn Marquez
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening School

To all whom it may concern:

This is my plead to delay reopening schools here in Hawai'i, due to the simple fact School Staff; teachers especially need more time to fully be prepared to be back in school. They need time to set up, plan put social distancing & arrange sanitation systems, everything is just too rushed.

I am also very concerned for my 2 kids who have underlying health issues, one with restricted airway disease & the other one with febrile seizures, they get sick & yes kids in lower elementary tend to spread & get germs very quickly. What PROTOCOLS are in place to help keep our kids safe? The only way I can fully control my kids not getting sick is if I continue to keep them home & away from people that may get them sick. While school was in session there was kids coming to school sick, because parents have to work & don't have any other option. Which sucks!!! Right now, I feel like there's so much uncertainty to fully be confident enough to put my kids in danger, as well as staff. The numbers here on Oahu keep rising even making it more scary & challenging to fully commit to sending my kids back to school. What's more disturbing is the fact that recent numbers of clusters have been linked to common communal areas, such as, bars, funerals, fitness centers, planes & training facilities. And with locals & tourists still on the move daily there's too much room for error, with higher probability to get. Do you think the teacher on top of everything in the capacity of teaching could fully, thoroughly keep up with the necessary cleaning of the classroom everytime the kids move around the classroom? I think not!!!! Plus, how can our kids concentrate on learning with these other factors, masks ALL DAY!! I KNOW FOR CERTAIN MY 5 YEAR OLD, wouldn't be able to do it, she can barely keep her mask on for 5 minutes. I urge you to fully look into these matters & take it to heart & seriously DELAY OPENING SCHOOLS.

Also, I would love to have the option to school to go FULLY online with my kids learning, again for safety measures regarding their health. I want to go online but as of today my kids have no options from their school, POPE ELEMENTARY to do so if they are part of KAIAPUNI school. We need options & to be included as the other regular education students have. If the teachers are scared to go back to school because of COVID-19, how can you confidently send them back? Therefore, students shouldn't have to be FORCED to back to school. Please make the right decision for all of us.

Mahalo

Dawn

Testimony BOE

From: Cory Horwitz <corymhorwitz@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cory Horwitz
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:29 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 Meeting

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education Members,

My name is Cory Horwitz and I am a Special Education teacher on the island of Maui. I am also the parent of three keiki who attend schools within the HIDOE. I am writing today to let you know that under the current plan, neither my keiki or myself will be returning to campus next month.

At this time, I have opted for the distance learning option for my family. I have heard Superintendent Kishimoto state the HIDOE would be offering distance learning. From what I can tell, my keikis' campuses have been solely tasked with this undertaking. My elementary school children have the option of distance learning that includes hours of daily video chat and requires students to work "a full school day." In addition, the school has asked that parents commit to this model an entire school year and has insinuated that if a student wishes to return to campus there will not be room to do so. My middle school child has been offered distance learning through Acellus with minimal teacher support. Again, the school is demanding a commitment of a full school year.

As a parent, to have one school require a "full day" of video conferencing and another school offer little to know live support seems unnerving. It does not give me great confidence that the HIDOE is on the same page and able to offer quality distance education to students. In talking to colleagues and teachers it is apparent that there has not been enough time or training allotted to achieve this.

My current plan is to apply for Family First COVID leave or FMLA so I can stay home and support my children in a homeschool program. This will create a hardship on my co-workers as they will be tasked with taking over my current Special Education students because a longterm sub cannot write IEP's or hold the necessary meetings. This is not the option that I want to take, but I feel that I have no option given the current schedule for students to return on 8/4.

Please reconsider the starting date of 8/4 and allow teachers more time to prepare and set up quality distance learning options. Please ensure that consistent opportunities are available to all students with only the most vulnerable of students accessing on campus instruction. Distance learning options at this time should be so amazing and accessible that parents want to keep their students home.

We parents should not be bullied with threats that we cannot return our students to campus for a full school year. We want our keiki back in the classroom as soon as it is safe to do so. I, as a teacher, want to be back in my classroom as soon as it is safe to do so, but I have many more questions that need to be answered before this can happen.

Mahalo,
Cory Horwitz
Special Education Teacher
Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda Kaahanui <kolohekai@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Amanda Kaahanui
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to push back school opening
Attachments: BOE testimony July 27.docx

Aloha,

Please accept my testimony for the emergency meeting.

Mahalo,

Amanda Kaahanui

Parent

July 27, 2020
Amanda Kaahanui, Parent
Kaneohe, HI
Special Meeting, Agenda Items A & B

Honorable Payne and the Board,

I am in favor of pushing back when school starts for students to allow schools and teachers to have more time to get ready for students. We are in the midst of a pandemic, which is not slowing down in Hawaii. Because of this, I am also in favor of adding distance learning to every school model. I do not want my child's life risked for face-to-face instruction. The DOE should be offering teacher instruction through virtual means. The only option my school, Kalaheo High School, is offering is 1) AB rotation for face to face and 2) online learning only. Online learning has no teacher. It is self-directed learning only and not appropriate for all students. We keep hearing that the "most vulnerable" students will be prioritized for in-person learning, but let me tell you, my son is one of those students. He has an IEP and he has chronic asthma and Reactive Airway Disease. Face to face is not appropriate, and neither is online only. The DOE should be banding together to offer distance learning for those who are not ready to go back to school. If it is not offered at my child's school, then it should be offered with another. The wonderful thing about virtual learning is it does not have to be the homeschool delivering the instruction.

The State of Hawaii is requiring that no more than 10 people gather at one time/place. Yet schools are doing this and more. If my child's school does the AB rotation, there will be 400 kids + staff on campus at once. You cannot social distance while changing rooms. There is not enough room on campus. If we have to, push back school until September 1st, and go until June 30th. Work with the union to get an extra month of pay. This is an EMERGENCY. We must do things to adapt and keep our kids, teachers, aids, related service, custodians, and school staff safe.

A bulleted list of my concerns, in case you don't have time to read my letter:

- Push back the start of school for students at LEAST 2 weeks
- Provide every student the ability to learn virtually, even if it's not at their own school
- Adhere to the "gather no more than 10" state rule and move most classes into a virtual setting
- If face to face is needed, by having most kids learn with a teacher via Zoom or Google, there will be more room to spread out. Schools should not be exempt from this ruling.
- Provide appropriate training and time for teachers so they can instruct students appropriately

Mahalo for you time and dedication to our students. I appreciate that you did not rush this decision.

Aloha,

Amanda Kaahanui

Parent and Kaneohe resident

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Kowalick <erin.kowalick@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Erin Kowalick
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: In favor of Phased Reopening
Attachments: phased reopening.jpg

To whom it may concern:

Please consider the attached phased reopening plan as a guide to how we can open schools safely. I can attest to my school not having any PPE right now, even though it was ordered months ago. I can attest to not having any training, including how to teach online or how to handle Covid-19 at a school, though the DOE says we have been trained extensively. I can attest to not having nearly enough time to set up a classroom for this new normal. I can attest to feeling extremely overwhelmed that we are now responsible for possibly the life or death of a teacher, family member or student. The expectations are unbearable. Please do not take advantage of us any longer and help us do right by our families and communities.

And, on another note, please hold Superintendent Kishimoto responsible for the lies she is telling the media. It is so hurtful that she would blast schools and teachers and make us feel like we are the ones lying and not doing our part. We have been doing our part since March! I literally have not had a day off since. In her recent video, she assures everyone we have what we need to open safely. Come to find out the next day we have NOTHING we need. This is not a way to build bridges between the DOE and it's employees. She has literally lost all trust from us and our principals as we have all been thrown under the bus by her. She needs to be stopped and not allowed to spread rumors to the public. Let's start fact checking her and holding her accountable for the inaccuracies she is spreading.

Sincerely,

*Erin Kowalick
Kihei Elementary School
EL Coordinator/Coach*

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.



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Hearl <katie.hearl@gmail.com> on behalf of Katie Hearl
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Testimony in regards to action items A, B, and C as per the emergency meeting agenda.

Aloha,

My name is Katie Hearl and I am a middle school teacher on the island of Maui. Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony. I am writing in regards to agenda items A, B, and C.

In regards to item A, teachers and administration need more time at the beginning of the year to ensure that every staff member has the training and knows the processes to ensure the safety of everyone on campus. As of right now, my school has allocated 1.5 hours to disseminate this information to staff. With everything we need to cover before the beginning of the school year, we only have 1.5 hours to learn and discuss safety procedures. To me, this is not realistic. There is no way that everything will be covered in 1.5 hours. We need more time to ensure that people are trained properly.

In order to do item A, item B also needs to be approved. Other states have reduced the number of student days to 170 days in order to give teachers 10 waiver days to train during the beginning of the year. We here in Hawai'i need to follow the precedent of what these other states are doing.

In regards to item C, masks need to be worn. Period. This needs to be an expectation in all DOE schools. To do so and leave it on a school by school basis is going to cause us as a state to have a reactive response. Let's be proactive and make sure that mask wearing is the expected norm at all times on campuses. We also need information as to what counts as an exception to that rule. We've talked about vulnerable populations (like medically fragile special education students), but what about families who simply don't want their student wearing a mask? I have a friend who has her doctorate in nursing and she informed me that she is getting inundated with calls asking for her to sign off on exemption forms for families. What is the process going to look like for that? I wrote in my last testimony piece that I find it absolutely concerning that the Department of Health has not provided "detailed, written, publicly posted guidance". They are a major stakeholder in this process. Yet there are still no guidelines and teachers go back to school this week. They are the agency we are looking to for guidance and yet there is none to be found. Again, the transparency in the plan to reopen schools is alarmingly lacking.

In regards to digital learning, I appreciated Boardmember Takeno's suggestion of starting the year digitally online. I think that is an excellent suggestion, especially because our state has been setting daily records for Covid cases in the past few days. However, I'd like to caution the Board that expecting teachers to roll that out on August 4th is almost an impossible task. Schools still have not fitted all students with the technology needed to do so. By extending the student start date, schools can ensure equity with technology and that all teachers are trained in the platform schools are choosing to use.

I listened to the entire board meeting last week. I really appreciate those on the Board who were moved into action based on testimony. Thank you for hearing our voices and our concerns and for addressing them through this emergency meeting. However, our work is not finished yet. In fact, it is only beginning. I ask you to take these suggestions into consideration when making decisions that have an impact on our community.

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Fricano II <monsieurgrand02@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Fricano II
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:15 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - July 30, 2020 Meeting
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

My name is Michael Fricano II. I am a Hawaii educator of 13 years. I have many close friends that work in the HI DOE system and they also have kids that attend school in the HI DOE system. I am very concerned for my friends and their children.

I would like for the Board to strongly consider the attached 4 Phase Plan for reopening Hawaii DOE schools. This is a similar plan that other districts across the nation are implementing.



HAWAII FOR A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOLS

4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Along with this 4 phased plan, I would also like for the Board to consider these important points:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues

- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system(s)
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons. These substitutes will also need training on best practices and school safety protocols
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (the distance learning model will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher)
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers (technology needs)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place home (not just an educational program)
- School nurses should be trained to provide care and make critical decisions for potentially ill students and staff
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community
- Pay substitute teachers for training days to receive similar and relevant training as teachers

Thank you for your consideration and time!

--
Michael Fricano II

Educational Technology Integration Specialist & Maker Ed Educator
Google for Education Certified Trainer | Product Expert { Google Classroom, Google for Education, Google Expeditions, Nearpod, Zoom, Canvas LMS }



~ *Children need our presence more than our presents.* ~



www.EdTechnocation.com | www.arvreduhub.com

Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Humphreys <vhumphre@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Vanessa Humphreys
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Board Action on Revisions to 2020-2021 School Year

Dear Board of Education Members,

This email is in response to agenda items regarding revisions to the 2020-2021 school calendar, and additional training & professional development for teachers and educational staff to ensure the health and safety preparedness for schools.

As I am sure you have read/heard already, Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools has suggested a 4-Phase reopening proposal including the following phases (with clearly defined metrics for each reopening phase determined by a multi-stakeholder process and public health & scientific expertise):

- **Phase 1**: Training for educators & substitutes (technology & health and safety protocols), evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces, order needed PPE
- **Phase 2**: 100% online learning, continual training on health & safety protocols, school traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- **Phase 3**: Hybrid learning model with limited class sizes, 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reasons), cleaning schedule for school campuses & classrooms
- **Phase 4**: Full return to campus with 100% in person instruction

In the past few days, we have seen public school districts across the nation make the difficult decision to switch to distance learning for at least the fall – to better assess the best way to safely proceed with the rest of the school year. Although not ideal, this proposed 4-Phase plan is the best choice, at the moment, to protect students, staff, and the surrounding community – with safety and prevention in mind. There are over 170,000 public and charter school students we as educators are responsible for, not to mention the thousands of teachers and support staff involved in the reopening of schools. Each of these individuals entering school buildings has numerous loved ones and family members they come in contact with—with so many lives at stake, we need to reopen with caution, we need more time before starting in-person instruction.

It is true that many others are already working and putting their lives at risk during the pandemic, yet many of those in the medical field and retail have staggered weekly work schedules, do not come into contact with the public for long periods of time, limit the number of individuals entering their establishment, have medical grade PPE and high-quality disinfection/ventilation systems in place, work with a team of individuals each with an assigned task, and/or have plexiglass partitions. Once students enter our classrooms – teachers handle all forms of responsibility from attendance, ensuring classroom management, seating charts, safety, and well-

being.....all of this along with instruction. On a typical, non-pandemic day, these are a tremendous responsibility -- and a responsibility we gladly take on because we have trained for YEARS through college courses, student-teaching practicums, advanced degrees, professional learning communities, conferences, training sessions, and professional development -- YEARS of training specifically designed to take care of our students and provide them with the best educational experiences we can with the resources we as educators are provided. With COVID, there is still a lot scientists, doctors, even the general public doesn't understand -- much of the information changes practically daily as we wait for science's understanding to "catch-up" with the course of this virus. To provide our students with the best educational experience during a pandemic ALONG with ensuring their health, safety, and well-being, we will need a lot more than a couple of days of in-service training. We as educators are not asking for years, but a clearly defined phased approach with the input of all stakeholders involved, that allows us to better understand, prepare for, and protect our students, staff, colleagues, and surrounding community for a safe return to our schools and classrooms.

Vanessa Humphreys (High School Teacher)

Testimony BOE

From: S.M. Yamauchi <sm.yamauchi@gmail.com> on behalf of S.M. Yamauchi
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: 115982631_10158977033032150_8900208442527141928_o.jpg

July 27, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Shirley Yamauchi, gr. 7 teacher at Kapolei Middle and starting the twenty-first year of my career with the HDOE.

I left the Big Island back in 1992 and never moved back home since. This was largely due to my respiratory issues since 1978. My PCP, Dr. Bradley Lee of Kapolei recently drafted a letter, to be delivered to my school administration, as I am highly susceptible to respiratory infections. I have asked my teachers' union several times over the past several COVID months of school closure if the air conditioning at my school will be shut off. This possibility was brought up by Kapolei Middle School administration during Q&A sessions with our teachers and staff. Please ensure that ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces are made safe for all, students and teachers alike. Living in Makakilo Heights and providing child care to my five-year-old son, it is very hot without any air conditioning and without wearing masks while in our home. Now imagine my grade seven classroom, with the air conditioner, turned off, and a few open windows located near the ceilings, as my workplace has had central air conditioning since 1999. When I asked two teachers in my building if electric fans will be allowed, neither knew the answer. I am sure that most of us know the relief of returning to our cars after a quick shopping trip to a store, getting into our cars, turning on the air conditioner, and taking off our masks. My classroom will not be a quick trip to an air-conditioned store, but a school day, many hours long, with no definite answer regarding air conditioning or classroom fans.

I would like the Board to adopt the FOUR-PHASED APPROACH mentioned below in the 4 Phase Plan (4PP):

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Start ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to the illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

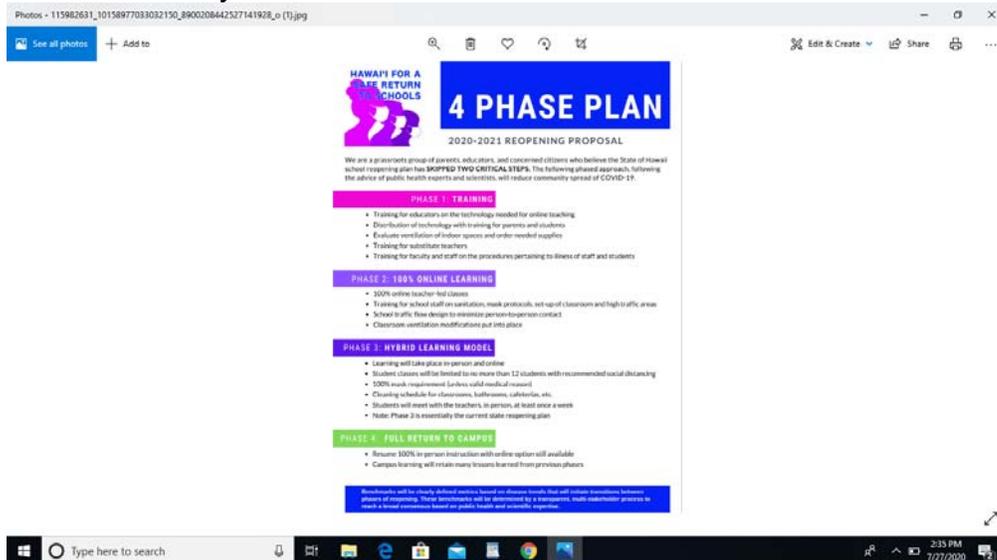
Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in the current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Please reconsider delaying the August 4th opening date for the HDOE. My son Taizo Cailing is five years old, if I die from respiratory issues, he will be without his mother for the rest of his life. I am the breadwinner of our family.

See attached flyer:



Sincerely,
Shirley M. Yamauchi
HSTA Leeward Chapter President
Hawaii State Teachers Association, Leeward

<https://yesforourkeiki.com/why/>

<https://www.stitchfix.com/referral/13325745>

<http://www.isecretshop.com/register/1112247>

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Shire <ikai97@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Susan Shire
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:40 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: July 30 Special Meeting

I am the parent of a Honolulu school teacher. The attached article hits the nail on the head that it is not time yet to open classrooms to students. Given the recent huge spikes in COVID cases here and the horrifying rampage and number of deaths on the mainland, Hawaii is in no position to think about opening classrooms just yet. It will hurt no one to wait a bit and see what happens. Children will not be irreparably harmed, contrary to popular opinion. They will not be “neglected” (as some seem to think) forever. We know so little about this disease but the one thing we do know is if we slow things down and do what we know to be right, like maintaining little contact with each other, it does help control the virus. So let's do that. The bottom line, however, is that when human life is at risk we must do everything in our power to protect it. You have that power here and a moral responsibility. So, please, employ a little wisdom and a whole lot of respect for the value of life - especially those of teachers, staff and their families, oh yeah, in addition to students and their families.

DO THE RIGHT THING AND POSTPONE THE OPENING OF CLASSROOMS UNTIL WE GET THE VIRUS UNDER CONTROL!

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/danny-de-gracia-mercenary-economics-are-fueling-a-rush-to-reopen-schools/>

Thank you for your attention,

Susan Shire

Testimony BOE

From: Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com> on behalf of Richard Stange
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 4 phase plan.jpg

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Richard Stange. I am an English Language Arts teacher, and I teach for the Hawaii Department of Education. I am immensely concerned for such an early return of children to school campuses.

“We had 800 cases in the first five months of COVID-19, and then we’ve had 800 cases in the last thirty days,” says Lieutenant Governor Dr. Josh Green on [KHON2 News](#).

Dr. Green has recently shared his opinions based on medical expertise. The first thing Dr. Green mentioned is that “no groups greater than ten” should be in a particular setting. Surely, our class sizes sometimes reach three times that amount. He, then, went on to say that everyone should “wear masks everywhere, period.” He also explains that research suggests that the virus is “19 times more likely to spread in indoor events.” Our classrooms are indoors.

“I think we have to start thinking about pushing back the school date a little bit to make sure we’re extra prepared,” says the Lieutenant Governor.

There seems to be a prevailing false belief that children cannot suffer from symptoms of COVID-19. However, I argue that bringing children back to classrooms as early as August 4 would be placing them in direct imminent danger.

Florida recently faced a “23% increase in child COVID-19 hospitalizations in eight days,” according to a recent [CNN article](#). 31, 150 children have tested positive to COVID-19, and 303 were hospitalized due to its effects. We do not want to follow Florida and suffer the same fate that they have.

There is NO wisdom in waiting until our keiki begin being hospitalized due to COVID-19 to start making smart decisions. He must be proactive, NOT reactive in this most dangerous situation.

As an attachment, I have provided an infographic which illustrates a four-phase plan on reopening schools, which is based on benchmarks, NOT dates.

Mahalo for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,
Richard Stange



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

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Testimony BOE

From: Cid Chun <cidchun@gmail.com> on behalf of Cid Chun
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:51 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30/20

Dear Board of Education,

I am a classroom teacher, and have been an educator for HI DOE for 25 years. I am 62 years old, a cancer survivor, and have an auto-immune disease (Hashimoto's). My son, his wife (who is 10 weeks pregnant), and their 10 month old son are living with us due to Covid. He is a 2020 graduate of UC Berkeley's Law School. His job in LA moved the start date to January due to Covid. With them staying with us through December, we have 4 (this includes my husband) people who are high risk in our home. We are very concerned about the possibility of my being exposed to the virus when I return to work, and thus exposing our family. With only the two admin days and two teacher work days (same as we always have), I do not have trust or faith that necessary protocols will be in place in time for a safe return of the students on August 4th.

Previous to going back to the classroom, I worked as a curriculum and IBMYP coordinator for 5 years at Kaiser High School. I know quite a bit of what it takes to put a new curriculum in place, to get teachers trained, and to do all this with fidelity. If there has been training this summer, it has been for the few and not organized for rolling out for the many. I believe the only common sense plan is to put off the return of students for 2-3 weeks after the return of the teachers. Give us and our admins and support staff time to figure out how to do this right, cohesively and pragmatically. If you implement distance learning beginning on August 4th you are distracting the teachers from learning, creating, and implementing a hybrid curriculum that is best practice, as determined by the schools and teachers. You would force us to throw our current curriculum into google classroom (or something like that). To be doing two things (teaching distance learning while being trained for a best practice distance and/or hybrid model) sets us up to do both things mediocrely. The students have been out for four months. To me, it makes more sense for them to miss 2-3 more weeks of school and come back to an organized and purposeful system, than to have them start off one way in a disorganized system, and then move to another system. Especially when this option gives schools and teachers less time to collaborate, plan, and set up systems.

Finally, our family (and all teachers' families I would assume) would like to know, if we are exposed to Covid at work and test positive, will our sick leave be paid by the State? Or will we be on disability? It wouldn't be right for teachers to use their own sick leave. What if we expose our families because we were exposed at work? Will the State be liable, and be responsible for medical bills or even possible deaths?

Thank you for your consideration,
Cid Chun

Testimony BOE

From: k chong <jkchong43@gmail.com> on behalf of k chong
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30/2020

Dear Board of Education,

I am a parent to 5 school-aged children in Kindergarten, 3rd, 5th, and two in 6th grade. I am also a TEACHER, special education preschool at Holomua Elementary in Ewa Beach, HI.

As a teacher for special needs preschoolers, I am doing what I can to ensure the safety of my students even if that means having to provide my own supplies in order to do this. I am purchasing a thermometer and additional cleaning wipes to ensure that my students and team are as germ-free as possible. My EA is an older lady which is why I am going above and beyond to make sure our classroom has safety plans in place. In addition, I am a mother to five and I cannot bring home any germs to my 'ohana.

As a mother, I am doing my part to teach my keiki to not touch their faces and to ALWAYS wash their hands! My 2 older boys will be attending Dream House Ewa Beach and their schedule is blended. The school has been listening to us parents and are working WITH us to ensure we feel comfortable making whatever decision we feel is the *best* learning method for our keiki. My younger 3 keiki attend Holomua, where I teach, and their schedule is different from their older brothers. Furthermore, it is different from my own schedule for my sped preschoolers. They will not all be on campus with me for the 4 out of 5 days that I'm scheduled to be in my classroom. Two of the three won't be in school until after fall break! Are you lost with all of those different schedules yet? I hope so, because that's what I have to deal with for this upcoming school year!

As a mother AND a teacher, I strongly feel there needs to be a plan to address the issues teachers like myself face when trying to figure out how we can teach and have a safe place for our own keiki to be when they are scheduled to distance learn. If this is about safety, how can I neglect my own keiki because I need to work in order to provide for our 'ohana. Not everyone is blessed with family who will take on the responsibility of distance learning with my keiki. Let's not just discuss the safety issue of how we're not trained as teachers to take on reopening our classrooms in the middle of this pandemic, but let's also discuss the safety issue of our own keiki not having a place to go when we as teachers need to teach our students.

Mahalo for your time,

Kau'i Samson-Chong
Holomua Elementary
SPED PreK Teacher
Mother to 5

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Kennett <amy.kennett@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Amy Kennett
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, July 30, 2020 1:00 p.m.

Aloha my name is Amy Kennett and I have been teaching at King Kamehameha III School for 25 years. I am speaking on allowing schools more time to figure out how to run a school during a pandemic prior to the arrival of students.

I feel that we are not equipped to open the schools at this time. There are many unanswered questions regarding procedures for cleaning, mask wearing, recess, lunch, illnesses and what happens when someone contracts the virus at the school. We also need training on how to best serve our students via distance learning. Our staff needs training, supplies and plexiglass barriers.

If I feel that the situation is not safe for my family and I, I will have to take a leave of absence. I am not willing to jeopardize my family or myself.

Please delay the arrival of the students until it is safe for the students, their families, school staff and the community.

Mahalo,
Amy Kennett

**King Kamehameha III Elementary
Lahaina, HI 96761**

Amy Kennett M.A.
Reading/Media Teacher
King Kamehameha III School

amy.kennett@k12.hi.us

'Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' –William Butler Yeats

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Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Humphreys <vhumphre@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Vanessa Humphreys
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Board Action on Revisions to 2020-2021 School Year

Dear Board of Education Members,

This email is in response to agenda items regarding revisions to the 2020-2021 school calendar, and additional training & professional development for teachers and educational staff to ensure the health and safety preparedness for schools.

As a public high school teacher, there is nothing more I want than to ensure the continual education, well-being, & socioemotional health of my students, however, the State of Hawaii is not ready for the reopening of schools for in-person instruction August 4th. Below are a few concerns that I feel need to be addressed before our school staff, students, and teachers begin in-person instructional days:

- Health & Screening Checks:** The MOU states each school will have a written procedure for health screenings, but it seems to be left up to each individual school – specifics about temperature checks and questionnaires are not mentioned. In addition, teachers have yet to receive information, yet alone training, on how we should respond if a student (or staff member) is displaying COVID symptoms. Teachers are not trained health care professionals – it takes years of schooling and training to become a doctor or nurse -- yet we are given about 2 days of professional development before students return. It is frightening to think that teachers, with the little training given, will end up determining whether students are okay to remain in our classroom. Hospitals, airports, and many other facilities currently have checkpoints and designated “screeners” in place before one can enter their facility, yet our schools do not.
- Social & Physical Distancing:** Although we now have “6 feet” in our MOU, realistically, that is not possible in many of our classrooms -- with 6 feet of distancing, I can probably fit about 10 students in my classroom safely -- but I doubt I will only have 10 students on any given instructional day. In addition, according to the CDC, confined spaces, with poor ventilation, for long periods of time, with groups of more than 10 individuals (which describes many of our classroom environments) increases COVID transmission to a “moderate” to “high” risk. As of writing this letter, I have not seen my class roster, nor have I been able to return to my classroom. If I am to safely bring students back, I am going to need more than a couple of teacher work days to trouble-shoot safety issues.
- PPE:** The MOU states that PPE should be worn by all staff and students on campus. However, I have also heard that when in the classroom, masks are at the teacher’s discretion. Even with a modified hybrid schedule, high school students will still meet with 3-4 different teachers each day. If each teacher has different classroom protocols on campus, this could in effect, increase exposure and transmission in several classes, and several individuals on campus if there is no consistency.
- Quality of PPE:** Although it does help prevent larger quantities of aerosols from being dispersed, cloth masks will not protect the wearer from inhaling viral particles. Although most students will have a staggered schedule on campus, teachers will be on campus 5 days a week, for 6 or more hours in the classroom – will

there be enough PPE provided for a work week and will it be quality products (e.g. KN95 masks) be provided? How do we address sanitation measures within the high school classroom? At many business establishments, carts and other high-touch surfaces are sanitized after EVERY use. With high school courses, students travel from class to class -- will there be enough time to sanitize desks and other high-touch surfaces between classes? Also, how will we ensure that each school is upholding the safety and sanitation protocols established? At the high school level we have fire inspections and other health inspections throughout the year - will there be an established committee that checks every school to ensure proper COVID health and safety measures are in place?

5. **Exposure:** The DOH has indicated that exposure to COVID in our schools is “inevitable”, yet we do not have an emergency plan in place. The state already recognizes that we do not currently have enough contact tracers, so how soon will a school community be notified of possible exposure? With the opening of schools, our “ohana bubbles” are not just extended to our students, but essentially everyone in the community. How can we ensure that those in the community are taking adequate precautions to prevent transmission? How do we hold parents, guardians, and students accountable? As a teacher, this probably frightens me the most, because most of Hawaii’s COVID cases are due to large gatherings, not using the proper PPE, no social distancing – unfortunately, not everyone in our community is taking this pandemic seriously. If the public holds teachers and school staff accountable for students within the classrooms, we as educational staff also need the same assurance that our surrounding communities are personally doing their part to prevent the spread of COVID. In July, there have been over 800 new COVID cases reported – many tied to bars, gyms, training sessions, and large gatherings – groups of people who have not been socially distancing and/or wearing masks. This rise in cases, more so in a month than any other time during this pandemic alone, shows that our communities are not ready for another large reopening of “normal” activities.

Although the concerns listed above are lengthy, they are probably not my concerns alone, but shared by colleagues, school staff, parents, students, and the general public. Schools are an established part of EVERY community -- involving not only teachers and students, but parents, grandparents, surrounding businesses, bus drivers, custodial staff, security, police, firefighters, health care workers.....essentially everyone in the state is linked somehow, someway to a student or groups of students gearing up for the start of the school year. With the entire state's health and safety in mind, we need to proceed with extreme caution, now is not the time to start the school year with in-person instruction. In the past few days, we have seen school districts across the nation make the difficult decision to switch to distance learning for at least the fall – to better assess the best way to safely proceed with the rest of the school year. Although not ideal, this is the best choice, at the moment, to protect students, staff, and the surrounding community – with safety and prevention in mind.

--Vanessa Humphreys (high school teacher)

Testimony BOE

From: Margaret Peterson <margaret.peterson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Margaret Peterson
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony for change to school calendar

I am writing in testimony to support the safe reopening of schools for SY 2020-2021.

I work part time at Kihei Elementary School, Maui. I fully support the proposal to revise the school calendar in order to provide additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year in order to ensure health and safety preparedness. In addition, I agree that teachers need additional training on distance learning. .

I also support the proposal to allow the reduction of the 180 day school year so as to provide the additional training and professional development for teachers and staff. I am 100% in agreement that face masks be mandated for all within the school campus! Finally, I agree that there needs to be a detailed, written, publicly posted guidelines from the Department of Health.

In order for the return to the classroom to be successful, proper training is critical. Please continue to support our dedicated teachers, and thank you for listening!

Margaret Peterson
Kihei Elementary School, Maui

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Testimony BOE

From: Pamela Tipton <pamelat9699@gmail.com> on behalf of Pamela Tipton
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony reg opening of schools.

Board of Education:

Let us rewind to only 4-1/2 months ago. We put an abrupt stop to in person schooling in March. We were told that schools would not reopen until there was at least 14 days without any Covid-19 cases in the state. Now, with less than 1 week before school is supposed to start, we had 63 new cases in one day on 7/26 in the state. Yet, for some reason there is federal pressure from the government that it's ok to reopen schools again. At what expense? Teacher and staff health? Are we that expendable? We already have a teacher shortage. We have not had training for this new venture into a medically sterile environment let alone any training on procedures and protocols. We are trained enough as humans to recognize symptoms of illness to refer kids to a nurse but not allowed to use a touch less thermometer...are you kidding me?!?! Where is the logic? The entire country, including the scientific studies, is unsure about COVID-19 and constantly changing symptoms, other than we know it's highly contagious and people are dying. Why not be safe than sorry? Students need to be back in school, but defining school as mandatory in person because the president demands it is absolutely pathetic. Our country needs to also be "back to normal" but it's irresponsible and impossible right now. Everyone is adapting and changing. School should be no different. Children are the most resilient beings on this planet, we have to pray that they will be ok during these times, but their life and the lives of teachers and the people around them are priority right now. It's cruel and inhumane to subject the teachers and students to become the BOE/DOE guinea pigs and expect us to launch into a Petri dish without proper procedures and precautions in place. If we can't even temp check our students then you've set us up for failure. We can't even decrease or flatten the curve with "safer at home" orders and zero tourism, yet you want us all to gather in a small space. Who is going to follow Jonnny and Tommy to the restroom to be sure they follow the PPE and social distance rules? Let's be honest, they can't even wash their hands properly without Covid-19 being a concern. It's time the HDOE adopts a universal online curriculum and the push to return becomes a push to eradicate Covid-19 from our islands. It's our job to protect these students. How can we do that when you throw us into a pot of boiling water and watch us fail.

Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. Those have always been my classroom rules. Maybe we should revisit the meaning of those when we make decisions on the health and lives of others.

Pamela Tipton

Kaua'i District Resource Teacher

Special Education Full Release Mentor

Testimony BOE

From: Katherine (Katie) Jagger <katie.m.jagger@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine (Katie) Jagger
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: August 4 School Reopening

Dear Members of the Board,

This is my second written testimony pleading with you to delay the school opening scheduled for August 4. I am a special education teacher and a mother to a rising fifth grader. I want to go back to school and teach in the classroom. It would be so much easier and rewarding to see my students each day and provide in-person learning. I want my son to be with his friends and build a relationship with his new teacher.

As much as I want these things, it would be negligent to open schools under current health conditions in our state and in our country. Unfortunately, in our state's efforts to "get back to normal," they've prioritized opening bars and not enforcing small group gatherings ahead of opening schools. This is allowing for clusters of COVID to get dispersed among our communities. Additionally, our Governor has admitted that the spread of COVID on the mainland will impact our testing abilities in Hawaii. How can we properly contact trace?

Our state has done many things right to mitigate the spread of coronavirus in our state, but we do not operate in a vacuum. Likewise, neither do our schools. We need to get control of the spread of this disease before we put children in the classroom. The sooner the better. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Katie Jagger

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Paul Nielsen <pauln0816@gmail.com> on behalf of Paul Nielsen
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony to support the safe reopening of schools

I am writing in testimony to support the safe reopening of schools. I am a concerned citizen, and live in Kihei, Maui. I have been closely following the recent discussions with regard to the reopening of schools, and am pleased to see that the Board of Education is listening to the concerns of parents, teachers, and school principals.

I fully support a proposal to revise the 2020=2021 school calendar in order to provide additional training for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year. I am confident that training will help to ensure health and safety preparedness. In addition, I am 100% in agreement that mask wearing on our school campuses must be MANDATORY!

Lets make sure that the reopening of schools is successful by allowing the extra time and training needed to make sure this happens. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Paul Nielsen
Concerned Citizen

Testimony BOE

From: Kristina Hinson <muxlowk@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristina Hinson
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Kristina Hinson
parent of student at James Campbell High School and Ewa Makai Middle School
July 30th Special Meeting
Agenda Item 2
Oppose

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in today to express my frustration and disappointment that the BOE is considering delaying students first day of school an/or approving a waiver to allow a reduction of the 180 day school year. The BOE, DOE, and teachers union have had 4 months to prepare and get ready for this upcoming school year as we all knew back in March the pandemic would not be over by August. It is time to execute the plans and procedures that all the schools have worked so hard to develop the past few months, our kids have been without any real schooling for over 4 months, that has to end.

I am saddened that the education of our children and teachers, are not being considered 'essential'. If they were, this would not even be a discussion. The Department of Health has approved the DOE's plan for return to school on Aug 4th, it should be implemented and followed. We need to stop pretending that we are experts in any way and follow the guidance of the DOH. If our hospitals, first responders or even grocery stores were to try and stay shut down 4-6 months it wouldn't even be considered or up for discussion. The education and future of our children shouldn't be up for discussion or debate either. We need to stop letting politicians, unions and those who do not have the best interest of our children at heart dictate what is happening.

It is time to return to the classrooms.

Testimony BOE

From: Eunice Werner <eunice.werner@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Eunice Werner
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:26 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Eunice Werner
Kailua Intermediate
Please delay

I am a teacher and parent and do not feel safe with face to face. Please delay student return. Train us in distance learning while covid cases are high. Then go distance learning til cases come down. Give us covid protocol training and bring kids back when safe! Thank you for caring and helping.

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Testimony BOE

From: Jessie Garcia <melenah@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessie Garcia
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:38 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Emergency meeting about reopening schools

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing concerning the emergency meeting about delaying the reopening of schools:

These training and professional development days for teachers and staff are vital if we want this school year to be successful. Last year distance learning was not successful as we were given only a few hours to figure it out on our own. If we already know that some students are choosing to do 100% distance learning we owe it to them to be prepared to support them. Also, knowing that reopening could lead to a shutdown (as it seems that DOE is already preparing for this) we need this time to ensure that we are as best prepared to make the switch from fact to face learning smoothly, unlike last quarter.

The training around health and safety preparedness is the most important thing we need to have to make sure our students, staff, families and the greater community are safe. The only way to ensure this would be to continue 100% distance learning, but if we are going to open school we need to make sure that all staff on campus are prepared!

Making the first days waiver days instead of teaching days would allow us to have the vital training BEFORE students start. Waiting to do these training sessions after students start is too late and welcomes disaster.

Mandatory mask wearing and detailed written public posted guidance from the Department of Health is one of the most important things to keep our students, staff, and greater community safe. Most importantly there needs to be a plan on what the protocol is if a student (or their household member), staff (or their household member) is confirmed to have COVID-19 and is in isolation, what are the next steps?

The fact that the DOH seems to feel that "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teacher, of course, or the faculty who are worried." and thus are using us like cannon fodder is distressing. If we open our classrooms without proper training, protections, and guidance and a student falls ill, or their family member, or I fall ill, or someone in my family falls ill how will we feel knowing we did not do everything in our power to keep each other safe. How will we feel if someone dies due to our lack of preparedness?

Thank you for your consideration
Jessica Lee Loy
Teacher
Holualoa Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole McElfresh <nicole7786646@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole McElfresh
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am an elementary teacher in Lahaina and I am writing to address major concerns. Every summer, I spend the last few weeks of summer excited to plan for the opening of school. I go to Target and use my own money to buy welcoming little trinkets for the keiki, name tags, pencils, and extra school supplies to help the ones who cannot afford to bring pencils or crayons. I am not excited. I am fearful. I am not living in fear of COVID but living in fear of knowing that the DOE never comes through with their promises. My back to school purchases looked much different this year. The only school supplies I bought have been a facemask, a face shield, and box of gloves for myself because I know that supplies are very hard to come by in the school system. We are lucky to have the hand soap replenished when needed. How do I have faith that we will have proper PPE for ALL staff and students? We have so many questions that simply cannot be answered. We return to school in a few days and when I watched Dr. Kishimoto and the Senate meet, I was hoping to have some answers. I left that meeting with even more questions. Dr. Kishimoto still had no answers for questions being asked. We are supposed to return and be forced into a health situation and hopefully figure it out as we go? As an educator for the past 10 years, I am tired of figuring it out as we go, spending my own money for resources, and not having confidence in our leadership. I am tired of answering for our officials when the parents ask questions about the why of this all. We have had weeks to make a decision about returning in person to school. We have no answers. We have no plan. Just today, I have seen many parents extremely concerned because their child is supposed to start school in two weeks yet they have no idea what plan or if they have a choice to distant learn. Teachers have had zero training on distant learning, how to handle a possible COVID student, proper protocols, and how to properly handle a child who has emotional/behavioral needs from 6 feet away. I want to be back in school teaching as that is what I am passionate about and know that is best, however I want to know a clear plan. I want to know all of us will be safe and when a problem arises, I want to feel confident we have an answer and not wait on an email to be answered from someone who may or may not know that answer. We are usually left to figure out things on our own and this time, we should not be doing that. This is life and death for some people. We have no answers to proper PPE. Grocery stores have plexi glass yet when I asked if we could have it, I was answered that we need to fill out a PO and use our classroom budget money for that. By the way, our budget was cut from \$900 to \$450 and one plexi glass partition is \$36. So now I must choose between ink and paper or the safety of my classroom? We are not allowed to hand in a PO until the first day of school yet we expect these purchases to be approved, ordered and arrive 4 days after I return so the students can use them on August 4?

Ohana bubbles are a divorced reality as our HSTA President, Corey has mentioned. Sports, band practice, choir, and rec sports are to open August 19 according to DOE. How does this fit into our bubbles? We usually have a hard time finding a sub when sick and now we have even less of a choice due to them not wanting to risk it. I found out today that substitutes are receiving unemployment until December so many of them are not taking jobs this year. This will leave us to scramble and pull resource teachers to cover. How will that work for the bubbles?

This is hard for our families as they need to figure out their work situation, many have to figure out childcare, and many need to figure out if they are unenrolling their child. We have no answers. No clear and truthful answers are being given to families regarding online learning. When the senate asked Dr. Kishimoto if the K-5 online platform was done yet, she said that they were "still working on it" but couldn't tell a date when it would be done. Teachers have had zero training although she said some have had training for online learning. Where

was this training? We must help the most vulnerable students yet those students start in two weeks and we still have no plan to who is vulnerable.

We have no direction how to help the SPED students if we do have to do distant learning again and were left to figure it out in the last quarter. We now have had time to figure this out over summer break and still do not have a plan? What do we tell the parents who are angry their child's IEP minutes are not being fulfilled? We need solid plan. Numbers are higher now then when we locked down.

We love our students and want to do what is right for them and their families. Please delay the start of school or keep us in distant learning.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Renee Dieperink <reeneeieperink@gmail.com> on behalf of Renee Dieperink
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Frontline Doctors Call To ReOpen Schools

Dear members of the Board of Education,

Please take the following information into consideration, because this means we can open our schools NOW!!!

Watch these frontline doctors all call for an opening of the schools.

They say they have treated Covid19 patients successfully with Hydroxichloroquine (HCQ) and zinc, and that school and work should be opening up again. They say you can even take HCQ as a preventative measure with zinc, including teachers.

Watch the first 12 minutes if you are pressed for time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaX8-JbaacE>

Here is part two of their visit to DC to educate members of congress.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfXd5wA7R1E>

This is their website: <https://www.americasfrontlinedoctors.com/>

Under Summit, and then References you can find a white paper on Hydroxychloroquine and a compendium on studies.

Here is another doctor, an epidemiologist, who says HCQ and zinc work.

“ When this inexpensive oral medication is given very early in the course of illness, before the virus has had time to multiply beyond control, it has shown to be highly effective, especially when given in combination with the antibiotics azithromycin or doxycycline and the nutritional supplement zinc.”

<https://www.newsweek.com/key-defeating-covid-19-already-exists-we-need-start-using-it-opinion-1519535>

Sincerely,

Renee Dieperink
5th Grade Teacher
Enchanted Lake Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Mary S. <lokelani86@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary S.
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Meeting on 7/30/20

I am providing testimony on action items A and C on the agenda for the meeting on July 30, 2020.

My name is Mary Shire and I am a National Board Certified Language Arts teacher at Aiea Intermediate School where I have taught for 12 years. I am extremely concerned about the reopening of schools right now while COVID-19 cases in the state are rising exponentially. **I believe that it is irresponsible for Hawaii schools to open up on August 4 and public schools should go full distance learning for at least the first quarter of the school year.** This will provide schools further time to prepare for a potential hybrid model as well as give time to monitor the ever-changing Covid-19 situation.

My school is a Title 1 school that services several public housing areas as well as many English Language Learner students. I know firsthand how important it is for my students to be able to attend school and take advantage of not just what they learn in class, but the many services the school provides. I also know that many of my students live in multi-generational houses and many deal with asthma or have other family members with chronic health conditions. Also, even at the middle school level students often have a hard time keeping their hands away from each other, they borrow pencils, water bottles, play around, etc. Also, last week a child in a summer program in our school community tested positive for COVID-19, which hits just a bit close to home. It is clear that children will probably pass around or even come down with COVID-19 themselves when they return to school

A recent study in South Korea has been publicized that says students 10 and up are just as likely to spread coronavirus as an adult. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/18/health/coronavirus-children-schools.html?fbclid=IwAR0kfl-Fc_wSmtixnqogFlePNrxQeraX60z6B7T2MisJNu3SAn-IruXBoIU This is extremely alarming to me. As a middle school teacher even with my school's hybrid model I will see 60+ students a day, and they may interact with many other students over the day as well, so it is hard to maintain any sort of "bubble" for protection. Although I am a relatively healthy 34 year old, I do live with my parents who are both over 65 and one has several chronic conditions that are well maintained, yet put her more at risk for COVID. My students, myself and my family should not have to possibly sacrifice our health when distance learning can be a fully safe option.

In order for schools to open safely there must be a clear plan of how to protect all people on campus via the use of masks and social distancing, as well as what should be done when COVID cases pop up in the community to mitigate the spread. We can not just be told "there is a plan" but we must be able to see the plan.

I believe that my school is doing as good of a job as possible in this situation. Our classes have been cut down to 50% under a hybrid model, parents are offered a full distance option for students if they desire and our school is working to provide supplies for teachers. Still though, there is so much to be done and so little time to do it all. Despite our efforts I still do not feel totally safe going back to work and I know that I am not the only teacher or parent that feels that way.

I know that some people say distance learning is a joke because of the lack of success during Quarter 4 of last year. As a teacher I know this was largely due to the fact that the learning was not required for students, a stance which was mandated by the state and nothing teacher could control. The argument that extensive learning was lost during the 4th quarter is also not a strong one because across the state Smarter Balanced and End of Course testing is the focus during Quarter 4 along with May Day and other end of year activities. My students that did participate in distance learning almost completed all of my typical Q4 curriculum.

Please listen to the people of Hawaii who want to keep our teachers, students and families safe. Please delay the start of in-person classes and allow schools to provide full distance learning. No person in Hawaii should be asked to sacrifice their life when safer alternatives are available.

Thank you for your time,
Mary Shire

Testimony BOE

From: William Espero <william.espero@gmail.com> on behalf of William Espero
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay working of schools

Aloha BOE Members and Superintendent,

I would like to add my name to the list of those individuals who want to see the opening of our public schools postponed. I don't know what date schools should open, but it shouldn't be in the next 2 weeks. Ml

The COVID-19 pandemic is so unpredictable and unknown and the recent surge and rise in cases should automatically put your August 4 timeline on hold.

A focus on distant learning should be the method of teaching for now.

Thanks for the opportunity to give view.

Will Espero
Ewa Beach resident

Testimony BOE

From: SH 77 <silverhonu77@hotmail.com> on behalf of SH 77
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - July 30 Special Meeting

RE: Public Testimony on Board of Education (“Board”) Agenda Items

Aloha Esteemed Board Members,

My name is Anjanette Naganuma. I live in Lahaina; my son attends Princess Nahienaena Elementary School and I teach at Lahainaluna High School. Thank you for taking the time to reflect on best practices as we move forward to ensure Hawaii's keiki are educated safely and with love.

SARS-CoV-2 is a pressing concern for Hawaii's educators, their families, and neighbors. My own household consists of immuno-compromised/elderly parents, and members with pre-existing conditions.

Our schools already struggle to ensure that we have enough janitorial staff to make sure that classroom floors are swept and that bathrooms always have toilet paper and paper towels stocked.

I do not believe that Hawaii's school campuses are ready to be opened to students at this time. The usual four non-instructional days are barely enough to get prepped during a regular school year. I don't believe that administration, teachers, and other staff have enough time to be trained on health and safety protocols prior to student presence on campus.

Are we to trust that masks, sanitizer, and handwashing stations will be properly supplied and replenished? That social distancing is enforced? That everyone, (students & staff) understand the protocols of safely reopening a campus? Or what should happen in the event a campus needs to be closed and reopened again?

The number of students in my classes is, on average, between 26 to 36 students per class. I do not have space to properly socially distance classes that large. Hoping that parents keep their children home so that the classroom can be properly socially distanced is no way to ensure the safety of those involved. Leaving it up to teachers to figure out how to differentiate instruction for in-person and virtual learners *at the same time* is not fair to teachers or students.

Oh, but you did a great job of it in Q4, you say? Yes, we stepped up, but that is not distance teaching and learning--that is educational *triage*. This is not the way to start a school year.

I asked my son, "Do you think some of your classmates would think it was funny to cough on, sneeze at, or lick hands & chase each other yelling 'Covid'"? He laughed and said, "Yes." Thankfully, he also said he knows not to do that.

For the following items, please:

- **Revise** the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar **to allow** additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and **delay** Students' First Day **to ensure** health and safety preparedness for schools.
- **Grant** a general waiver **to allow** reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar.
- **Focus** additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; **start** student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; **mandate** masks on public school campuses; and **require** detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns.

Sincerely,

Anjanette Naganuma
Lahaina, Maui

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Testimony BOE

From: Jan Avellana <javellana@hes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jan Avellana
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov; christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us; senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov; gov@gov.state.hi.us; BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov; Margaret_Cox@notes.k12.hi.us; dwight.takeno@boe.hawaii.gov; Catherine.Payne@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on the Reopening of Schools Special Meeting July 30, 2020

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Janice Avellana and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because COVID-19 is spreading in our community and it is unsafe to direct children, teachers and staff back to face to face teaching at this time. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

As a first grade teacher in Hawaii Kai, I'd like to give you a glimpse of what I am up against at the start of this school year:

I return to teach in 2 days. Unless things change, students return on August 4th. That means I, along with my colleagues, have 2 days of teacher meetings and beginning of the year business and 2 days to set up our classrooms and do all the necessary planning to greet the children and teach them when they come to us. It's never enough time, so the majority of teachers come in on their own time, own dime, to prep and plan and meet.

Except that this year, we are coming back in the midst of a global pandemic. There are hefty new health procedures and protocols to learn and implement. Our classrooms need to be emptied of all furniture, except for student desks in order to meet the requirements for 6 foot distancing. I've already gone in two full days to purge furniture, align desks to the 6 foot distancing requirements and to organize. I'm nowhere near done.

I haven't been given a teaching assignment yet. Because parents now indicating their desire for 100% distance, I was able to apply for a 100% distance learning teaching position. I begin in 2 days and I still don't know if I'll

even be in a classroom this year, or teaching remotely. Because of this uncertainty, I've decided to set up my classroom just in case, but all that work might be for naught. But what else can I do? If I leave things for the 2 teacher prep days, I won't be ready on time for a face to face class on Monday.

I don't have a class list yet. Many of our teachers don't. I have no idea how many first graders I'll have—if I have a regular class—I haven't been able to write any welcome letters or make any introductory phone calls home. No list yet, means no name tags, no names on cubbies, no teacher record books yet.

And if I don't have a regular class this year, if I am assigned the 100% distance learning position I applied for, I will have to teach 2 grade levels remotely—kindergarten and grade 1. Online. So that means I have to familiarize myself with new curriculum for a new grade level, new standards and ways of engaging 5 year olds virtually. I'll have to set up remote meetings with teachers in 2 different grade levels and do all the beginning of the year planning with 10 different teachers all before the children start on August 4th. But I don't know yet if I'll have an online position or a face to face position and I don't know yet if I'll be teaching a new grade level I've never taught before, or if I'll be back physically in grade 1.

Did I say that I start in 2 days?

There are inklings that maybe we'll be adopting a Learning Management System—not that many of us know what that is—but apparently it's an online classroom environment program that is yet to be named. Once it's finalized, we'll need to learn it ASAP, set it up our virtual classrooms, plan lessons and ready ourselves to teach synchronously and asynchronously online with only a few hours of actual professional development under our belt, articulate with our grade level colleagues—or two—ready to deliver high quality instruction in two days time—remember, July 29th and 30th are our prep and planning days.

Or maybe not. Because maybe I'll begin the year teaching my first graders face to face, all day, everyday this year in my old classroom. But then, if someone falls ill or tests positive with COVID-19 then we have to be ready to close up and teach virtually with immediacy. The last minute, emergency hustle of last quarter's virtual teaching echoes loudly in the disappointed expectations of parents, who tsk and criticize that learning wasn't as

it should've been—and rightly so. We are in a global pandemic, and were thrown into distance learning without any professional development. I fear these same results will follow if we are not given time and training to learn how to be effective distance learning teachers.

My principal and school administrators are doing a fantastic job getting everything ready for the school year. These failings of preparedness and leadership are not because of ineptitude on their part—no. They can only do so much as they wait for the State of Hawaii Departments of Education, Health and the Board of Education to finalize written documents detailing health and safety protocols for staff and students, to give the green light on virtual learning programs, to finalize and articulate an official beginning of the year start date for students, and many other key COVID-19 school reopening plans.

We are waiting for the decisions that will come as a result of the emergency Board of Education meeting on the 30th, to determine if student start dates should be pushed back to give schools more time to reopen with all new COVID-19 plans, and even whether or not we will begin the school year virtually or in person. The hypocrisy that this BOE meeting will be held VIRTUALLY to ensure safety of the adult participants as they decide when and if my keiki and I should return to school face to face is not lost on me, or any of my colleagues.

The lack of teacher voice in these life and death decisions is hugely problematic. Without the perspective of what it is actually like to have to teach in a public school classroom, I cannot imagine that wise decisions can be made.

My 13,000+ colleagues along with our 185,000 students are in limbo. Please let the public know that this chaos is not the fault of public school teachers! We will field concerns, criticisms, your disappointment and parent anger at the last minute nature of the roll out of this school year--please support us by loudly communicating that we are at the mercy of the Board of Education, DOE and BOH.

We need training to learn health and safety protocols from COVID-19. We need training and professional development to learn the Learning Management Systems that are yet to be named and we need time, training and professional development to learn distance teaching platforms. For safety, we need to start student

instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode--there is community spread of COVID-19
going on in Hawaii!

-Jan Avellana Hongo

Grade 1

Hahaione Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Catherine Baldaino <cbaldaino@gmail.com> on behalf of Catherine Baldaino
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am an elementary teacher and parent of a school aged child. I am writing today to urge the Board to adopt the [4 Phase Plan](#). I strongly believe we need to work together to make schools safe for students and teachers. I have worked for HIDOE since 2000 and feel it is important for students to return to school, however I do not feel that the current plan is safe. There are many things that need to be addressed prior to returning to school:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system(s)
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons. These substitutes will also need training on best practices and school safety protocols
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (the distance learning model will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher)
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers (technology needs)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place home (not just an educational program)
- School nurses should be trained to provide care and make critical decisions for potentially ill students and staff
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community
- Pay substitute teachers for training days to receive similar and relevant training as teachers

I believe that the [4 Phase Plan](#) will help to address these concerns and help us to provide our teachers and students with a safe learning environment.

Mahalo for your time,

Catherine Baldaino
Elementary Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Hackney <maryh1955@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Hackney
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:10 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening testimony

Since submitting testimony 7/7/2020, the COVID crisis has worsened. That fact alone makes it too dangerous to reopen.

As an RN, I fully agree with Dr. Fauci and our own Lt. Governor Dr. Green. Don't play Russian roulette with the lives of keiki, their teachers and their families.

A teacher/parent from Kauai was arguing with me that they have no COVID cases. But, yesterday it was disclosed that 2 on Kauai have tested positive.

Public health rules are to control a contagion. In order for the rules to work, you must coordinate with all countries to implement the rules simultaneously. It's time to make some serious phone calls to negotiate to make this happen! We were warned by Dr. David Ho that we had 2 choices. Because of lack of leadership, most of the world, including the USA, chose the wrong path. We will be forever in lockdown and financial ruin, if we don't get the world to simultaneously shut down.

Sincerely,

Mary Hackney, RN (retired)

1185 Mokuhano Street

Honolulu, HI 96825

From: Mary Hackney <maryh1955@gmail.com>
Date: July 7, 2020 at 6:51:36 PM HST
To: testimony.BOE@hawaii.gov
Cc: Hackney Mary <maryh1955@gmail.com>
Subject: Testimony

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on the issue of public schools reopening. My name is Mary Hackney, retired RN. I am submitting testimony against the 3 foot distancing. Anything less than CDC guidelines (6 feet minimum) is unacceptable. I believe this is on Discussion Item VI(A).

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is spread in the air. Now that businesses are reopening and more and more visitors are arriving, we are seeing the predicted results, an increase in cases of COVID-19.

Hawai'i has the best record so far. But, lack of leadership is steering us in the wrong direction.

Don't reopen schools because the President is pressuring States. For the same reasons I refuse to eat in a restaurant, if I was a parent, I would refuse to send my child into an unsafe environment. In my profession we call that child endangerment and we are required to notify CPS.

The bottom line as I see it, we do not have control of this virus. There must be mass testing so that know carriers will be quarantined. Identification of people who have had contact with those know to be infected must also be quarantined. When possible, use ZOOM for safe schooling. For classes that ZOOM is not practical, keep classes at a maximum of 10 students, desks 6 feet apart at a minimum, mandatory masks, optional eye shields, and hand sanitizer. Conduct classes outside when possible with same safety recommendations. Every public health expert says the same recommendations. Listen to them, not Capitalists who buy our politicians!

Sincerely,

Mary Hackney, BSN, RN, CNOR-e

Testimony BOE

From: Trisha Gushikuma <trishatg6769@gmail.com> on behalf of Trisha Gushikuma
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Name of organization: Parent
Meeting: Full Board
Agenda Item: Returning to school
Position: Oppose to opening on August 4.

As a concerned parent of two children in high school, Aunty of a middle school and elementary school student I oppose to the schools reopening on August 4. We teach children that education is important, how can you teach that knowing that we are putting the children in this situation of lacking more of vigorous protocols of their safety. There are many inconsistencies in the DOE systems that relate to the health and safety of the children due to Covid-19. The teachers, staff and workers who work on school campuses have not been properly trained in health and safety protocols properly. How can you expect to train staff in a few days or so, that is impossible actually ridiculous when it comes to health safety. This virus spreads like "wildfire". There has been a rise in cases for the past days of 60 or more and the DOH seems to not have a handle on the cases. The community is not working together to properly contain the virus in social places. Plus, there has been a recent case at Kaala Elementary school, what is the DOH and DOE going to do to protect children and others workers on campuses. The DOE needs to have an across the board protocols in all schools on health and safety. If not, do not open schools. We need to keep our children, teachers, and staff on all school campuses safe. That should be the main priority and not tourism. If need be delay tourism again. Students and faculty FIRST!

Sincerely,
Trisha Pimenta

Trisha
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Margaret Peterson <margaretpeterson11@gmail.com> on behalf of Margaret Peterson
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony to support safe reopening of schools

I am writing in testimony to support safe reopening of schools. First I would like to say that I am so pleased that the Members of the Board of Education are listening to our dedicated teachers, principals, as well as concerned parents.

Upon review of the agenda for this week's emergency Board meeting, following are my comments:

I am in full agreement of a proposal to revise the 2020-2021 School calendar in order to provide additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year to ensure health and safety preparedness.

I am in full agreement of a proposal to allow a reduction of the 180 day school year in order to allow for the aforesaid training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year.

I am in full agreement that additional teacher training be provided in the area of distance learning.

I am 100% in agreement that all persons on school campuses be required to wear masks at all times.

Finally, I agree totally that there needs to be a detailed written, publicly posted guidelines from the Department of Health.

Again, I would like to thank the Board of Education for listening to the concerns of all involved. With careful planning and training, I believe that we can successfully open our schools again.

Margaret Peterson
Kihei, Maui

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Tatiana CHAUVET-MARTIN <marama77@gmail.com> on behalf of Tatiana CHAUVET-MARTIN
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30/20

Dear Board of Education,

I am a parent of a 16 year old high schooler who attends Roosevelt High School. I am extremely worried of the covid situation on the island and the increasing number of the covid cases.

I do not think we are ready to reopen our schools and urge you to reconsider it.

Students can earn up to 5 credits per year while homeschooled and have to commit to a full year of homeschooling.

Please delay the reopening of public schools to a later date, when the cases will be much lower and when it will be safe for everyone to go back.

Tatiana Chauvet-Martin

Testimony BOE

From: Hana Mauldin <hanamauldin@gmail.com> on behalf of Hana Mauldin
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Hana Mauldin and I am a kindergarten teacher at Mountain View Elementary school on Hawaii island. Yesterday I started my 11th year teaching and it is happening during a global pandemic. This will be my 5th year teaching kindergarten.

I am asking you to please give us more time, at the minimum another week. We need this time to plan and adjust our curriculum. We can't use any of our pacing guides from previous years as we will be teaching a blended model, only half my class at a time. We need to prep for the days our students wouldn't be in school and who don't have internet.

I want to return to work, but we need to do it safely. On July 28th I will spend some time with my husband writing my living will and making sure my family members are aware of any medical decisions that need to be made in the event the worst happens. This shouldn't be the way I spend my last day of summer, but given events that have occurred on the mainland it seems to be appropriate even though I'm in my mid 30's.

Thank you for your time.
Hana Mauldin

Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Klaassen <joshua.klaassen@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joshua Klaassen
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Name: Joshua Klaassen, Special Education Teacher, Ewa Makai Middle School

Meeting: Special Meeting July 30, 2020

Agenda Item:

A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

Position:

- A. Support, with comments
- B. Support, with comments
- C. Support, with comments

A. As a teacher, the 4 preparation days prior to students' arrival is our normal timeline, but we have a LOT more work to do to ready the physical spaces for the requirements of physical distancing and health protocols (in addition to learning said protocols, if said protocols have even been created). And we have a LOT more work to do to prepare the curriculum for both in-person and distance learning for our school's hybrid model. We need time to learn the new software platform our school will be using, so we're not just winging it on the first student day. We'd want to make sure that the distance portions of the curriculum are:

1. Meaningful, not just make-work
2. Easily do-able with too much parent support, and
3. Ones where peers or teachers can provide guidance and support to students if they get stuck.

If we want the school instruction to be high quality, we need much more initial preparatory time than usual. In the spring we made do and winged it, but we want to make sure we do things much better now.

B. The extra preparation we need to make sure we're delivering high quality instruction, both in-person as well as distance will require additional preparation time. Therefore, this adjustment of the required school year will be necessary.

C. As both a parent and a teacher, this is the toughest call. The phased return to school is the only one which makes sense for the safety of students, staff, and families.

1. As addressed above, the additional planning will be necessary to create meaningful, high-quality curricula that can be taught virtually.
2. Starting the school year with Distance Learning is necessary. In my household, we have an 89-year-old person with underlying medical conditions placing him at great risk. My spouse has a medical condition which places her at high risk. My son is a 7-year-old entering 2nd grade at a public school. On the days he will be doing distance learning, he will have to go to my parents'

house as my wife and I both work. They are in their 70s and 80s, and while they are willing to help him with his distance learning lessons, they are also at high risk due to medical conditions. Returning to school while the COVID-19 pandemic is uncontrolled and getting worse will raise the risk both from me, as a teacher, and from my son as a student, of bringing home a virus that puts four family members in grave danger.

Much has been said about children not being good spreaders of the disease, and while I am not a physician, might the fact that children have not been spreading the virus be due to the fact that they were some of the first ones in lockdown, and not in contact with others to spread the disease? I have also heard recent medical information that children over 10 spread the virus as much as adults. If true, then 5th graders and up will be our new disease vectors. Multi-generational households are common in Hawaii, and child-care will often be put on the grandparents.

If we open while the pandemic is uncontrolled, we are guaranteeing that some of our family members will die. ONLY when the disease is controlled, then we can consider moving to hybrid 3. Masks may not be easy for younger kids to wear for very long, but we must require masks be worn as much as possible.

4. I have yet to see specific protocols and what to do if there is a child or adult tests positive. Does anyone who's had contact with them need to quarantine and be tested? By what criteria would we need to decide to go to distance learning? These are important questions that we NEED to have answered. If we do choose to go distance learning to start, then the DOH should set specific, quantifiable criteria for when it is safe to re-open. These criteria should also tell us if we need to revert to distance learning.

Joshua Klaassen
Special Education teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

--

Special Education Department Head
Ewa Makai Middle School
(808) 687-9500

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Testimony BOE

From: Diana Wan <dianawan21@gmail.com> on behalf of Diana Wan
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf; Untitled attachment 00042.html

Aloha, BOE,

I am a secondary teacher at Washington Middle School.

I believe we need to complete all of the following before the opening of schools:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system(s)
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons. These substitutes will also need training on best practices and school safety protocols
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (the distance learning model will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher)
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers (technology needs)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place home (not just an educational program)
- School nurses should be trained to provide care and make critical decisions for potentially ill students and staff
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community
- Pay substitute teachers for training days to receive similar and relevant training as teachers

I support the attached "Four-Phase Approach" created by members of the Facebook Group: "Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools".

Mahalo,
Diana Wan



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Ann Crawford <acrawford@kkhs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ann Crawford
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:00 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Agenda Item 1

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Anna Crawford. I have taught at King Kekaulike High, Maui for the last 17 years. I am urging you to delay students' first day of school for multiple reasons. Primarily to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and the community. COVID numbers in Hawaii keep climbing. Also, families are still very confused about their options. Not everyone understands the definition and differences between Home School, Virtual Learning, Online, E school, Distance Learning and Hybrid. Lastly, teachers and schools need more time to prepare to deliver the various learning models.

King Kekaulike recently decided to go all virtual, except for those needing extra assistance, because even with rotating schedules we cannot safely socially distance students. I can only safely fit 7 students in my portable and I have 170 students. I am happy that the leadership at my school made this decision. However I am in no way prepared to deliver 4 levels of French virtually. I have not received any training on how to teach virtually, we have been on summer break. I do not consider myself not to be tech savvy and I have very outdated equipment so the learning curve for me will be steep. There are only a few hours in our schedule for the first 2 weeks that are devoted to professional development. I feel that by delaying students' return to school teachers would have more time to be trained and then to prepare and deliver quality learning opportunities for students. I want to do a good job and not have to figure it out on the fly. Our students deserve quality instruction. I am the head HSTA representative at my school and all the teachers I talk to do not feel prepared to start the school year. We only found out last week that we would be all virtual.

Another point I would like to make is that the survey Superintendent Kishimoto keeps referring to was taken at the end of 4th quarter. At that time, COVID-19 numbers were very low in Hawaii and had flattened. Since that time, our numbers have gotten worse and many other states are spiking. I believe if that same survey was taken today the numbers would be different. More families would want virtual learning and to delay the start of school so that schools and teachers can be better prepared.

Thank you for considering my testimony

Anna Crawford

Anna Crawford

French and Advisory Teacher, Kekaulike High
Head Faculty Rep, Hawaii State Teachers Association
KKHS FIDM Fashion Club Advisor

Testimony BOE

From: Stacey Ishihara <sish03@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacey Ishihara
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Items for Consideration

Dear Sir or Madam,

As you make decisions about the reopening of school, I wanted to share some items for your consideration. My opinion is that the reopening of school should be delayed for a few weeks or be 100% distance until better protocols and plans can be developed to ensure that you can provide a safer / fairer environment at the schools. In talking with other parents, here are some things I wanted to share:

Policy and protocols need time to be enhanced

- Most workplaces have established clear policies and protocols
- Schools have not clearly shared (or developed)
- Here are some common ones at other workplaces
 - a. Can student/teacher come to school if family member has symptoms
 - b. What student/teacher needs to do if they are exposed
 - c. What student/teacher needs to do if family member (or themselves) travel out of state
 - d. When a student must quarantine, what happens to their education (do the switch to distance)
 - e. When a teacher must quarantine, what happens to their class (do the switch to distance)
 - f. If numbers reach a certain level in the state will schools close or will closure only occur when there is a positive in the school or multiple in the school
- Understanding the Department of Education or Schools policies and protocols is key for parents to make choices on their children's education. Parents have had to make choices without this information.

Communication to parents is rushed and lacking

- Many parents didn't receive information about the 100% distance option
- Many parents received information on 100% distance option only a couple days before deadline
- Parents were not given much information on the platform used
- Some schools didn't know they had to offer/publicize the option

Discriminates against those with health conditions or at-risk family members

- 100% Distance Option, as it is currently explained, would force children with health conditions or at-risk family members to have unguided classes (basically no instruction) and have only limited courses (won't have access to all classes)
- Rules protect special needs children's education, but in this case some children will be forced to use a separate platform (is it possible to use Zoom so they can be included).

Reasons for utmost caution

- This is be the largest gathering of people in the state since the outbreak started
- This gathering involves a large number of keiki
- The number of cases in the state are the highest they have ever been
- The number of cases in children are on the rise

Safety measures used are unproven / untested

- Can students last in an un-airconditioned class with a mask?

- Can students last for the length of the school day with a mask?
- Will air-conditioned classrooms make the virus spread more
- Classroom settings adhere to the 6ft, but hallways and stairwells between periods are often very crowded (shoulder to shoulder) with students not maintaining distance because they are trying to get to class
- Limiting only 50% of students on campus at a time is dependent on the student population. For schools with larger numbers of students, this is still a high number.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
S. Ishihara

Testimony BOE

From: Ms. Kuroiwa <ckuroiwa@nimitzeagle.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ms. Kuroiwa
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: Watch on how China reopened schools

BOE Members,

Please watch this video on how China is reopening schools. We need to open our schools SAFELY.

<https://www.facebook.com/culturacolectivaplus/videos/637114310236803/>

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.

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Mrs. Cheryl Kuroiwa
Teacher, Grade 1
C.W. Nimitz Elem. School
520 Main St.
Honolulu, HI. 96818

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Ishihara <nicoleannishihara@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole Ishihara
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Special Meeting 7/30/2020

Aloha kākou,

My name is Nicole Vise and I am a parent of a student attending Kea‘au Elementary School. I am writing in regard to the BOE’s Special Meeting on July 30, 2020, which I believe is about the reopening of schools in early August. I want to say that my husband and I OPPOSE the reopening of schools in early August.

We believe the DOE should delay the opening of schools across the Hawaiian Islands to protect the health and safety of our keiki. The federal government/Trump administration should not reopen schools despite their urging to restimulate our economy and use our children as pawns while simultaneously holding funding from schools, school districts, state departments of education. It is wrong and inhumane. With our national numbers climbing in COVID-19 cases and our state numbers slowly climbing as well, we need to think RATIONALLY about what we are doing. Kea‘au Elementary is a Title I school that receives a tremendous amount of federal funding and in turn I am grateful that we have used these funds for free lunches and school supplies. However, I would be fine with doing away with our federal funding to keep our children safe. That is the priority--keeping our keiki and our communities safe and healthy.

The BOE has a kuleana/responsibility and that is to keep our keiki safe. This current plan to get our kids back to school does not keep them safe nor does it quell the fears of parents, grandparents, and extended family. There are too many questions and not enough answers to reassure families that our keiki will be protected and that an outbreak will not occur at a school, especially when it comes to protocol IF someone should contract COVID-19. We urge you to delay the reopening of our schools until the COVID-19 numbers go down and we continue to keep the kama‘āina of these islands safe.

Mahalo nunui loa,
Nicole Vise

Testimony BOE

From: Bob Underwood <underrd@gmail.com> on behalf of Bob Underwood
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 6:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re-opening of Hawaii public schools

Aloha,

My name is Robert Underwood and I have been a teacher at Kaunakakai Elementary School on Molokai since 2003. I urge you to delay the opening of Hawaii public schools. Furthermore, when we re-open, I recommend that we do so with virtual classrooms only.

Simply put, our school doesn't have the resources to effectively prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus if we go ahead with face-to-face instruction. We have had little guidance from the DOE and state health professionals, so our self-created school response plan is inadequate.

I will be 64 this October, and though I'm in good health, I think my chances of survival are much greater if we reopen with virtual classrooms only. If we reopen with face-to-face instruction on August 4, and I make it to December alive, I will retire mid-year.

Respectfully,

Bob Underwood

3rd Grade Teacher

Kaunakakai Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: cindy lu <cinluyou@yahoo.com> on behalf of cindy lu
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 6:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Conda, I'm a 20 year casual hire for the DOE.

I am opposed to schools opening up on 8-4-2020. The first 2 weeks of school is supposed to be half days and this will not help anyone (students, teachers, parents or caregivers). I suggest that the first 2 weeks teachers have trainings on school wide , if not statewide, consistent safety measures for their students. Also that time would be for contacting parents and students, giving packets and computers to make sure they have access or can work out other options with homes. Teachers could have time with planning for alternative distance learning if parents do not feel comfortable and this would benefit schools and count date.

It seems like as of now there has been little training and I feel our students and community are a test site for the rest of the states.

Masks no masks (when and where),

Recess big question mark,

Lunch. 6' apart walking and how long will that take, Interaction with counselors/ tutors, I know this pandemic is a first for this world and I know with all the uncertainty and change it would make things a lot better if WE could all be on the same page and have more things worked out before students were brought back to campus.

Mahalo for your time and any consideration you give this testimony.

For our children and Kupuna.

Aloha

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Megan Walsh <mwash11390@icloud.com> on behalf of Megan Walsh
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

To whom it may concern,

My name is Megan Walsh, and I'm the mother of three elementary school children.

I oppose the face-to-face instruction of public schools during this pandemic. My family has opted to do virtual/online schooling.

Testimony BOE

From: dching10@twc.com
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Regarding July 30th meeting

Good evening Board of Education Members,

Our son is entering the 9th grade this school year therefore it'll be his first year of high school. Under normal circumstances starting high school can make any child anxious and nervous however COVID-19 adds an additional layer of stress to this. His high school is opting for a hybrid model of online and in-class instruction. As parents our concern is that it seems as if there's a rush to open schools by August 4th. The daily count of coronavirus cases lately has been in the 50's, 60s and 70s whereas in March when schools closed the cases were in the single or low teens. It does not make sense to rush opening when the number of cases have broken records just in the past week. I concede that yes, life does have to go on and we need to get back to some kind of normal however the Department should move forward carefully. Please consider taking more time to plan and provide training to teachers and students (I do not believe my son has ever taken an online class before) in online learning. What is the school's plan on communicating to parents how student's health will be safeguarded? For example, will each desk be sanitized after each class? What about water fountains, bathrooms, doorknobs? Is there an SOP in place for these concerns? Also have the school's support staff been provided training on disinfection and do they have enough PPE, sanitizer, etc.

Another concern is that my husband and I both have to physically go into work therefore we won't be able to pick up our son from school when he has a half day and this puts him at risk of more exposure if he has to wait around at school. It is also extremely challenging for our family because we won't be home to help him with online instruction. Although our son is a responsible person, I do not expect him to log in everyday when he's supposed to because realistically he's just a kid. He needs the guidance of a teacher to provide structure and instruction. I fear that this may set my son as well as other students up for failure rather than success. I understand that the COVID-19 environment has made things challenging for everyone however please consider postponing the start date of school to work on these and other concerns that many other families share. If COVID-19 does find its way into the schools it'll just require the community to take a step back rather than forward. It doesn't make sense to open too soon and unprepared as shown by the skyrocketing cases in Florida, Texas and California. Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Anna Yamauchi

Testimony BOE

From: Sonya Porcher <porcher1005@gmail.com> on behalf of Sonya Porcher
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:46 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to Support the Delay of Opening Schools

July 27, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Sonya Porcher and I am a second grade teacher at Konawaena Elementary School. I am one of those overly anxious teachers who went to the school on Monday of this week to begin classroom preparations. It is clear that the school is not ready. The classrooms are dirty. The custodial staff was cutting the grass and maintaining the lawn. The PPEs are not provided in the classroom and there were not any cleaning materials available for the classroom.

Upon entering the front office to collect the keys to my classroom and mail, I placed my hand under the automatic sanitizer station and there was not any sanitizer available. I then signed my name on a clipboard on an outside picnic table and provided my phone number (which is now accessible to anyone who comes onto the campus). There was also a space for my email address, but I did not want this information available to the public. It is my understanding that this is a part of the school's COVID tracing process. The students are coming to an environment that is not ready. There is no protocol for student safety. The following concerns are not being addressed or currently considered for student health and safety:

1. Touching the hand railing while walking up/down the stairs to the classrooms. All students walk up and down the stairs and touch the hand railing. Who will clean the hand railing?
2. Cleaning materials in the classroom (soap). There is a huge container of sanitizer and cut paper towels in the classroom.
3. What will happen when students enter the restroom for bathroom breaks and touch the stall handles and doors and then re-enters the classroom.
4. How are the students going to maintain 6 feet social distance during recess time?
5. Are the students going to sit 6 feet apart on the school bus? Will there be bus monitors to assist with this process (particularly on the first day of school)?

These are just a few of the questions that have not been addressed or possibly cannot be addressed at my school to assist with providing a safe environment for our students. The administrators have a lot to process. They are trying to balance the class sizes with students (and do not have an accurate current record of the distant learning student or blended model students). All of the parents have not sent in their form to indicate their choice. Therefore, the teachers do not have a class roster. The administrators are trying to work out a staff member that will work with the distant learners to prepare and train them as well as parents to access Acellus on day one.

The schools are not ready. Time is needed to train teachers and to work through these concerns. Four days with teachers setting up their rooms is not enough to prepare and ensure that our school can safely welcome students to the campus.

Please consider extending the first day of school to August 18 or possibly starting the school year virtually so that all of our students can have an equal opportunity to reconnect to school. When the aforementioned concerns are addressed, then open the campus to our learners.

Kind regards,

Sonya Porcher

|

Testimony BOE

From: Holly <hollybakescookies@gmail.com> on behalf of Holly
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To 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 a kindergarten teacher. This year is going to be my eighth year teaching. Throughout my years of teaching, I've learned many lessons. The most important of these lessons being, "failing to plan is planning to fail".

This is why I am writing to you today. As teachers, we are required to assess students and plan according to their needs. In order to create an effective plan, teachers collect data and make observations. This is what an effective educator should do.

If the state of Hawaii was a student, that student would be classified as a struggling student. According to data, the cases of COVID are going up. In fact, more cases have been identified in the past few weeks than during the entire lockdown. Hospitals are beginning to surge. This data shows that the state of Hawaii has regressed.

If the state of Hawaii was a student, this would be the time when a teacher would start planning on how to help that student. The last thing a teacher would do is to start pushing that student into something they are not prepared for. The last thing a teacher would do is start teaching without clear objectives and a clear plan.

If we do not plan well, we will fail. Failure, in times like these, can come in many forms. It could mean having to shut down a whole school, having to shut down the state again, or worse, dealing with the death of a student, teacher, or faculty member. I say worse, because nothing is worse than the loss of a life that could have been prevented.

A question I heard in the testimony last week hit me hard. Someone asked, "What happens to the student who is struggling?" The answer is simple, teachers will teach from anywhere. They will put in the time to reach those struggling students. Then when schools are SAFE to open again, teachers will be there to do their job. That struggling student will be alive to learn another day. Teachers will be there to assess and plan. Teachers cannot do that if teachers end up catching COVID and dying. I cannot teach from the grave.

I am writing to you today, because we need a better plan, one backed with clear objectives, protocols, and science. I am writing to you today, asking you to help us plan to succeed. Please support the 4 Phase Plan, as stated below.

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies

- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Thank you for your time,

Holly Uehara

Testimony BOE

From: Bozo Clown <nelsonmaeda@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bozo Clown
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Nelson Maeda
Subject: From a 40 yr Educator - Would You as a Board of Ed Member, sit in a Teacher's shoes and report to work in a classroom?

The schools are not ready to open schools to students as the campus are not safe. safety procedures have yet to be discussed and implemented. Teachers report to work on 7/29/20 W and 4 days later, students are scheduled to report to schools. Of the 4 days between Teachers reporting to work and the opening of the schools, 2 days are designated for Teacher Prep to prepare for the school year. The other 2 days are Administration days where opening procedures are discussed and where new safety procedures in regards to Covid-19 will have to be squeezed in the agenda.

- 1) POSITVE Virus cases are rising over the last week in alarming rates.
- 2) Data is inconclusive that students cannot be afflicted with the Cover-19. The data is showing that older (Inter & High School) students are testing positive.
- 3) ALL Students are potential carriers to the home and community.
- 4) Adult Staff are vulnerable and in grave danger to being afflicted with Covid-19.
- 5) Possible deaths resulting from the opening of the schools will lead to probable Litigation against the DOE, DOH.
- 6) Premature opening of schools will lead to a exodus of Teachers either retiring or leaving the profession. It is not worth dying for.

Under the present circumstances, would you, the Board of Ed, sit in a Teacher's shoes and report to work with children in a school and take a chance of being exposed to the Virus, or having your students be exposed and take it home and the community?

Mahalo, NM

Testimony BOE

From: Hanalei conda <hanaleiconda@gmail.com> on behalf of Hanalei conda
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Attachments: OPENING SCHOOLS CONCERNS.pdf

July 19th, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Aloha My name is Hanalei Conda. First and foremost I just want to say how thankful I am that you all are working so hard to keep our aina, keiki , and community safe. I understand there are so many factors that weigh into decisions. Mahalo. I'm writing this letter as a concerned parent and Teacher.

I currently have 6 children under my care 2 of my own and 4 that we just recently got custody of. This has been such a trying time for everybody and as a parent I am so proud of how well they have dealt with all of this. As a parent I feel very nervous about sending my kiddos to school. They are all in a different grade and they will all be exposed to different "bubbles". The idea of keeping to a "bubble" is very ridiculous to me. I understand that kids need to be in school but the way school is, will be completely different and weird for them, I feel they won't get much out of it. Much less the Elementary, Intermediate, and Highschool are all saying no Distance learning. The inter and high school that my older kids attend has just sent a letter home saying they will be going 1 day a week and they watching the SAME lesson taught 3 other times on a stream. That is very frustrating for me as I've always stressed how important "stretching your brain is" My kids are al on the higher side of academics and this will just bring them down way more. They will be getting 1/3 of the education. I'm concerned for all the kids attending there as well. No matter what level of learning you are at this method will just bore them. They will also all get exposed to a whole bunch of different people regardless of Bubbles (My kids are pretty good about following directions as well). Another issue is Childcare. I've been watching my sister- in laws child while she's at work and she will still have to work, along with any other person I know. And because I have 6 pickups and drop offs can only be done by my car due to seats. If I can find someone in my ohana Bubble to watch them they will not be doing any school stuff because the adult would not be able to help. This leaves them up to it by themselves. I have also not filled any surveys out since the end of May and that is when cases were low. Now that they are on the Rise I am not comfortable with my kids doing face to face instruction.

As a teacher, I was told that I am Directed to be on campus every day, Masks aren't required, There will be NO distance learning (It was not part of the options ??) if parents want that they can do homeschool. We were also told no changes to the bell schedule will be made. No temp checks, and if teachers are high risk there's things they can do? If a child is sick send them to the health room (our health aide is at high risk herself) if the kid is sent back and still sick we can call parents. We can attend meetings virtually but it has to be on campus (we have a small campus). Class rooms will be sanitized daily (yet our wednesday is for sanitization and we only have 3 custodians). Our school has not received any training that Dr, Kishimoto has referred to. I feel very nervous about going back into the classroom, seeing all the cases on the rise.

I am so torn as an educator. I usually feel so excited and now all I feel is anxiety. I don't want to leave my school kids, But I also have to do what's best for my family. If we distance

taught for the first quarter then reassessed after Labor day and decided its good to go, maybe can do a weekly switch then kids get established in classrooms as well as have a week of work to do at home. (EX: Group A first week Group B second week and continue on) I feel this would be better for working families too, they could get full weeks in at work and not have to switch days consistently all the time.

Thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate all your doing.

Mahalo nui,
Hanalei Conda

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Mickelsen <e.m.mickelsen7828@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Mickelsen
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Actions A, B, and C. I am a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee School on Maui. I have been teaching for 15 years and I don't want to stop now.

WE NEED MORE TIME!!! And not just 9 more days! Teachers have not been trained and we need CLEAR protocols from the top that all schools will use to ensure safety.

According to the CDC guidelines for reopening schools if you answer NO to any of these questions then you should not reopen....

- Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders? **Not sure**
- Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness? **Most likely NO since many orders for PPE may not come in time.**
- Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure? **Not sure**

So, based on the fact that many schools cannot answer YES to these questions...we are not ready to open!!!! This is being rushed and people's lives could be on the line. It is unacceptable!!!

Thank you for your time,
Erin Mickelsen

Testimony BOE

From: Darlene Dunston <darlene.dunston@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Darlene Dunston
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:45 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony school reopening

testimony for july 30

Currently, COVID19 is non stoppable. Looking at the numbers of the United States the virus simply continues to spread.

Here in Hawaii, our numbers continue to climb and our islands are not even open for business, no tourist.

On the news, the professional baseball league couldn't, with all their millions of dollars, prevent players from contracting COVID19.

NFL, had some 70+ players test positive. These leagues prove that gatherings is still very dangerous.

We are an educational league. We know about the importance of **SCIENCE**. Yet, our educational leaders are not apply the basic common sense

of science to the reopening of schools. I question the system, why aren't we following **SCIENCE??????**

In your meetings, you follow **SCIENCE**, virtual. Keeping all safe. This should be exactly the same for all in the educational system.

There is no way we can keep everyone on our campus's safe. That is supposed to be the most important part of education.

Schools have always following the following two important concepts:

Providing our keiki with a **SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**.

Providing teachers and others with a **SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**.

When we go to the doctor's office, they thoroughly clean the exam room prior to the next patient checking in.

This is the action following **SCIENCE**.

Doctors know that it is so easy for the next patient to get infected. This applies to our students.

Who will be cleaning our rooms when our students leave to the next classroom?

I have already sent out emails introducing myself to my incoming 9th grade families.

They reply immediately wanting to know will the students have their temperatures taken?

Who will be cleaning the classrooms between classes?

Who will be monitoring students during the passing time?

What about monitoring students during lunch time?

What about the cleaning of the restrooms?

What about the cleaning of water fountains?

Just to mention a few items that can infect anyone.

Of course, all of us know that there will be no one to or time to clean the classrooms between classes or any of the other items.

We are the state of Aloha.

When hyphenate our state name we greet people, **HI**.

Where are these people of **ALOHA** for our communities, keiki, and future.

It hurts deep within to even think that anyone would be planning to have schools open when our COVID 19 numbers are constantly climbing.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with beginning distance learning, first and follow the rules of **SCIENCE**. We can work in various ways with our students in the **STAY AT HOME** safe environment.

I am a teacher, and I am terrible afraid of this virus.

I have 2 special needs grandchildren in high school and they **WILL NOT** be returning to the classroom.

I also have 5 other grandchildren who also **WILL NOT** be returning to the classroom.

They are way too precious to me and our family to take such a risk.

Their parents, elder siblings, and myself are working together to figure out ways in which we will work with them all to continue their education.

This entire situation is an unbelievable nightmare.

We need to remember, we are **Hawaii**. A place that has always **CHERISHED** the **KEIKI** and the **KUPUNA**.

Many of our teachers and substitutes are **KUPUNA**.

Please allow more time to make all of Hawaii's educational institutions safe. Give us all of the needed supplies and time.

I would not want to be in your place if and when we start to get sick, have long-term disabilities or die.

Please have the end goal, **SAFETY** with **SCIENCE**, in your decision.

Mahalo Darlene Dunston

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Pautzke <sarah.pautzke@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sarah Pautzke
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: COVID School Opening....or not

Dear Ms. Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I urge you to consider opening based on island or even by school. We understand Oahu has several cases of COVID-19, but the Big Island and other islands do not. As a parent, I want my child back in school because I feel our school is ready. We have a plan in place for what to do in the event of a case at the school. Our teachers are comfortable.

But, I understand that other schools are not ready and teachers are not necessarily comfortable at other schools. Maui, Kauai, Molokai, and Hawaii Islands have very few cases. We are not Oahu. Please do not do a blanket policy regarding school opening. Yes, this is more work tracking the different schools. I get it. But it's worth looking at us all individually, ensuring schools have a plan in place before opening, and the teachers are comfortable.

Another aspect I urge you to consider: if one teacher is uncomfortable, but everyone else is comfortable within the school, please do not let that one person speak for everyone else. The school should work with that teacher internally to address their concerns instead of allowing the school to be shut because of one person.

I know you have to respond to concerns of teachers and parents and other administrators, whether they are arguments for or against re-opening. I hope you choose to reopen.

Thank you for your time,
Sarah Pautzke

Waimea, Hawaii Island

Testimony BOE

From: Andee Lau <andeeklau@gmail.com> on behalf of Andee Lau
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:09 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: July 30 Meeting Re: School Opening Concerns

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

For the health and safety of our children, families, educators, and everyone they come into contact with, please make it a requirement to wear masks or some sort of face covering while on school grounds, OUTSIDE AND especially INSIDE of the classroom. It shouldn't be left up to the principals or leaders of the school to decide policy when it comes to the health and well-being of the children. Even if the desks are six feet apart, the students will not be sitting down at their desks the whole time. If the government can mandate everyone to wear masks in a restaurant, the government can sure as heck mandate masks on school campuses.

Thank you,
Andee

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Justin Bergonio <justin.bergonio@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Justin Bergonio
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:10 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY for Emergency Meeting 30 July 2020

To the Members of the Board of Education (BOE),

Thank you for taking the time to hear me out. My name is Justin R Bergonio. I am a sixth year math teacher at Waipahu High School. I am writing to you to advocate for the BOE to adopt the following Four-Phase Plan as proposed by the grassroots group Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools (included at the end of this testimony).

This is the third time I am providing written testimony. I have never felt so passionate for a cause, but I feel that I've bottled up so much anguish and anxiety during this pandemic that even jotting these thoughts and questions and ideas down might relieve me of this heavy burden that is this upcoming, "new normal" school year.

I am advocating for this Four-Phased Plan (4PP) because I feel that there are many moving parts that must be considered before we welcome our students this school year. I applaud the initial efforts by the DOE to tackle this challenge head-on: allowing schools to choose the type of schedule that suits their community, additional funding to obtain more internet-accessible devices, and the continued communication between leaders of different departments (Labor, Health, etc.). However, there is much that has yet to be taken into consideration. Here are some of those things:

1. What benchmarks drive the current reopening of public schools? I attended last week's BOE General Meeting at 1:30pm and had stayed online to hear the rest of the meeting, which ended at around 8pm. In those 6.5 hours, I kept hearing this word "metrics" brought on by Superintendent Kishimoto. What are the current metrics that say it is safe to reopen? How have the risks in reopening public school buildings to students been calculated? Has each community's unique demographics--internet-access, access to tech devices, access to healthcare, number of household members--been taken into account for the risk assessment? In the 4PP, we ask that there are benchmarks backed by science integrated into the plan to ensure a smooth transition from one phase to another. What those benchmarks look like may have to come by the guidance of the State Department of Health.

2. How will substitute teachers be trained to prepare for this "new normal"? Even before the pandemic, substitute teachers were essential. I remember several occasions when the front office would scramble to have substitutes jump between classrooms in order to find full coverage. There would be occasions when security guards would be tasked to keep several classes without teachers in the cafeteria! Has there been proper protocols to address these unique situations? If not, we propose that all substitute teachers, in addition to the normal substitute training, are also trained in the procedures and policies, and be compensated as need be. Now is not the time to scrape the bottom of the barrel for a sub that is merely an "adult body in the classroom". We need qualified, reliable substitute teachers that can continue to run the classes safely WHEN a teacher gets coronavirus and has to be out for at least two weeks.

3. What is the verdict on ventilation? On the Return to Learn Guidelines flyer on the DOE website, one of the ways to reduce the risk of transmission has been proper ventilation. However, I have talked story with teachers in classrooms with AC units and they're classrooms no longer have the option to be subjected to air ventilation. Will small rooms like portable units be safe for students and teachers? Or is this guideline merely a "recommendation" that has no significant increase risk in the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the novel coronavirus)?

4. When a student/students do test positive for SARS-CoV-2, will those tasked with cleaning be properly trained? Will there be proper protocols in place? I need to know that all has been done to prevent further infections in keeping the entire school community safe, which includes our vital school custodians. Will there be enough personal protective equipment to keep these workers safe as they disinfect the schools, both on a daily basis and in a deep-cleaning event? What happens IF there is a shortage of PPE and/or proper sanitization supplies, what will be the protocols then?

Although these are troubling times, I believe we can reach the best possible choice that can protect as many people as possible.

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Sincerely,
Justin R Bergonio

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: Karly Kanehiro <karly.kanehiro@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Karly Kanehiro
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:45 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education members and Superintendent Kishimoto,

If you are meeting, VIRTUALLY while teachers are already back at work, which also means that not all of us can testify if we wanted to, 5 days before schools are projected to reopen, we are not ready.

I urge you to adopt a four-phase reopening approach listed at the bottom of this e-mail. There has not been enough planning and preparation in order to reopen schools safely. We need to take a more holistic approach to having our keiki return to school, especially during this pandemic. As they say, "it takes a village to raise a child." It will literally take a village to help our children to go back to school, and EVERYONE must do their part in order for this to be done effectively. Although, in order for everyone to do their part, these very real and legitimate concerns need to be addressed.

Teachers

Teachers have not been trained in safety protocols on how to effectively disinfect classrooms properly, unless they have been teaching themselves doing this on their own time during their summer vacation. Which disinfectant spray do we use? How long do we have to let it sit? Can we have students wipe their own desks? Where can we even find disinfectant wipes?

Do we provide our own masks? What if students don't have their own masks? Do we need to get them for ourselves? What if students refuse to wear a mask because of medical conditions? There is no DOE mandate that masks must be worn in classrooms.

There are still teachers that have less than 6 feet distancing between classes because they don't have enough space in their classroom to fit all of their students.

What about ventilation? Have the school's ventilation systems been upgraded because some teachers are going to be sitting in the same classroom for 7 hours without proper ventilation?

Also, understand that we're already in a teacher shortage crisis in the state of Hawaii and in the United States for various reasons such as not feeling supported enough, respected, valued, low pay, for the sheer amount of work it requires to be a teacher, and yet here we are again, feeling the effects of this tenfold during a PANDEMIC; what is preventing teachers from leaving the profession altogether or retiring early? Who will fill those positions? Who is going to want to go into a classroom of maybe 10-20 students for the entire day or teach 100+ students, seeing them for long periods of time? What if teachers decide within the last minute to leave because we feel like we aren't being supported or heard from the BOE or the Superintendent? What will schools do then?

Also, Superintendent Kishimoto has claimed that teachers have been training over their SUMMER vacation to be prepared in distance learning. I have heard from many teachers, that they have not trained, seen this offering, or simply didn't decide to partake in this training because it is their summer. Now, are we going to be penalized for not participating in this so-called training? Some schools haven't gotten access to their distance learning platform until recently. Now, they're expected to have it all ready within a week?

Also, where is the PPE at? Our school purchased PPE for their teachers, but I'm not sure if any of that came out of the DOE's budget or our school budget? Other schools have not been informed about what they are getting and we are starting school on AUGUST 4TH! What are we going to be provided? Will we be able to have plexiglass coverings around our desks? What about student desks?

If a teacher gets sick, who will take over their lines? Are they still required to call in for a sub? Will another teacher need to take over their lines? How will that work out logistically? At what point would a teacher return back to the work place from getting COVID? What if they are sick for a really long time? There have been people that have been knocked out by this virus for MONTHS!

If a teacher or a student gets sick from COVID, why would we not shut down multiple classrooms, especially at their middle school or high school level? If a student got it, and if the teacher is not rotating (which is the case

for many schools), then that student is potentially spreading it to numerous other “ohana bubbles.” If a teacher get sick and they are not moving classrooms, they are potentially spreading it to multiple classes worth of students, in which those students could potentially pass it to their other classes.

Is the state-wide protocol in how we will work with students who violate social distancing or choose not to wear masks? There has to be consequences and it should be a part of our Chapter 19 protocols for this year. How one teacher might handle this might be different from how another teacher might handle this?

Students

Have students been properly educated in all of the protocols that will be taking place when they return? Do you expect them to “learn as they go?” This needs to have been in communicated to students and families earlier. There are currently people going to the beaches and parks, not social distancing and yet we expect them to enforce strict mandates upon return? What about in between passing and during lunch? Students have the potential of interacting with hundreds of other students, is there going to be people monitoring them then? And if so, who is expected to monitor them? Teachers can’t monitor them because we will be frantically disinfecting our classrooms, custodians can’t monitor them because they will be busy disinfecting everywhere else and/or doing their regular custodial duties, admin will be required to do their regular admin duties attending IEP/504 and leaderships meetings. So, who will watch the kids? Given that campuses can be very large, how are we going to ensure that they will be safe during these times? Not all schools are having teachers rotate between classrooms.

What if a student gets sick? How would they return back to class? Who would want to return back to class, knowing that they possibly got COVID there and maybe gave it to their classmates? What is the protocol for that?

Vulnerable populations

What if there were SPED or EL populations that wanted to be given the option to do distance learning? Or did the DOE force this decision upon them because generally this population struggled with distance learning? They should still be given the option to distance learn. Because the teacher of these classes will be working with larger populations, what kind of PPE will we be providing these teachers? Have their classrooms been upgraded? Can they have the option to work outside or in larger classrooms?

If people are arguing that a portion of the vulnerable population gets their meals at school, then why can’t we offer meals on the go again for breakfast and lunch like how we did during the 4th quarter?

Social emotional learning

There is the argument that the reason why we want to return to schools is to help the children grow socially and emotionally, how in the world can we provide a nurturing environment during the pandemic? I can’t be my normal teacher self, struck in some level of fear and anxiety because I’m scared that I could get sick and they could get sick. What if the students are thinking the same thing?

Parents

Have all parents been educated in their different distance learning options? It says that all schools need to provide an all distancing learning option for parents, but this hasn’t always been offered easily based on each school.

Have parents been trained in safety protocols? How can we be sure that this is being enforced at home? Have parents been properly trained in distance learning platforms?

Are they aware that the state is purchasing different distance learning platforms and this may look very different from what things were like in the 4th quarter?

Has the DOE done another survey about how parents feel in regards to reopening schools? Because it is continuously being touted that 85% of parents prefer in person face to face instruction. This was taken by parents (and teachers) in May/June when numbers of cases were low. Has the DOE stepped back and collected new data to make informed decisions about what parents want currently? Or has that been left up to the schools to figure out?

Custodians

What PPE is going to be provided for custodians? Are they equipped to go back? School across the NATION are potentially going back in the fall, so we all pining for the same resources, what did the DOE get for our

custodians? What is being done to ensure their safety as they are the one that are making sure all of us are safe?

Cafeteria workers

What PPE will be provided for cafeteria workers? Will they be expected to serve food in the cafeteria?

Nurses/health assistants

Will there be enough nurses in each school to provide a safe place for the students who are potentially sick? What kind of PPE are given to them? They could potentially be exposed to many people who are sick, what is going to happen if they get sick and can't come to work? Will there be quarantine zones for these health workers? One nurse per campus may not be enough, especially at the larger middle schools or high schools.

Bus drivers

What PPE are given to bus drivers? And not just school bus drivers, but city bus drivers as well? What safety training are they to receive/have they received? Is it expected of the bus driver to also make sure that the students are socially distancing WHILE they're driving the bus?

Substitute teachers

In Hawaii, HSTA does not represent teachers, so they don't have the benefits that we do. Who is going to want to sub during this time? We already have a shortage of substitute teachers. Also, a number of these substitute teachers are retired teachers, which put them in the high risk category.

What PPE will be provided for subs, bus drivers, custodians, EAs, and administration? Each might require different equipment. Also, are subs going to be trained in distance learning platforms? Are subs going to be trained in safety protocols as it is a very real chance that they will be taking over numerous classes. Will they be paid for this training?

Buildings

Have the schools been upgraded with more hand washing stations? What about the bathrooms? Has it been outfitted so each student will disinfect their bathroom stall and their sink every time they use it? Is there an option for teachers to teach outside if they don't feel comfortable teaching in the classroom? What is the process systematic disinfecting of classrooms? What is the process to systematic disinfecting of a classroom where a child or a teacher has COVID? At what point will the entire school shutdown? At what point would all of Hawaii schools need to be shutdown?

Technology

How much technology will be provided for the students? Did schools purchase hot spots? Because it won't make sense for students to be loaned computers and not have easy access to the internet. Will they need to go to public wifi areas if they want to do their school work?

No standard protocols

Because there has not been a lot of guidance from the DOE or the DOH, schools have had to haphazardly come up with plans that they think will best suit their schools themselves. But effective protocols isn't being mandated throughout entire schools and who is going around making sure that they are in place. Is the DOE, BOE, or DOH doing that? From what I have gathered there are some differences among schools. Some schools have 100% face to face learning. Some schools are making it difficult for parents to request 100% distance learning. Some schools have different start and end times to minimize students potentially exposing other students outside of their "ohana bubble." Some schools have systemic cleaning of bathrooms during certain periods. Some schools want students off campus by a certain time. Some schools are telling teachers that they shouldn't be turning on their AC. Some schools are telling their teachers that they need to inform the school if they tested positive. Some schools are using different distance learning programs different from what were used in the spring. There are also some schools that have classes larger than 10 students which goes against the CDC guidelines.

Hawaii unique population

According to a Hawaii Data Collective study, [Family Ties: Are Hawaii's Multigenerational Households More At Risk?](#) Hawaii has the highest rate of multigenerational households in the nation at 7.7%. According to the study,

“In Hawaii, nearly 250,000 people live in multigenerational households (about 1 in 5 people), according to the American Community Survey. These households are found in all communities across the islands, but at greater density in urban areas (Map 1). Italy and Spain also have a large number of individuals in multigenerational households, a fact that some believe helped spur the spread of the virus in those countries.” This means that we are risking thousands of people’s livelihoods on the basis that people want schools to reopen for face to face instruction.

All 3 unions have collectively said that we are not ready to go back. So, why has the Superintendent persisted that we are ready to reopen schools?

Also, we have set record setting amount of cases within the past week, and yet teachers are expected to return the following week?

Also, why is it’s the solely the Superintendent’s duty to make a recommendation to the Board of Education to reschedule the opening schools? It should not be one’s person’s responsibility.

Who is going to provide trauma training for students, teachers, staff, and families of knowing someone who got sick and/or died because of COVID because the DOE continues to push for face to face instruction? How can anyone provide training for that kind of trauma?

It has also come to my attention that the DOE is proposing to delay the reopening of school until August 17th. What is the plan? What is going to be accomplished in those two weeks? Are you going to address all of these big questions? Are we expected to not have these questions answered and yet still teach face to face instruction? Will the DOE be held accountable for any lack of training or safety protocols? Or will it be on the teachers and schools?

“We will use this time to prepare at yet another level, but I recognize this comes at a cost for public school parents and our students. My expectation is that if the board approves the two-week delay, that our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students.”

So, it is the Superintendent’s expectation to have schools to reopen face to face on August 17th. Does this means that she would be willing to step into the classroom make sure all protocols are put in place?

The only way to mitigate some of this is to adopt the 4-phased approach. The DOE is already looking into offering teachers more time to be trained in protocols. Then, to safely reopen, we should start schools virtually to withstands these billions of concerns that aren’t being addressed. Make it easier, start schools online. And then, once deemed safe, we can go from there.

[For a PDF graphic flyer version of the 4 phase plan to download or include in your testimony, click here](#)

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

--
Karly Kanehiro
Social Studies Teacher
James Campbell High School
Room M-104
(808)305-3760

Testimony BOE

From: Ellie Stineman <stineman.ellie@gmail.com> on behalf of Ellie Stineman
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:47 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: STOP APPEASING THE UNIONS!

First, I am only able to submit written testimony, because I will be at work during the BOE Special Meeting. I am a high school math teacher at a public high school.

When will it end? First 40 plus days stolen from our public school children. Distance learning was in no way comparable to in-person learning. Then the DOE gave the green light to allow schools to decide what model to follow. For a majority of students in public schools, they will have less than half of their 180 instructional days, with any form of education. Please do not get it twisted, just because there are 180 days allocated to students learning, not ALL students will be learning because of the hybrid model. Again distance learning is not comparable to in-person learning. Two weeks were already allocated to teachers for training, taking away a half-day of learning for the first nine instructional days from students. Teachers wanted 6 feet rules, students to wear masks, cleaning supplies, PPE.

Now, two more weeks of what? What training has the CDC provided or is readily available for school-level faculty and staff to spend 10 days about learning? For teachers to train about online learning? Did they not already have an entire 4th quarter?

I am a teacher, I work for the public school system. This is not about child care, its about EDUCATION. In the last 10 years, we have gone from focusing on academics only, standards-based education, common core standards to teaching the whole child, social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care. When do say that the damage to our children's ability to retain, retrain, relearn, refocus, and grow is as important as the need to take precautions, be mindful, and be educators? As a teacher who teaches the practices of a growth mindset, facing challenges, staying positive, and perseverance, I utterly dumbfounded that now, when our society and communities need it the most, EDUCATORS can not practice what they teach.

If the BOE appease the unions, the demands will not end. HSTA and other unions will continue to request more and more time, training, etc. The public school children of Hawaii will have already lost so much due to COVID, please do not allow powerful unions to take more away from their futures. Do you know who will likely win? Private schools.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Stineman
Parent/Educator/Concern Citizen

Testimony BOE

From: Cheyenne Velez <cheyennevelez@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheyenne Velez
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.PDF

Welina,

My name is Cheyenne, and I am a concerned community member as well as a friend of many parents and educators.

It has been very distressing to hear how certain individuals have been pushing for a full re-opening of schools at a time when COVID-19 cases are back on the rise in our Hawai'i nei. Since the August 4th reopening date was announced, many educators have been sharing stories about how they were scrambling to prepare their classrooms with no funding (paying for classroom modifications and cleaning supplies out of their own pocket) and no clear direction as to what standard they should prepare their rooms. Moreover, making these last minute preparations gave teachers even less time to build lesson plans, prepare for continuity with substitutes should they be forced to quarantine (or worse), et cetera. Meanwhile, what about the even bigger issue that is air flow in our classrooms? Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe by professionals to maximize ventilation, avoiding recirculation and air stagnation.

Another distressing truth that teachers keep sharing is that there have been neither uniform trainings for teachers on COVID safety nor on distance/digital learning. Some of the instances of the virtual learning trainings are advanced lessons that are being embedded in other professional development modules, expecting the teachers to already know the basics of new teaching platforms.

More time and significant preparations are needed to open our schools in a way that doesn't jeopardize the health of thousands of our keiki and our kumus/teachers. I ask that the Board adopts a four phased approach to reopening our schools. Proper training and planning time will not only enhance the quality of education that our students will receive, but it will also allow our communities to avoid higher rates of community spread of COVID-19.

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching

Distribution of technology with training for parents and students

Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies

Training for substitute teachers

Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2

Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

100% online teacher-led classes

School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact

Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan

Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students

100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)

Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.

Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week

To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

Return to school campuses

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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Mahalo for your time,
Cheyenne Velez



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Joanna Lau <jldesigns1@hotmail.com> on behalf of Joanna Lau
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Special Meeting - July 30, 2020
Attachments: Ltr_BOE_7-27-20.pdf

Please find attached my written testimony for the Hawaii State Board of Education Special Meeting that will be held on July 30, 2020 at 1:00 pm. Further required information is as follows:

- Name: Joanna Kameoka, Parent of Two Elementary School Children
- Meeting: Special Meeting on July 30, 2020
- Agenda Item: Action Item B - general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar.
- Position: Oppose

Feel free to contact me via email at jldesigns1@hotmail.com should you need further information for submission of my testimony.

Thank you!
Joanna Kameoka

July 27, 2020

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
(sent via email)

Subject: Testimony for Special Meeting held on July 30, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Dear Board of Education Members:

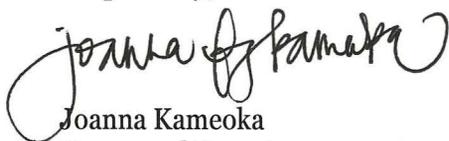
While I believe that the safety of the students, teachers, and staff of the public schools should be our foremost concern, as a parent of two elementary-age children, I strongly oppose the reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251.

Our children have already lost more than a quarter of school last year, and while I understand that the extension of spring break and the switch to distance learning was necessary due to COVID-19, I feel that the lack of a quality education puts our children at risk of falling farther and farther behind the educational levels they need be at. Distance learning at the end of last year was sparse, disjointed, and ungraded, but it was to be expected given that we were all dealing with the pandemic and a sudden shift in our way of life. We did our best to complete every assignment at home while also doing our full-time jobs from home as well. We have done additional "school work" all summer long to be ready for the upcoming year and I am willing to do my part as a parent, but lessening instructional time is not the answer. Our children deserve as much instructional time as they can get, especially when they have already been asked to make so many sacrifices.

I understand that parents, teachers, and staff may feel the need to delay the start of the school year for further training and time to prepare, however we shouldn't cheat our children of a full, comprehensive education. In looking at the current 2020-2021 school calendar, I see many opportunities to fulfill the 180 day school year even with a delay to the start of school. This may mean foregoing teacher institute days, teacher work days, fall and/or spring break or an extension of the school year, but all are reasonable options. I cannot see the DOE or any of the unions opposing fulfilling their obligations as outlined in the Hawaii Revised Statutes. At this time, everyone is being asked to do a little more than what they are used to, but I believe it is worth it for the sake of our children.

If the guiding question as set forth in the HIDOE Strategic Plan is "how to ensure that all students have access to quality education and preparation for college, career, and community success", it seems to me that even in unprecedented times, we should continue to follow this direction. Decreasing instructional time seems to counteract this goal and in my opinion shouldn't even be on the table.

Respectfully,



Joanna Kameoka
Concerned Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Igawa <igawal@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lauren Igawa
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I have a 10 year old who has dyslexia and ADHD, and a 7 year old. I am a health care worker that has to report to work. I do not have many options regarding who will help take care of my children. My mother passed away in April and their grandpa who is 75 is left to watch them. He is 75 and grieving for his wife. He is and will be unable to help assist my children with online learning.

My children NEED to return to school to learn. They NEED to return to start learning again on August 4th. I watched the videos with superintendent Kishimoto saying that schools will be ready. Now, we aren't??? Which is it??

I have already bought my children face shields, face masks and hand sanitizer. What else should we do as parents?

We were shut down in March. Was the implementation of returning to school not discussed at that time?

Public summer schools were open. Were we not touching base with those schools and getting feed back from them by learning what worked and what didn't??? Preschools were open. Daycares were open. How can they be open and we aren't??? Why are we not ready now?

I need my kids to return to school on August 4th NOT August 17th. They need to start learning again. They have already lost so much time.

Sincerely,
Lauren Igawa

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: mnuuhiwa <mnuuhiwa@yahoo.com> on behalf of mnuuhiwa
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a parent of a 1st grader & feel w/ covid cases on the rise, our keiki are not ready to return to school. We have kupuna who are immno suppressed that need our TLC. We can't bring it home to them & the rest of our Ohana.

Keiki will engage, cough, sneeze, touch, wipe things around & spread bacteria/ germs. Resources to clean are becoming limited. The Kumu will work too hard trying to sanitize surfaces & equipment. We can sacrifice our keiki's education a bit longer!

Please keep in mind that many of our Ohana work hard on keeping our Ohana safe/healthy & we would like to keep it that way.

Mahalo!

Maile

Testimony BOE

From: Mari Taira <maritaira@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mari Taira
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Aloha from Waikoloa

Aloha to you our Board of Education,

As a 20 year veteran teacher, I am asking that whatever you decide on Thursday please be a strong leader for our state's public education system. We need clear and strong directives during this time. I personally want to get back to the class next week and start teaching, but I know that others do not feel the same and I understand why. However, we cannot continue to push back these dates. Our community and our students need us. I need them. If we are pushing back dates, please be strong is saying what is needed to be done and do NOT let the DOE tell all schools to "handle it themselves". We do not know how. We need our government to lead us through this murky time and if they aren't we will be left in a swamp. Students start two weeks later ... ok? But... what is the DOE going to train us in. They MUST have specific goals and objectives for all the stakeholders, schools must have the tools, teachers must feel ready, and we must go. There is an urgency. Across the nation, we are again fighting to show what public education is about and the inequities continuing to widen.

Thank you for your support. I hope that you will be a strong voice to get our DOE to lead us and not tell all the legs of an octopus to go in their own directions.

Mahalo,
Mari Souza
Waikoloa Middle School (Big Island)

Testimony BOE

From: Sharie Ono <sharieso@gmail.com> on behalf of Sharie Ono
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Open Schools now! You had all summer to prepare!

I am an essential worker that has been working since the pandemic started. We didn't ask for more time to prepare! We kept working! Why do you expect us to provide you with all essential services and also stay home full time and take care of our kids? Plus our kids are missing valuable time learning with their peers! If your not gonna work don't expect to get paid!

Testimony BOE

From: Askildson <askildson@gmail.com> on behalf of Askildson
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:26 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Open the schools as scheduled

Dear Board of Education Members:

As a parent of a student attending a DOE Elementary School, I would like to urge you to proceed with the scheduled opening of schools on Aug. 4. Schools and teachers have had -- and will have -- adequate time to prepare with the current schedule. There is no compelling reason for a delay and no indication that a delay would make a meaningful difference in preparation at this point. Please remember your responsibility to the students and families of this state and do not concede to the demands of the teachers union.

Sincerely,
Lance Askildson



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF AGENDA ITEM III, ACTION ITEM A, Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF AGENDA ITEM III, ACTION ITEM B, Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEM III, ACTION ITEM C, Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

1 P.M.

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT, HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

RANDY PERREIRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

LIZ HO, ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

Chair Payne, and Members of the Board:

The Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA), United Public Workers (UPW), and the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) are committed to ensuring our schools reopen in a manner that ensures the educational needs of our students as well as the health and safety of our students, their families, school employees, and the community at large.

While we are committed to continue persistently working through the many critical questions yet unanswered, we respectfully provide the following comments regarding the Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE) action items for its meeting on July 30, 2020.

While the following list is not exhaustive, it represents significant areas which we collectively believe must be addressed by the BOE, Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), and the state of Hawaii.

A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students’ First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

We support postponing the start of the student school year to Monday, Aug. 17, with full instructional days beginning on that date. This is a delay of nine (9) instructional days. These days are necessary to ensure that all employees receive proper training, are issued necessary personal protective equipment, and have adequate time to prepare for our students’ return to campus. The HSTA is committed to meet for further negotiations necessary to modify the HSTA SY 2020-21 COVID-19 Response Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as it relates to the school year calendar.

B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180-day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar

The HGEA, UPW, and HSTA support the BOE waiving nine (9) instructional days from the 180-day school year as well as the 1,080 student instructional hours for school year 2020-21. The HGEA, UPW, and HSTA recognize the HIDOE is already operating within serious fiscal restraints and adding any makeup instructional days will be cost prohibitive. Therefore, we have committed to future negotiations to discuss ways to recover some of the instructional days lost.

C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding:

(1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning;

All staff in our public schools need training, personal protective equipment, and the instructional staff, including but not limited to, teachers, special services personnel, and educational assistants (EAs), need additional professional development related to curriculum delivery and support.

The state and complex area levels are responsible for providing support to school level leaders and should therefore provide the trainers, funding and resources necessary for the additional training and professional development. Timely, accurate, and up-to-date training on health and safety should be provided by health professionals whenever possible. Training should be offered statewide for the sake of consistency, clarity and equity.

Staff training and preparation for all HIDOE staff includes the following:

- Reviewing and understanding written guidance related to safe operations of schools during COVID-19;
- Training and practice on various new building and campus protocols such as check-in, health screenings, face coverings, opening/closing, recess and lunch programs;
- Training and practice on access to and proper use of personal protective equipment;
- Training and practice on cleaning and disinfection protocols;
- Training and practice on contingency plans for shutting down of campus facilities due to COVID-19;
- Walkthrough of campus distancing, health and safety protocols;
- Specialized configuration of classrooms, offices, cafeterias, libraries and other meeting spaces to meet distancing, signage, and other health and safety protocols;
- Planning and training time with and between instructional staff such as teachers, special services personnel, educational assistants, part-time teachers and others.

Certificated employees such as teachers in particular also need time to engage in professional development and planning for the following:

- Professional development regarding their school's blended learning programs
- Professional development on virtual learning instructional delivery, platforms and programs;
- Professional development to address student's social emotional needs;
- Professional development and in-service on contingency plans to continue instruction when buildings close due to COVID-19;
- Training and in-service for those dealing with special needs populations related to compensatory educational services;
- Training on any changes to school policies and procedures, including but not limited to, student discipline, referrals, etc.
- Planning time to work within department and/or grade levels;
- Planning time to prepare for student assessments in learning loss;
- Planning time to modify curriculum for blended learning;
- Planning time to modify curriculum to address physical distancing restrictions.

(2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode;

While we strongly believe in-person, face-to-face instruction is the most effective method. Schools have modified their instructional delivery models for 2020-2021 to meet the demands of COVID-19 and the necessary physical distancing needed in building spaces. However, it is very likely that school buildings and/or entire campuses will have to be closed down by the Department of Health due to COVID-19 at some point. Therefore, the HIDOE and DOH must provide comprehensive state-level written guidance regarding the potential shutdown of classrooms, buildings campuses, and/or entire complex areas and how the continuation of educational services via a full distance learning mode will occur. Those comprehensive plans need to also account for the temporary reassignment, if necessary, of other HIDOE employees. Each school in turn needs to have their own contingency plan for full or partial school shutdowns and should make them available to HGEA, UPW and HSTA.

We believe that all employees should be adequately prepared for such a change with training and students and families should be communicated with in advance about said contingency plan. Any decision regarding starting student instruction via a fully distance learning mode must be done with the above in mind.

Per the BOE resolution and the HSTA MOU, the HIDOE should provide “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.” The HIDOE has failed to provide adequate guidance to both administrators and parents/guardians regarding 100% distant learning options, including how schools will address 504, SpEd, SpEd PreK, EL and other needs of students, if parents select this option. This failure has further complicated and exacerbated schools’ efforts to plan for in-person physical distancing and instruction.

(3) mandating masks on public school campuses;

We strongly support mandatory face coverings and cloth masks be worn by all individuals on school campuses and related facilities. There should also be a standard system wide policy for any exception(s) to this policy, including but not limited to a medical note for anyone claiming they cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons.

and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

The MOU with HSTA requires that the DOH provide written guidance before “in-person schooling will resume” (pg. 2, line 34 HSTA MOU). In addition, lines 47-48 of the agreement states that the HIDOE will “consult and take direction from the DOH for health and safety measures.”

The guidance from the DOH should include but not be limited to the following:

- Minimum procedures for health check screening of employees, students and campus visitors;
- Procedures to address employees, students or campus visitors who become sick on a campus or show signs of illness;
- Health room and isolation room procedures;
- How schools will handle incoming new students, especially new military students who are not subject to the 14-day quarantine order;
- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for various personnel;
- Procedures to support any contact tracing that will need to occur related to COVID-19;
- Proper physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting protocols in line with CDC guidelines.

In addition to the above issues, there are a few issues specific to personnel that must be addressed.

Contingency plans and instructions are needed for when administrators, teachers, educational assistants, custodians, and other school employees are ill and/or must self-isolate due to possible exposure to COVID-19. Employees will have no unnecessary direct contact or interaction with students or parents on campus. Contingency plans must also be in place if significant portions of the staff choose to retire, resign, take leave and or utilize their FFCRA leave benefits.

The CDC guidance indicates that schools should have a “back-up staffing plan.” Currently the HIDOE has no plan or guidance for administrators on what to do if there are inadequate staff and teachers to start the school year. There is also no plan to assess substitute availability and/or how substitutes will utilize and access the technology and equipment teachers will use for the blended and distance learning.

The HGEA, UPW, and HSTA remain committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety of our members and the students they serve. The employer must provide a clean and sanitary workplace. We ask the BOE to ensure that the above issues are addressed before students return to classrooms.

Handwritten signatures of Corey Rosenlee, Randy Perreira, and Liz Ho.

Corey Rosenlee
President
HSTA

Randy Perreira
Executive Director
HGEA

Liz Ho
Administrator
UPW

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Stuart <lshuxel@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lauren Stuart
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening

Aloha,

As a pediatrician and a parent I would request that schools reopen as scheduled. The children are suffering from lack of social interactions, and are not vectors in the spread of COVID-19.

Please read the following article regarding the lack of spread in schools. No spread from child to child, no spread from child to adult, and no spread from adult to adult within the schools. There were a couple of adult to adult transmissions from areas outside the schools. This is consistent with the lack of pediatric cases seen worldwide.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7268273/>

Thank you,

Lauren H. Stuart M.D.
Pediatric Hospitalist
Hilo Medical Center
(928)699-2538 cell

Testimony BOE

From: Spring Lee <springlee@elitepacific.com> on behalf of Spring Lee
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:26 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING - A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

- Name with position/title and organization, if applicable;
 - [Spring Lee](#)
 - [Oppose - delaying the first day of school.](#)
 - [Parent of Baldwin High School](#)

Nothing more to say.
Our kids need to go back to school.
Thank you.



Spring Lee, RS-77679

808.757.6503 | springlee.maui@gmail.com

www.springleemaui.com



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Testimony BOE

From: Jonathon Medeiros <jonathon.medeiros@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jonathon Medeiros
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Jonathon Medeiros, NBCT, Language Arts Teacher, Kauai High School, HIDOE

Special Meeting, Agenda Item - III - Action Items A, B, C

Support/Comment

Aloha Board Members and Dr. Kishimoto. I hope you are all listening carefully to the voices of the families, the students, the teachers, the admin, and the support staff.

I support the move to add teacher days to the beginning of the school year, effectively delaying school for students while allowing teachers, schools, and staff to get as ready as possible. I also support the move to waive the minimum schools days and hours requirements so as not to extend the school year for students. I would suggest one way to mitigate some of the lost school days. Consider moving all PD days scheduled throughout the year so that they are up front during the next few weeks. Those days that would once have been teacher waiver days or complex area work days can then be student days later in the year. This will not make up all the lost days, but will mitigate the situation a bit. Also, I suggest not having a hard date of August 17. We need flexibility. Cases continue to rise. If a hard date must be set, please consider mandating that all school starts in a 100% virtual model and please consider allowing teachers to telework, when possible.

I also support all four points in Action Item C.

1) Additional teacher work time should be focused on safety, wellness, and how to best reach our students during this unprecedented school year. I suggest that social/emotional well being is more important than testing for reading and math skills. 2) Yes, please have students start the year 100% distance learning, to again allow for a nuanced and phased reopening of schools. Also consider giving flexibility to each complex area about exactly when and how schools can open to some f2f instruction. Again, allow teachers to telework so we can stay safe and still help our students learn. 3) Yes, please mandate masks be worn by all who can wear them, at all times. Making this a teacher by teacher decision will only lead to problems. On top of this, we need to have school level systems in place to deal with students who refuse so we do not endanger ourselves and our other students. 4) Yes, please require all schools to have detailed plans for all eventualities based on DOH guidelines. We cannot safely operate schools when the answer to the question "What happens when a student gets sick?" is "It depends." We all need assurances that we (teachers, students, staff, the community) will all be kept safe first.

I will also add that Dr. Kishimoto should put our safety and wellbeing over the "win" of being open. Please know that teachers work hard every day to learn and grow and figure out how to make school safe and effective for students. We do not need to be scolded into being "at the

schoolhouse door on day one for our students." We are here for our students everyday and we will be exactly where they need us to be, which might mean teaching from home. I ask the DOE, the BOE, and leadership to be with us in this, not pushing us into unsafe situations.

Be flexible and be forgiving, of yourself and others.

Best,

Jonathon Medeiros, NBCT

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Testimony BOE

From: Dr. Phaedra Robinson <drphaedra@me.com> on behalf of Dr. Phaedra Robinson
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Phaedra Robinson. I am a first grade special education teacher.

I want nothing more than to be able to be back in the classroom with my students again. Unfortunately, I do not get to make that decision. COVID-19 makes that decision right now. I am highly concerned at the recent spikes of COVID-19 cases. Our islands have not seen recorded cases this high up until now. I find this alarming, and I am scared to return to in person teaching as I am at high risk due to a compromised immune system. I think that teachers should be able to chose to work from home if they are scared about their risk because of health issues or age. Military families do not all quarantine or are on ROM. This puts those teachers and staff who work on bases at increased risk to exposure of Covid.

I urge you to please reconsider teachers and children returning to school for in person teaching in August. We must start online only for all of our safety.

- For July 23, 55 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 24, 60 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 25, 73 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- Numbers courtesy of KHON2 News Facebook

That is an alarming 188 new cases over the course of only three days. Our islands have NEVER seen spikes like this up until now.

I am not confident in the concept of “bubbles.” I do not trust that families will stay in their bubbles to keep teachers safe.

In order to facilitate a SAFE environment for children and their ohana as well as school faculty and staff and their ohana, we must proceed with caution by implementing the following strategies to perpetuate a secure space for teaching and learning:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues- such as when there is a case at the school & strict protocols for notifying everyone immediately, closing campus, contact tracking & deep cleaning.
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe. Outdoor classroom spaces should be utilized to the maximum extent possible.
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons

- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus. Temperature checks should be conducted at minimum 2 times a day, starting with drop off/check in for teachers, staff, to be cleared to go onto campus- just as in hospitals, doctors offices, stores, and even some restaurants.
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real teacher if learning from home, not just a program
- School nurses should be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community needs to be launched

The following is a suggested 4-phase strategic plan with the end goal being to have children back in classrooms with teachers on a full time schedule:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan

- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

Mahalo for considering my concerns.

Sincerely with appreciation.

Phaedra Elisabeth Robinson, Ph.D.

Special education teacher

Mokapu Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Deborah A Niewijk <niewijka@yahoo.com> on behalf of Deborah A Niewijk
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Alexandria Niewijk
Subject: RE PLEASE DELAY OPENING - July 30, 2020 Vote and Opening Debate - DELAY

Dear BOE,

I am a 50 year old mother to a 5 year old son entering kindergarten and a 3 year old boy. I am also stepmother to three young adult children whose mother died of leukemia when they were around 10 years old. She died of leukemia along with another cluster of people because she was exposed to toxic chemicals at her elementary school on a Superfund Toxic site. I have seen the devastation of mother loss close up. My own mother was a teacher for 50 years and she died of brain cancer from exposure to radiation as a teenager. People die of childhood exposures sometimes close in time and sometimes years later.

I am an epidemiologist from Yale Medical School and served in the USAF and U.S. Agency for International Development as a Public Health Officer until I was critically injured in Afghanistan. I follow the research on coronavirus extensively. I have lived in Hawaii since 2005 and this is my home. I have no ties to any other place.

I do not want my community to be ravaged by coronavirus. I do not want teachers to die. My friend in Honolulu, a Vietnam Veteran, died in Honolulu last night and there will be no funeral for a long time. Grieving in these circumstances is absolutely horrible. Do not put our citizens in a position where everybody knows somebody who was injured or died of coronavirus.

Please DO NOT open schools in August. If anything happens to me, my biological children will be without a mother and there are no living relatives to step in. My stepchildren will have lost a second mother figure. If my lungs are weakened by coronavirus infection, I am doubtful that I will survive.

We all know what will happen when schools reopen and when tourists start flooding in. Infections will rise exponentially. Look at Dr. Michael Osterholm's recommendations in his two podcasts through CIDRAP Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy. He gives a good list of questions need to be answered before schools can reopen, including:

Will teachers receive sick days when they stay out for coronavirus exposure or infection?

Is the substitute teacher population capable of stepping in for the inevitable absences?

Are there outdoor learning facilities?

If a student's family member tests positive, how will parents from other families be notified of the increased level of risk to their student in time to avoid the increased risk?

Are you really going to swab a 5 year old? How often? Who is paying?

Aikahi elementary did a wise thing and created some outdoor areas to hold school. But this was parent driven and not supported by the DOE. Where is the funding to redesign classroom areas to be safe? Why has there been so little creativity and action taken to hold classes outdoors? It is obvious that stagnant or recirculated indoor air is a hazard.

Right now I do not care so much about what my child is learning. I care that they have healthy bodies and love and stability. I want them to be alive and I want us to be alive and healthy. The kids are doing very well. There are many positive aspects of the time they have had at home.

I do not want my kids to have permanent damage to their bodies. I do not want them to have a mother who is too sick to care for them. We are in no way willing to take an experimental or rushed vaccine knowing that we already have had a life threatening reaction to flu vaccine. There should be little stock put into a vaccine saving our nation.

The only thing that can save us from infection, injury, and/or death is more time and space and funding put into creating spaces that have excellent air circulation. Start making Green Schools. We have the perfect weather to do it. Lead the world in proactive change. Turn the failed rail into a bike path. Turn our schools into open air green schools. Use our parks.

We as parents can handle whiplash changes in dates and plans if it keeps our keiki and families safe. Do what is right and delay the opening of school as long as it takes.

Please look at the guidance from the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy CIDRAP. It is far less politically tainted than the nightmare of CDC.

Yes, my child needs to learn to read and do math. They need places to play outside and to make friends. Better safe than sorry. They are learning other things right now that they will need in this new world.

Had the world been normal, I might have sent my son to Chinese Immersion kindergarten. I let go of this dream. It is no longer important to me. There is no money for that extravagance. The preschool that my kids used to attend did not have fair and transparent financial policies in coronavirus and I will not risk spending on anything like that again. My son is enrolled at public school close to where we live. And if the schools are not safe, I will keep him at home. I do not care what date they set for deciding about online learning. If the physical school campus is not safe, he will not be there.

In recent days we have received an invitation/plea from a charter school to enroll in their online learning. I would like to know how the money is flowing so that I better understand where these requests from schools that were impossible to get into before are coming from. What is driving the principals' student numbers right now? Where is the money allocated? What happened to the GE system this year? Our home school was an absolute nightmare and we did manage to get a GE to a better school. For that I am grateful. But what financial issues are driving the principals? Please to not put them in a position to make things dangerous for our kids and families.

We are hoping that school is delayed. I think an intelligent call would be to delay until October, not just a few more weeks "for training". But any delay would be better than the current plan.

Aloha,
Alexandria Suthard
Honolulu
808-397-7395

Testimony BOE

From: Joseph Menor Jr <menorj@gmail.com> on behalf of Joseph Menor Jr
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Joseph Menor, Jr. and I am a special education teacher at Moanalua High School.

I am in favor of postponing the start of the new academic year for public school students and allow staff more time to prepare for distance learning.

As the rate of COVID-19 positive cases has increased within the last few weeks in the state of Hawaii especially the island of Oahu, a lot of stakeholders (teachers, parents, community members, and other staff) are worried that COVID-19 can be spread within an education environment without a safe and thoughtful plan of action.

The delay of the start of the new academic year (2020-2021) for public school students for about two weeks (starting August 17) allows for more planning for schools and hopefully the numbers of COVID-19 positive results decrease. The planning on how to do distance learning is very vital to educating teachers on different platforms (Jupiter Ed, Google Classroom with Google Apps and others) to use that may be universal for that school or the whole state. The amount of preparation done for distance learning will allow teachers to practice the different and new platforms we did not use during Quarter 4 of the Academic Year 2019-2020.

In addition, the teachers can learn more innovative teaching approaches about the past platform(s) we used during Quarter 4 of the Academic Year 2019-2020. With the delay of the start of the new academic year for public school students will also have schools discuss on how we take attendance daily with distance learning, how to implement certain procedures at the school (temperature checks, what room(s) to isolate if a student or staff may have certain symptoms of COVID-19, and procedures if a student or staff tested positive for COVID-19), creating and discussing substitute plans for substitute teachers to do distance learning when the full-time teacher is out sick or using personal days, and other important areas.

The delay of the start of the new academic year (2020-2021) for public school students allows more time for the district and/or schools to order more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the school and classrooms with each school having their own discussions about PPE being provided and how additional protection measures (cleaning protocols, social distancing, possible staggered lunch/recess) will be implemented.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your discussions and votes.

Sincerely,
Joseph

Joseph Menor, Jr., M.Ed.
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: brooke nasser <b.l.nasser@gmail.com> on behalf of brooke nasser
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: We need honesty, transparency, and a comprehensive plan

I am concerned about the announcement yesterday re: delay of students.

On the surface, it seems like a victory; it appears as if our voices were heard. But looking closer at the language in both the HIDOE announcement and the Superintendent's press statement, it is clear that this is a Pyrrhic victory. First, the statements do not address our primary concern — i.e. safety protocols at schools during a pandemic that is not being managed effectively by the state — and two, it pits teachers and faculty against students and further establishes us as selfish whiners who aren't doing our jobs or looking out for the best interests of our students.

"Monday's agreement would give educators nine additional days of training and preparation time on top of the regularly scheduled two administration days and two teacher preparation days between July 29 and Aug. 3. That important extra time would allow for training, planning, and preparation for the safe return of students to classrooms." (HIDOE)

We aren't arguing that we need extra days to figure out how to social distance in the classroom, are we? We are arguing for training should there be a shift to remote learning. We already know how to do our jobs face-to-face; we need time to prepare for blended and remote. We are also arguing for the DOE and BOE to put in place strict, comprehensive safety protocols at the state level to ensure equity, fairness, and universal compliance so that we can confidently do face-to-face lessons during a pandemic where case numbers are rising and infection rates aren't slowing down.

For example, at schools, things like mask requirements, bathroom procedures, temperature checks, and teacher testing and, at the state level, things like comprehensive testing of both symptomatic and asymptomatic to ensure accurate data about the number of people in the state who are contagious.

"... reached a conditional agreement today to propose a delayed start for students to accommodate concerns regarding employee training." The superintendent never addresses our primary concern, which is that the schools are not currently safe for students, teachers, and faculty. She obverts the issue to make it simply about training — but without mentioning why we require additional training, the meaning is lost; ergo, her opening paragraph suggests we don't know how to do our jobs.

"... I recognize this comes at a cost for public school parents and our students." Her statement is clearly meant for parents, but her language is demeaning and fundamentally out-of-touch. She pits students and parents — who she presents as being treated unfairly — against teachers and faculty — who she posits are refusing to do their jobs.

When she says "our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students" she deliberately chooses an antiquated version of education, one where all students gather together in a one-room "schoolhouse," to both harken back to a simpler time when this pandemic didn't exist and teachers did what they were told AND to issue an implicit threat. Her nostalgic portrait of education is coupled with an "aggressive push" back against teachers. In fact, her whole message suggests that not only are our safety concerns unfounded (so much so they're not even worth mentioning) but they are actually putting students at risk.

I wondered that too. How are schools going to put together meaningful PD on anything with one day to plan? They aren't. It's all bs. The Gov and Super are determined to get kids into schools for face-to-face learning for political and economic reasons and I believe she won't agree to remote for the first two weeks because she's worried once we go online we'll stay online.

From everything we've seen and heard from epidemiologists, cases tend to come in clusters. When they hit, it's going to be a group and that group is going to expand out. In a school climate, what gets passed on will get passed on extremely quickly, particularly without comprehensive safety protocols (like masks, immediate contact tracing, etc). Extensive research has shown that tweens and teens are the highest groups of asymptomatic cases. We need to do comprehensive and/or random testing so data drives policy, not economics or emotions. Once COVID-19 is in a school, it's going to be all over that school.

The good news is that there are alternatives. Remote learning isn't ideal, but it's viable. If you can't do that for economic reasons, you need to establish thorough statewide safety protocols. Other school districts have thorough protocols in place. Why don't we? What happens when people start dying? It's a question not simply of health and safety but also liability. What are people going to say when infection rates skyrocket in our educational communities and **WE COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO PREVENT THIS BUT DIDN'T?**

In my opinion, this is a truly disturbing turn of events as it seems our voices have not been heard. If you decide to re-open schools, that's fine, that decision is under your purview, **BUT THERE NEEDS TO BE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.** If it never happens, we still have to prepare for it. You must be willing to be honest with everybody. There is no right way to re-open schools — all avenues are fraught with difficulty; however, the state can't keep downplaying the safety concerns and rising infection rates.

Testimony BOE

From: Justin Hughey <justin.hughey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Justin Hughey
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in support of agenda items A, B & C. July 30th 1:00pm

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, July 30, 2020 1:00 p.m.

Aloha my name is Justin Hughey and I teach third grade Special Education at King Kamehameha III Elementary School in Lahaina. **I am speaking in support of agenda items A, B & C.**

First I want to thank all Board members except Mr. Voss for supporting the differentials. It showed that this Board has morals and is listening to the individuals who testify their concerns.

- A. **I support** more professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year. We obviously have not received training over the summer and have a lot of anxiety about returning to our overcrowded and underfunded schools.
- B. **I support** reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251. This is a pandemic and our keiki and teachers safety should be priority number one. During Linda Lingle's furlough Fridays, the student achievement did rise with less instructional days.
- C. **I support** (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health.

Question 1: On Monday my son was exposed to a child at daycare who with his parents were exposed to another family member with Covid-19 at a funeral on Friday. My son could go fourteen days without any symptoms. I could go fourteen days with no symptoms. My administrator isn't sure how to move forward because there aren't any policies in place. Do we quarantine, do we wait to see if the other child tests positive, do we request to be tested? The BOE, DOE and DOH have yet to address the lack of guidelines and procedures for cases of exposure and positive cases related to the school setting.

I think these requests are a good start but they do not go far enough. The book Hawaii Pono states that our public schools have suffered from: meager funding, too few teachers and dilapidated buildings since 1911. I am asking the Board of Education to take the position that the legislature has never provided adequate funding to our public schools thus the Board can not reopen schools in a safe and healthy manner until proper funding is allocated.

Justin Hughey
Third Grade Special Education Teacher
King Kamehameha III Elementary
Lahaina, HI 96761

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Testimony BOE

From: Jason Billings <jbillings23@gmail.com> on behalf of Jason Billings
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:07 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30th BOE Meeting

Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent of a child that is getting ready to enter into 4th Grade at Keoneula Elementary School in Ewa Beach. Along with many other parents in the state of Hawaii, I watched as the end of my child's 3rd Grade year was thrown into turmoil by the shutdown of schools throughout the state. As frustrating as it was to watch my child struggle to transition to a purely virtual environment, I understand that it was necessary at the time due to the uncertainty associated with COVID-19 and the desire to keep our children safe until more information was available. Four months later, we have substantially more information regarding the virus, specifically in how it affects children. So I was pleased to see the Hawaii BOE publish a plan to start transitioning our children back to in-person instruction a few weeks ago.

It is widely documented that the virtual instruction at the end of last school year was a failure (not just in Hawaii, but throughout the United States). Most classrooms saw less than 50% participation with a significant number of students not participating at all. The quality of education also varied widely with some students reporting zero interaction with their teachers while others (such as my daughter) count themselves blessed by having a teacher that was incredibly interactive, caring and dynamic in what was clearly a challenging environment for everyone. When parents were surveyed shortly after the end of last school year, an overwhelming 80% indicated that they wanted in-person instruction to commence when students returned in August. When I received the specific plan from Keoneula Elementary School, it was not what I had hoped. It indicated only 2 days a week of in-person instruction (I was hoping for 4 or 5) but I quickly came to terms with it being a transitional phase between the all-virtual environment we came from and the traditional in-person instruction we all know is necessary as an end state. This plan seemed very similar to most schools throughout the state and even though it was not exactly what I wanted, I could respect and deal with it.

However, I have been beyond frustrated at the response I have seen from the Hawaii State Teacher's Association. Despite the fact that they were included in the development of the reopening plans (<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/03/hawaii-news/states-public-schools-unveil-plans-for-reopening-amid-pandemic/>), they have come out strongly against reopening without having any justifiable reasoning or clear path forward to getting our children back into a quality education. I am watching the fate of my child's education play out on the news daily. Despite the fact that 80% of parents want in-person instruction to resume, the vocal minority is given the largest speaking role which makes it sound like somehow the situation is reversed. Day after day I watch as the local news outlets add articles indicating how scared some teachers are to return, without giving any voice to the rest of us that are very comfortable with the procedures put in place by our school and the BOE. This plan was not thrown together overnight, quite the opposite is true. The plan I received was a 22 page document that outlined just about everything one could possibly imagine about the situation.

The plan developed by Keoneula sounds very similar to other schools across the state and is in alignment with the guidelines set forth by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/pediatricians-educators-and-superintendents-urge-a-safe-return-to-school-this-fall/>). Both of these groups of medical professionals indicate how critical it is to get our children back into school because COVID-19 is not the only risk out there in the world. We have to balance that risk with the multitude of other risks that are substantially increased by keeping our children at home and removing them from a social learning environment. Local health professionals here in Hawaii also agree that the risk of COVID-19 is substantially less for children than the risks associated with hindering their learning and developmental processes (<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/hawaii-health-officials-back-superintendents-plan-to-reopen-schools/>). Despite all this, the constant refrain from the HSTA is that the protocols aren't good enough (despite being in line with all health professional guidelines) and that the "bubbles" created by classrooms will just encourage transmission of the

disease. This, again, is out of synch with reality when it has been proven throughout the world that transmission in children is significantly lower than in adults (<https://www.kqed.org/science/1967577/covid-19-risk-in-schools-what-you-should-know>). When the HSTA is asked what restrictions are “good enough” and when will be ready to return to school, the answer is the same: the BOE needs to figure it out. This circular logic makes me very concerned that “good enough” will be when there are zero COVID-19 cases and a vaccine. We cannot afford to wait for that process as we all know that a vaccine at best will be available by the end of the year and would take years to implement across the country and the world.

I need the Board of Education to also look outside the borders of Hawaii and understand how we stand in regards to the COVID-19 situation. Per capita, we have the lowest number of cases of any state in the country by far. The next closest state (Vermont) has double the per capita number that we do. The Board of Education needs to look at states like Connecticut (per capita 13 times as many cases) that are reopening with in-person instruction 5 days a week or Pennsylvania (per capita 8 times as many cases) that is opening with in-person instruction 4 days a week. How is it that we are faring so much better than most of the country yet it’s still not good enough to open our schools? How are we seriously even having this conversation about crippling our children’s education despite having the lowest transmission anywhere in the country? Fear, not science, is what is currently governing this conversation. I hear the refrain time and again on the news to listen to science, make decisions based upon science, don’t make decisions based upon politics and emotions. Well, this discussion has officially left the scientific realm and has become a purely political and emotional response. A small percentage of teachers and parents are uncomfortable and so we are considering setting the standard down to their level. Parents have the option of going all virtual if they aren’t comfortable, so they have a valid option for their kids. Those of us that want at least some level of in-person instruction would conversely be left with no viable option. Teachers are essential workers and need to be treated as such. They do more than just regurgitate facts to our kids. They provide key services for our communities and are absolutely vital to moving this state forward. Virtual learning environments can work for adults and maybe older teenagers, but not elementary and middle school kids. We all know that but somehow the needs of our children have gotten lost in the fear that some people have over the situation.

The Board of Education needs to understand that going with what the HSTA wants (delaying school opening and going all virtual until some unknown time in the future) will have catastrophic effects on our communities. COVID-19 is not going away, we have to learn to live with it and take reasonable precautions that still allow us to function as a society. Parents have to be able to return to work or the kids won’t have a house to return to. Not every job allows teleworking and even those that do cannot be expected to work a full time job and teach their kids at the same time. We already did that and proved that it does not work, why on earth would we even consider doing it again? I understand that choosing to stay the course and reopen schools as planned requires courage. The vocal minority will not stop fighting this. I fully expect that the HSTA will take the action to court and waste even more money that the state doesn’t have. I also will not be surprised if the HSTA plans some kind of walk out, protest or other similar event to disrupt the education of our children. We cannot let the loud voices of a few overcome the needs of our communities. I ask you to have the courage to make a stand and recognize that the vast majority of Hawaii parents are standing quietly behind you. We are quietly wearing masks where required, following social distance guidelines and following all other precautions being asked of us. We just aren’t screaming our opinions from the rooftops as some have chosen to do. Please have the courage necessary to do what is right for our children and stay the course on your reopening plan.

Jason Billings
Ewa Beach, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Keola Gilbert <keolagilbert@gmail.com> on behalf of Keola Gilbert
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To The BOE,

Please reopen schools ASAP because it is important not only for our children but for our country. Science has proven that people are more likely to contract the flu virus than covid. A person is more likely to die from suicide, drug overdose, or abuse than covid. Covid has a 99.35% recovery rate. The chances of a child getting covid is .00003%. I work full time in healthcare and put my life and my family's lives at risk everyday but I still do my job to service our communities with much needed services. Shutting down our country is a democratic political scheme that needs to end now!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Keola D. Gilbert

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberly Pennell <kbpennell28@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kimberly Pennell
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear Members of the Board,

I am providing testimony for the July 30 meeting action #s 1, 2 and 3 to discuss revisions to the Department of Education 2020-2021 school calendar. My name is Kimberly Lauzon and I am a secondary Social Studies **teacher** at Mililani High School and the **mother** of two school-aged children who attend Mililani Uka Elementary and Mililani Middle School.

This is the third testimony I have submitted to you this month, so I will try to keep it brief. I am writing to ask you to delay the reopening of our schools and consider a **SAFE, phased reopening** as outlined by Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools, which is data-driven and requires safety benchmarks to be met each time we increase our physical interaction. I am asking you to protect students, teachers, staff, and all of our families.

According to the Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools phased plan, Phase 1 would focus on training of teachers and substitute teachers, as well as evaluation of all classroom and building ventilation. Given that we know Covid19 spreads through the air in respiratory droplets, classroom ventilation is very important. We do not yet know the exact impact on children, although there is evidence that young people aged 10 to 19 spread the virus as easily as adults and maybe more so given their social habits, and there are hundreds of children suffering from an inflammatory disease connected to Covid19. Rates of children infected with Covid19 are also increasing on the continental U.S. We should not be cavalier with what we do not know or understand. Phase 2 would implement 100% distant learning and necessary modifications would be put into place. After safety benchmarks are met, the schools would move into Phase 3, or a hybrid model of learning. This is the current model we are supposed to begin next week. When it is safe to do so, we would move to Phase 4, or a full return to campus.

Our numbers of active coronavirus infections are increasing at an alarming rate. We have many more infections currently than we did when our state decided it was unsafe to be in school in person back in March and April. The threshold for a safe return was 30 days for no new cases; the threshold has fallen dramatically in the push to get back to normal. As I outlined in my previous testimony, I have an average of 150+ students and will see 3 classes a day at 50% capacity. There will be 15 to 18 students in my classroom, and those students will have been in other classrooms, walking through campus, possibly riding the bus, working an after school job, participating in extracurricular activities, and seeing friends and family. After seeing three groups of them for 65 minutes each in an enclosed room, and teaching the other 50% virtually, I will go home to my family. My children will also be in their respective schools in hybrid settings, coming into contact with many other students and teachers as well. They will go home. How long before one of us is infected and spreads it to the others?

My husband and I have worked tirelessly since the outbreak in March to maintain our family bubble and keep our children safe. We have no other family here and it is imperative we remain healthy and able to care for our children. As a mother, I have dutifully sent my daughters to school the past three years with their "in case of nuclear attack" 14 day food and water supply. As a teacher, I have participated in countless drills and several real lockdowns over the past 7 years. As a teacher, I have attended an active shooter training and watched videos that showed the effects of gunshots on classroom furniture, learned how to create a safety bubble in my classroom using desks and textbooks because my single wall construction is not bullet-proof, and learned how to use classroom shears and staplers to protect my students if our safety bubble should be breached by an attacker. I cried that day, but I always showed up to class, and always sent my daughters to their teachers and schools, confident that we were all doing our very best to keep one another safe while teaching and learning.

However, if you send us back to in-person instruction right now, we would not all be doing our very best. Teachers and students would be sent back into undeniably unsafe conditions, putting their families at risk, in an attempt to pretend things are getting back to normal and provide childcare to families in our struggling economy. At what cost? Things are not normal, and to pretend otherwise is dangerous. Dr. Kishimoto's attempt yesterday to frame the concerns of teachers in direct conflict with parents and pit us against one another is insulting, as is her implication that we needed "yet another level" of training and will need to be strong-armed to return. This is alarming, since we are working for safe conditions for students, faculty, staff, and all our families. We should all want, and demand, safe conditions for our children, teachers, staff and families. I can't wait to get back into my classroom with my students, but not at risk to our personal health and safety. As you conduct yet another virtual meeting in lieu of an in-person meeting, I can't help but think you might agree.

Please put the health and safety of our children, teachers, staff, and all of our families first. Schools have closed before in times of trial; school dates can be changed and education can be made up. Lives, however, are a different matter.

Please consider a delay to school reopening and a SAFE, phased reopening based on data and not arbitrary dates and economic concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Kimberly Lauzon

Testimony BOE

From: Steven Baker <steven.baker@mauihigh.org> on behalf of Steven Baker
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:19 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Meeting of extending the start of school

As an educator I would discourage any delay to the opening of the school year. The vast majority of education will be virtual and there is no reason to inhibit student learning.

These are educated teachers, why is there a need for further training. If they can't learn what to do in a day or two, something is wrong. We have been inundated with procedures and protocols for safety.

An additional two weeks may not seem very long but students have been out since March 14th and they need to get back into a routine. Shorten school year days, shorten classroom hours, and delays, just further diminishes the level and quality of education Hawaii students deserve.

I would encourage the board to deny this request and get students back to learning.

Thank You

Dr. Steven A Baker

Testimony BOE

From: Mongoose Kope <mongoosekope@gmail.com> on behalf of Mongoose Kope
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of schools. Against. Meeting on Thursday (BOE OR DOE?)

Thank you for delaying the opening of our public schools.

Please delay at least until September and even later if people continue to act without taking precautions and spreading the disease further.

Why would we send children back to school with higher virus numbers (every day) than those in the spring when schools were closed down?

Our children, families, teachers and support staff deserve to be safe.

Our teachers deserve to have REAL protection and direction in place.

Please mandate the wearing of masks.

Please provide PPE to our school staff - all of them.

Thank you for considering the above,

Patsy Pitts
Resident and Tax payer, Haiku

Mongoose Farm Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Darlene Dunston <dbd391@gmail.com> on behalf of Darlene Dunston
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: reopening of schools

MY CHILDREN WILL NOT ATTEND FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES.

Kishimoto approves a 14 day push back.

With that, what are both the DOE AND BOE going to be doing to make our schools safe?

How many members of the DOE and BOE are going to monitor the schools when students are in session.

Coming in when students are not on campus is not a true evaluation.

Teachers need training to be able to do online/virtual learning.

Our schools need people to continuously clean the campus.

Students desks to be cleaned as the doctor's office does it after each appointment.

The toilet rooms need to be clean continuously.

The railings used up and down the stairs as students will be using them during passing.

Then there is the lunch period. What is your plan to keep students at the safe 6ft distance?

Are schools going to be given more money to hire all of these needed employees to keep the campus safe at all times.

What about the health room. Students going in, there are always several in there every day, the room. How is the nurse to do safe distancing?

Will the state be adding a special tent for students to be held until parents pick them up so that they are away from the rest of the school?

What about the required fire drill tests, lockdowns, evacuations?

Who will be monitoring students to be 6 ft away as we leave the campus.

What if one of these drills is for real?

Is the state going to provide 3 sided plastic shields for all students' desks as well as masks for students?

Our campuses cannot ever open safely as it is not built for such distancing.

Actually, the state has increased the amount of students on every campus and in every classroom.

WHEN WILL THE DOE AND THE BOE STOP HAVING VIRTUAL MEETINGS?

After all, schools are to meet in person as required by the DOE AND BOE.

Don't ask for others to do what your agenceis will not do yourselves.

Testimony BOE

From: Peter Choy <pbcenterprises@gmail.com> on behalf of Peter Choy
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30/20 BOE Meeting
Attachments: Reopen Schools PC.pdf

I am submitting my written testimony IN FAVOR of re-opening schools as planned on August 4, 2020. Please refer to the attached letter.

Thank you.

Peter Choy
pbcenterprises@gmail.com
808-255-1585

July 28, 2020

Dear Board of Education:

I am submitting my testimony IN FAVOR of re-opening schools as scheduled on August 4, 2020. I have two elementary school children and after hearing our school's plan to re-open, including the safety measures being taken, I am comfortable sending my children to school and commend the school's efforts to provide a safer learning environment.

For those parents who feel it is still not safe to send their children to school, they should continue to exercise their option to use the 100% distance learning format. However, I don't think it's fair or right to have those individuals demand that schools remain closed for any extended period of time.

In our household, both parents are considered essential workers and continue to work full-time. We do not have any additional time during the day to support our children with distance learning. If it is in any way similar to the last quarter of the school year, that was a complete disaster by the DOE and I do not want my children to experience that again. Homework was deemed optional and teachers were not really prepared or motivated to support their students. What was once every day, in-class learning, turned into once-a-week, 30-minute video conferences with no real purpose. It was completely unacceptable and in the end, both parents and our children suffered from that non-structured fiasco.

Please consider staying with the original plan to re-open schools on August 4, 2020. Every family's situation is different and I believe the schools have already provided suitable learning options for every family. I feel that my children need to be in school to learn, regardless of the potential threat of the coronavirus.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Choy
pbcenterprises@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Nelson Chang <nechang808@gmail.com> on behalf of Nelson Chang
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: BOE Special Meeting: General Business Meeting (Jul 30, 1-4pm)

- Nelson Chang, parent of an incoming 1st grader
- BOE Special Meeting: General Business Meeting (Jul 30, 1-4pm)
- Agenda Item: A suggestion. We are obviously in uncertain and crazy times, going into unchartered waters on how to educate our kids. Inevitably, we need our kids to go to school but with every mitigation measure possible to counter the coronavirus (wash hands, etc .. etc). I recommend we look beyond that and harness what makes us unique here to come up with additional ways to teach and at same time to mitigate the problem. Crazy as it sounds, but can an emergency fund be set aside to construct open air classroom facilities?
- I support this position

thanks for your time and your Aloha

Nelson

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Appelbaum <l.appelbaum4@icloud.com> on behalf of Lauren Appelbaum
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:07 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 8/17

At this point in time I have nothing nice to say. I have been an educator in the state of Hawaii for over 20 years. I never thought I would be risking my life to teach students. If y'all do not approve the late start date of August 17 so we can better prepared schools for students safely to come on campus know by not approving choice will cause harm ! In all honesty I believe will be going to distant learning even if we start late. Target and Walmart are safer than most public schools at this point. Until you people can figure out how to have hand sanitizer dispensers in every room, clear partitions so people will be protected, and yes PPE's for all teachers so we can wipe down tables after every class...

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kira Knight <kira.knight27@gmail.com> on behalf of Kira Knight
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:16 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: reopen schools on time.

Aloha -

I am writing to express my concern about delaying the reopening of schools. The plan is to already have children return half time, one day on and one day off. Understandably some of the older kids can learn all they need to by doing this and doing work online on the "off" day from the school site but for younger children who are in their prime learning years this is not going to be possible. A child entering 1st or 2nd grade has already lost a quarter of education from the year prior and now will enter a school year going only half time. A delay is going to put them even further behind. My daughter is entering first grade and she is learning to read, and do math, these are the foundation of your learning for your whole life. These are things you will use forever and grow on. My daughter and all younger children will be severely impacted for the remainder of their life from this school issue. Further delay will not only cause devastating impacts for their education but increase the income education divide. You have private schools going back full time and on time leaving middle to low income families being last priority, once again. You can't take these young kids and play catch up going half time and delaying the opening. This is going to leave these kids hurting for years to come playing catch up.

Schools have had since March to figure it out. There is a reopening plan and we need to stick to it.

Please hear my concerns as the parent of a young child. You are handicapping my daughter for the rest of her life doing this.

Sincerely,

Kira Knight

Testimony BOE

From: Kathi Takakuwa <kktakakuwa@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathi Takakuwa
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE Testimony, special meeting 8/30

Aloha!

My name is Kathryn Takakuwa. In my capacity as an Educational Specialist II with the D.O.E. and EOEL I support our public preschools but today I write to you in my role as parent of a 12 year old who attends SEEQS, a public charter middle school.

I SUPPORT the decision to delay the start date of school to 8/17, IF these days are used to

1. complete health and safety preparations and
2. train and prepare teachers to teach digitally.

Our teachers and students need to be safe and our teachers need to learn to use digital tools and formats to teach well in these new conditions.

I also OPPOSE the waiver "to allow for reducing the 1,080 student instructional hours and 180-day school year." Schools need more time to prepare, teachers need time to train, and students learning time should NOT be compromised in order to achieve those first two ends. As it is, I am unsure how schools plan to account for time spent on-task OUT of school and for the quality of instruction and learning when students are not in school, two key metrics. **If the start of the school year is delayed, it should be extended into the summer by as many days.**

Finally, I SUPPORT the mandate that masks be worn on public school campuses. I believe this is a safety rule, similar to seat belt and smoking laws, that every individual needs to abide by for everyone in the group to be well.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Kathryn Takakuwa

(808) 348-2545

kktakakuwa@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: jconnolly3 <jconnolly3@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of jconnolly3
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:40 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School re-opening

We are the grandparents of a child who will be a first grader. We are an older couple (73). We also both have underlying health conditions, making us high risk for serious illness requiring hospitalizing and possibly even death. I hope the Board will take Kapuna into consideration when making your decision.

Also, cases of COVID-19 are increasing at a higher rate, especially on Oahu. Until we can reduce the number of new cases schools should remain closed.

Are schools adequately equipped to deal with this? Is there proper room air circulation? Is there enough space to keep children 6 feet apart? Are guidelines developed for teachers and children regarding safety during this pandemic? If the answer to these question is yes then please provide the public with this information. The only information I have seen is what is published in the newspaper.

Thank you,

Joann Connolly

Sent from my Galaxy Tab® A

Testimony BOE

From: Cassie Favreau-Chung <cassiefavreau@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassie Favreau-Chung
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:33 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Parent Testimony in Opposition of Current Reopening Plan - Mililani High School (7/30/2020 Special Meeting)

To the Hawaii Board of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto,

My name is Cassie Favreau-Chung. I am a parent of a 9th grader at Mililani High School and a former substitute/contract drama teacher for the DOE. Under normal circumstances, of course we would want our son in school learning face to face with his teachers —however, **THESE ARE NOT NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES**. Far from it. We have been having record cases in our state day after day and are far worse off than when schools initially closed.

Our household includes high-risk family members, and we refuse to gamble with their lives. Also, our son does **NOT** feel safe to be in a physical classroom. As such, we have opted for 100% online learning via Acellus, though we would much rather him receive online instruction from actual DOE educators.

In the interest of school faculty and students alike, I urge you to please reconsider children returning to school on August 4, 2020. **THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH.**

- For July 23, **55 new COVID-19 cases** were reported.
- For July 24, **60 new COVID-19 cases** were reported.
- For July 25, **73 new COVID-19 cases** were reported.
- Numbers courtesy of KHON2 News Facebook

That is an alarming 188 new cases over the course of only three days. Our islands have **NEVER** seen spikes like this up until now.

The concept of “bubbles” is a fallacy. Each of these children and their families are around other people outside of school and there is no way to create a **TRUE** “bubble”. Kids will find ways to hang out with their friends during recess/lunch anyway, no matter what bubble they’re apart of.

In order to facilitate a **SAFE** environment for children and their ohana as well as school faculty and staff and their ohana, we must proceed with caution by implementing the following strategies to perpetuate a secure space for teaching and learning:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system

- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real teacher if learning from home, not just a program
- School nurses should be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community needs to be launched

The following is a suggested **4-phase strategic plan** with the end goal being to have children back in classrooms with teachers on a full time schedule:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

PLEASE SHOW THE REST OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAWAII KNOWS HOW TO DO THIS RIGHT.
Don't make us another case study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cassie Favreau-Chung

Cassie Favreau-Chung

Film/TV Creative

(808) 497-6412

...but out of limitations comes creativity. -Debbie Allen

Testimony BOE

From: Leisa Weaver <pacblu@pacbluhawaii.com> on behalf of Leisa Weaver
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: pacblu@pacbluhawaii.com
Subject: Testimony: July 30 virtual board of education meeting

Aloha and mahalo for considering my testimony.

During these uncertain times, now more than ever, it is important that we consider the safety of the keiki and those that support them. I respectfully request that we recognize that there is a difference in action and over reaction. I do not wish to engage in any political debate, nor unduly attempt to influence anyone on what we should do- this is just an opinion on how to provide education for all that is safe and viable. **In this instance, a delay of a significant amount of time prior to starting up school for the 2020 -2021 year is prudent and advisable.**

Having read the studies on the importance of socialization, in person learning, and development means that this opinion does not come lightly or without trepidation. What this does though is allow time and energies to be refocused in to preparing for alternate virtual services, plan child care, create parent/work schedules.

In regards to virtual versus in person- because there is a preference announced of how education can take place does not mean that it should take place. Nor does it mean that we do not recognize the effort that has previously taken place to try to create the safest reentry for our middle schoolers. For that we say thank you, but please reconsider when this should take place.

I strongly recommend that we hold a schedule that lines up with the mainland (September) to a greater extent and allows greater health and healing to take place. It is quite exhausting to worry that the opinions that children do or do not share the virus at the same rate as adults is not measured with the simple math equation of quantity of exposure and circumstances. All which will change with the advent of in person education.

It is also incredibly difficult to evaluate how the future of travel and tourism will effect our schools as many students parents are involved in this otherwise most susceptible population.

The one fundamental truth that has held during this time: "we may never know if we over react, but we most surely will know if we underreacted".

Mahalo,

Leisa

Leisa Weaver, MPT
President

PACBLU

1357 Kapiolani Blvd, Suite 1015

Honolulu, HI, 96814

Cell: 808.497.1017

Fax: 808.955.2925

Email: pacblu@pacbluhawaii.com

Visit us online at www.pacblu.com or [send us a referral](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Christopher Howard <christopher.t.howard@outlook.com> on behalf of Christopher Howard
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Parent Testimony in Opposition of Current Reopening Plan - Mililani High School (7/30/2020 Special Meeting)

To the Hawaii Board of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto,

My name is Christopher Howard. I am a parent of a 9th grader at Mililani High School and a former substitute teacher for the DOE. Under normal circumstances, of course we would want our son in school learning face to face with his teachers —however, THESE ARE NOT NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Far from it. We have been having record cases in our state day after day and are far worse off than when schools initially closed.

Our household includes high-risk family members, and we refuse to gamble with their lives. Also, our son does NOT feel safe to be in a physical classroom. As such, we have opted for 100% online learning via Acellus, though we would much rather him receive online instruction from actual DOE educators.

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- Students will return to school for in-person instruction pending further health and safety guidance.

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Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

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Don't make us another case study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

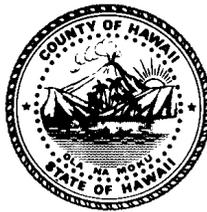
Sincerely,

Christopher Howard

Christopher T. Howard
Assistant Location Manager, *MAGNUM P.I.*
cell: (808) 497-6411
office: (808)-354-0232



REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

July 28, 2020

Board of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Re-opening of Public Education for Upcoming School Years

Aloha,

I am writing to you to express my opinion on re-opening public school education facilities in August 2020. There are concerns that I do not know if they have been heard and addressed. I myself have heard from my constituency that include not only parents, but teachers as well. Though adjustments to school schedules and plans to alternate students into groups I do not believe that it is enough to keep everyone safe. At this time it is not crucially prudent to have students return to campuses. Hawai'i has more cases of COVID 19 than we did this past April. That means it is more dangerous for groups of people to congregate. I commend the schools for taking initiative and to create plans to address having students to return, but I still do not believe given our current circumstances and what we know about this virus that the schools can be made safe enough. With the recommendation of social distancing at a minimum of six feet there is not enough space to follow the recommendation. Schools are planning to social distance students at three feet, facing forward instead and this does not lessen the contamination of others. A teacher, theoretically, will be teaching four groups of students per day, multiply that by all of the family members those students see when they go home, and we have exposed not only teachers but other facility staff to over 100 different students and family members who are exposed to different groups at their schools or workplaces. Even with cleaning protocols in place, it is inevitable that some will not keep their masks on therefore bringing the risk of contamination higher. I understand that our State is under tremendous pressure to re-open the schools, and I understand it is difficult for people to find child care but it is still to dangerous. I believe online learning options taught by quality educators is our only option at this time. We all want "normal" right now, but we shouldn't rush it and jeopardize our health and well being of our residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

Testimony BOE

From: Jaclyn Wills <keakulina@icloud.com> on behalf of Jaclyn Wills
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:05 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Jaclyn Wills
Subject: Delay of school reopening to students

Thank you so much board for taking to heart our teacher and frontline input on the topic of the delay of reopening schools when we are truly not ready to open. All Teachers should have training on virtual learning presentations for when school starts, instead of face to face contact, until a vaccine is developed and administered for our health and safety.

For our school, our youngest preschool-grade 3 and special needs students are the ones that will have the face to face lessons. This population is the very ones that are not able to keep the required 6 Ft distancing. Their day will be filled with negative reminders to keep their distance from others, and We will inadvertently be teaching mistrust. We will not Be fulfilling a true academic education, but one that is more of strife due to this pandemic.

Although Hawaii's numbers with infection looks low in comparison to other states, it is still one too many. Let us look at the experiment that the city and state did with reopening the bars, parks, and lessening the restrictions at shopping centers etc.....Now we need to retract so that we can keep it under control.....but oh wait, the state wants to open the schools with thousands of students, some virtually which is safer, and others like my Preschoolers k-3 and sped ,with face to face, because they have less of a chance to catch the virus. It Is believed it will be okay so long the teachers make sure The children wash their hands, maybe wear masks , and keep the 6ft Distance.... all tasks , mind you , require that the teacher be in close contact due to needing physical prompts.

Please help to make the best decisions for our state, and help to keep the health and safety at the utmost priority, instead of for economic reasons. It will not be good for the young ones to place them in a stressful environment due to trying to maintain social distancing in school.

All Teachers should be In training for the distance learning P12 including sped, until this vaccine is developed and administered. What is a few more months than gambling with lives? Will parents sign an acknowledgment/understanding that teachers will try their best to educate with these factors looming , but yet will not be responsible should their child contact covid? Can my family file a lawsuit knowing that my job places me in life threatening jeopardy? Just a couple of more months please..... until a vaccine is administered . Again thank you for considering the frontline's input.

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Debra Yamakawa <debyamakawa@gmail.com> on behalf of Debra Yamakawa
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:49 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Special Meeting on July 30, 2020, Support for Agenda Items A, B, C

Honorable Board Members,

My name is Debra Yamakawa, teacher/counselor at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School. I **support** agenda items A, B, and C.

Revision to the school year calendar for 2020-2021 will allow our schools to be better prepared to welcome students back on campus, safely and effectively. Reduction of the instructional hours will help ensure students will return to a safe environment. I support pushing back students returning to campus to August 17, 2020. As our state has pushed back the date to receive tourists without the quarantine to ensure protocols and practices are securely in place, schools should do the same.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has determined that basic needs need to be met first (food, water, shelter, rest, **safety** and security) before learning may take place. Please review the link below on how South Korea puts **safety** first for their students, faculty and staff. Currently, our return to school protocols fall short of their practices, and of course, their citizens are also more compliant with following rules than ours are.

<https://elemental.medium.com/back-to-school-lessons-from-south-korea-4d703ff9080a>

Masks should be required, in and outside of the classroom, to be worn by students, faculty and staff. Those who are not able to wear a mask must bring a doctor's note for verification purposes and should then be required to wear a face shield. The cluster of infections resulting from the Hawaiian Airlines training class demonstrated the consequences of not consistently wearing masks and social distancing. The sad death of the flight attendant who seems to have contracted COVID-19 at this training, could easily next be a school teacher or school staff member. How will students be able to adequately focus on learning after they find out that one of their teachers has died from COVID-19?

Dr. Anderson and Dr. Park expect to have increased infections once schools return to face to face instruction, and that students generally don't suffer as severe illness as adults. However, if they are sure that schools will have safe guidance and protocols from the Dept. of Health, I welcome them, yourselves and our leadership in the DOE to come sit with us in our classrooms for whole days in every school with students, to demonstrate confidence in the safety protocols.

From the WHO website:

[Can children or adolescents catch COVID-19?](#)

Research indicates that children and adolescents are just as likely to become infected as any other age group and *can spread the disease*.

Evidence to date suggests that children and young adults are less likely to get severe disease, but severe cases can still happen in these age groups.

Children and adults should follow the same guidance on self-quarantine and self-isolation if there is a risk they have been exposed or are showing symptoms. It is particularly important that *children avoid contact with older people and others who are at risk of more severe disease.*

On Monday, July 27, 2020, it was reported that someone in the Kaala Elementary school community has tested positive for COVID-19. Several days ago, 15 people who tested positive were under the age of 18yrs. Currently, we (faculty and staff) don't know how quickly we will be informed if someone on campus tests positive and what the protocols are. My friend's brother, who works in the private sector, recently got sick with fever so he was tested, but did not receive his results for 2 weeks and he had a fever for 2 weeks. Luckily his results came back negative, but I have to wonder if it was a false negative. The flu test has a 20% false negative test results, so I wonder how many people test false negative for COVID-19? It is also known that asymptomatic / presymptomatic people spread COVID-19, which is why everyone should wear masks. Hopefully these additional professional development days will include very clear guidance from the Dept. of Health with safety for all it's highest priority (especially when they previously mentioned 3' distancing was okay, when the CDC and WHO recommend 6', the 3' allowance does not instill in me much confidence in them). Most secondary schools are having students rotate in and out of 3-5 classes per day, how is this safe, even with reduced class sizes?

Yes, we could just return students to schools, but schools need adults on campus to do so. Children may not suffer as ill effects as adults do, but we need to keep the adults on campus healthy in order to be able to open schools. I understand that parents need their child care to be able to return to work and restart our economy. We then should be looking at how we may **safely** provide childcare while incorporating education, because until there is a vaccine, we will not be able to operate schools with any semblance of normalcy.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony.
Please stay healthy and safe. Thank you all for your service.

Testimony BOE

From: Dennis Takeshita <dennis.t.takeshita@gmail.com> on behalf of Dennis Takeshita
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:08 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

This is in regards to agenda item III.

As a teacher at Wahiawa Middle School, I have been increasingly worried about returning to school. Cases in Hawaii are still rising, with a vast majority of those being on Oahu.

The 2 week delay for training is appropriate, but does not address the underlying issues that required the Board to meet this Thursday. It is increasingly apparent that cases are not going back to their low levels from the spring, yet Superintendent Kishimoto intends for us to go back to school.

The transmission rate and case count need to go significantly down before schools are allowed to return. Instead of returning immediately, the Board should consider the 4-phase plan laid out by teachers and other stakeholders. It is not enough to say 2 weeks of training will prevent cases in schools; we need a guarantee that this virus is under control.

I completely understand the need for schools to be reopened because students have been without normal social interactions, but this should not come at the cost of people's health. I want to know what trauma guidelines will be in place in the event there is an outbreak and someone dies. It is better to guarantee people stay alive than to hope that people don't get sick.

I am a teacher and will show up to school as Dr. Kishimoto wants. I know my responsibility to my students. I want to know if the Board and Department of Education understand their responsibility to keep us alive.

Sincerely,
Dennis Takeshita

Testimony BOE

From: matthew calica <mcalica1@gmail.com> on behalf of matthew calica
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:11 PM
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.

I've been in lockdowns on campus; I've been in lockdowns when there WAS a credible threat. I've convinced myself that if things got "real" I'd take a bullet for my students. What I won't do is take that bullet home. And that is what's being asked here.

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: Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com> on behalf of Liz Benson
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:30 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY



Place
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ard of Education;

ze the grave consequences the board will face if we plan to bring students back to campus in mid-August. It can't be
ational news report, schools who HAVE opened are already seeing cases after just a couple of weeks. Despite the pr
is putting on states, governors must stand strong and resist the temptation to reopen schools. I beg the board to pro
/telework plan for the entire fall semester for now. We all know the covid situation is not improving. We are not flat
g exponentially and you can see the concern in our state leaders faces on the nightly news and see the fear knowing
quickly get out of control. Even after hiring 200 new contact tracers, the registration program to train them has reoper
that numbers will continue to rise as we approach the fall season. Google announced yesterday that its employees w
21. Yes, 2021. Farmers' Insurance employees have been told that they'll be teleworking until at least January. That sl

and government officials that the worst is yet to come. Let's not exacerbate the problem by putting our teachers, staff, and students in a position where you hold the power to avert the problem in your hands.

There are questions about teachers and accountability. Where's the trust? Whether teachers telework from their classrooms or we go above and beyond the line of duty for our students. There is enough technology to monitor us if you must. Just because we're there conducting classes, get added on to our Google Classrooms so you can see the curriculum for the week, assignments, etc. The vast majority of us have the integrity and heart to do what it will take to keep our kids on track, but changing plans every few weeks will just serve to exacerbate an already intense situation. We are all terrified. Especially those of us who are not sure the numbers of questionable teachers is small and administrators already know who they are. Deal with them and support the rest of us who are giving our all during this God-awful situation. Parents and students must also be accountable. This is something we must all work through together as a community in the best interest of our keiki.

We plan to bring students back this semester only to close by October. That's all that will happen and we all know it. We cannot gather in groups larger than ten yet we are asking our kids, staff and teachers to do just that.

Give teachers the option to work from their empty classrooms or from home. Those young teachers with children will have to be there when schools are closed. Allow teachers flexibility to do what we do best...teach and care about our students. We rallied to the front and finished out the school year no worse for the wear. A bit frazzled, perhaps, from the chaos of changing play books and curriculum. A challenge. Now that we've experienced the distance learning model, let us continue to do that and hone our online skills. Hawaii has many multi-generational households. Are we willing to risk our kupuna too? Why isn't anyone listening to the teachers and principals?

For elementary teachers. I understand elementary schools are a different animal that will require further consideration. We can absolutely operate quite successfully through telework and distance learning. Parents and guardians will also have to take responsibility for ensuring student attendance. Let's make sure to emphasize that fact. This will not be a one-model-fits-all solution so let's make informed decisions that will assure the public that we understand the gravity of the pandemic and you, as a board, will recommend a course of action to our governor.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

on
r

place
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"You can be anything, be kind."



Testimony BOE

From: iyamagata@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerning the Reopening of Public Schools

To the Board of Education,

I am a certified Special education teacher at Innovations Public Charter School. I am writing concerning the reopening of public schools during this pandemic. I am a veteran special education teacher, who has taught for 36 years, and I believe I am essential in my specialty area for the special needs students.

I do not feel safe returning to teach even 1 day a week or on any modified schedule. I do not believe we should begin school now or even delayed to a later date. Due to this pandemic, **no plan to return to school is safe for teachers and students.**

What needs to occur is **distance learning for all students in the entire state.** Why? That is the only way to keep students and teachers safe. Teachers can do it, and so can students and their families. We need to change and be flexible. We need to use this opportunity to **“rethink education” for the 21st century.**

My hope is that you will hear my message. I believe that one voice can make a difference. I trust you will make this choice, the right choice. Please don't disappoint me.

Thank you.

Ira H. Yamagata

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Or



Virus-free. www.avg.com

Testimony BOE

From: Shakti Brickland <shaktibrickland@yahoo.com> on behalf of Shakti Brickland
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:19 PM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re keeping schools closed.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong concern about keeping the schools in Hawaii closed longer and to have the schools focus on distance learning for another quarter or maybe semester depending on how the covid pandemic responds. The number of victims of this virus in Hawaii is escalating as people begin to move around. Opening the schools will no doubt exacerbate this. Health and lives are more important than the socialization of the children. We need to get the virus more contained before the schools can open. We need to protect the teachers and the people at home the children might inadvertently bring the virus to, as well as protecting the children.

Because it will be near impossible to have children at school keep a mask on the whole day and because it will also be impossible to monitor the mask wearing especially when not in the actual classroom, that alone is a big enough reason to keep the schools closed longer and to focus on distance learning.

Many other professions are finding they can work from home, why are we not allowing this opportunity for our teachers? Why put them at this risk and possibly have a lot of sick teachers and administrators? Then who will be supervising the classrooms, teaching the children and performing all the administration tasks?

It just doesn't make sense to open the schools up yet, until this virus is more under control.

Sincerely,
Robyn Brickland

Testimony BOE

From: Marsha Wellein <welleinmd@hotmail.com> on behalf of Marsha Wellein
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Marsha Wellein
Subject: Substitute Teachers and Opening the Schools Too Early Bd of ED Meeting July 2020

I urge you to delay the opening of school until September 2020. There are presently about 4,500 substitute teachers in the state of Hawaii. Many are retired, and above the age of 60. Many regular teachers are above the age of 60, also. The cost of living is too high, not to work.

Have you checked with your Human Resources Office to determine how many substitute teachers are over the age of 60, willing to get the virus, perhaps die, if the schools open too soon? How about regular teachers? Do you know your statistics? How many substitutes and regular teachers 60 years of age and above also have chronic illnesses?

Can you really tell substitutes and teachers that children do not have to wear masks inside the classroom if they are in grades 1 – 5? Who is willing to teach those grades if masks are not mandated? Would you?

Finally, who is going to teach in your classrooms, as you will probably find a huge shortage of personnel; without masks, the virus will spread in the schools, in the homes, in the community at large.

Dr. Masha D. Akau Wellein, Educator for 50 years; presently a substitute for the DoE.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Akemi Faria <afaria@kaumana.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Akemi Faria
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; Akemi Faria
Subject: Testimony

July, 28,2020

Aloha BOE Chair Payne and BOE members,

Thank you for hearing the concerns of many at the July 23rd BOE meeting. I appreciate that a meeting was scheduled for this week to address the reopening of schools.

As a 3rd grade teacher at Kaumana Elementary School, I have spent countless hours preparing and creating documents and lessons for online Learning Hub Summer activities for a total of 8 students. Through Zoom meetings, I have been able to teach them individually or in pairs. This type of prep was grueling and time consuming. This was not even an entire classroom or all Elementary subject matter. (I taught lessons in math.) It takes a lot of hard work, over time, to learn new technologies and create structured classes that provide quality instruction with quality assessments to monitor progress. If we hope to see all of our teachers successfully integrating the tools for distance learning and blended learning, we must allow them the time and training resources they need. I'm trying to figure out in my head how to be two teachers. I will have both in-person class and online. I'm not sure how many of my 46 kids will choose online. (I specialize and therefore have 2 classes rotating.) Do you think this is feasible? I don't have any extra prep time built into my day to be constantly uploading and making materials editable. Two out of 20 teachers at my school received training for online teaching. I could not due to my commitment to teaching students online during the summer. So not all teachers received any training or real guidance over the summer. It hurts to see the public's perception of teachers as lazy when I was working hard throughout the summer trying to help my students prepare for the 4th grade. I believe in addition to the later re-opening date of schools in August, we should also use a slower approach to in person learning. We should have distance learning until the Covid numbers go down as was the agreement in MARCH! Then we slowly begin the hybrid approach to then full face to face school. Many of our schools are not fully prepared despite Supt. Kishimoto's assurances via the 7/21 video that she sent teachers assuring us that ALL schools are ready. Her statements show that she does not care about the well-being of any teachers or their families. Some people try to make parallels with essential workers or medical field workers. There are no parallels. We are at a larger risk due to larger exposure, for longer amounts of time, with much less protection or even guidance. We were never medically trained nor did we need to in the past. Teaching in a hot classroom all day with young children without masks was difficult already.

I have not seen the BOE or DOE take into consideration what happens when a teacher is sick. I don't think it should come out of my sick days if we are in the middle of a pandemic and I come down with Covid. This is a risk the state is taking and they should make it clear that they will take care of us. I don't believe they will. I am not making the choice to put myself at risk voluntarily. The state has made this choice to put me directly at risk. Why did we cancel school last year with few to no cases but now that we are peaking, we are shoving everyone back in? Doesn't it defeat the purpose of everything we have been trying to do?

I would try to do telework from home but when reading a recent memo from the DOE it spells out that teachers do not qualify for this type of work. I have a daughter that will attend the fourth grade at a different school. I do not have childcare for her on the 3 days that she does not attend school in person. So I will need to use leave 3 days out of 5 to take care of her. I have no clear answers if the FFCRA covers my leave. This seems ridiculous for students in my own classroom to have a sub for the majority of the week. (My principal is not allowing our children to be on campus.) The prep days are also days I will need to take care of my daughter. I will very quickly run out of leave and then not be able to support myself and my family financially. Please seriously consider the safety and well being of all stakeholders.

Thank you,
Akemi Faria
3rd grade teacher
Kaumana Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rosalyn Dias <rosalyn.dias@gmail.com> on behalf of Rosalyn Dias
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Revisiting the start date of opening Schools to Sept 1st

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is Rosalyn Concepcion and I am the parent of a 5th grade child attending Puohala Elementary Hawaiian Immersion School. I am writing in opposition to starting school on August 4th as outlined in a recent letter from our CAS Matt Ho. I feel that there needs to be more training and planning of teachers, supporting staff, principals and administration on of COVID-19. Hawaii would be the first Educational Institution in the United States, under the entire system of the Department of Education to open. Not even the continent will reopen schools as soon. With the recent increase in the number of community cluster cases within the past month, we as parents believe that this is not in the best interest of our keiki.

I am not in support of having students sit three feet apart in class (facing forward), there is no scientific basis to support that. Also we want plans implemented to be fluid and based on successful models. As we know kids will turn around and want to talk story with their friends to the sides, front and behind. Not to mention the amount of burden placed on the teachers to ensure that every student is actively engaging in social distancing. Both my husband and I feel that our child will be better suited at home learning from the comfort of her own home with her respective teacher virtually. We have seen the benefit of distance learning in 4Q of 2019-2020. While we also understand that this quarter "didn't count" we do feel that she learned more, proved to be more of an independent learner, and she was able to learn at a level consistent with her abilities.

As professionals and invested community members we feel that we are able to support our child with distance learning as the primary means of learning and not a hybrid approach. We both feel that we need to truly buckle down and do what we need to (shut down completely) to address and eliminate this virus once and for all...the best model is New Zealand. Its a shame that we don't have the same type of leadership, as we probably won't be in this current predicament of increased cases in the state of Hawaii.

We ask that you as responsible leaders, parents, uncles, aunties of your own ohana please really reconsider having schools NOT open on August 4th, but instead Septmenber 1, 2020. Allowing for better preparation and planning for all parties involved, which ultimately would benefit the success of the entire DOE of Hawaii and potentially become the model that the rest of the continent looks too.

Me Ka Ha`a ha`a,
Rosalyn "Roz" Ku`uleimomi Rubio Dias Concepcion



My work email is: roz@thepaf.org

My personal email is: rosalyn.dias@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Anne Alves <alves.anne.a@gmail.com> on behalf of Anne Alves
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:58 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: Testimony 7_28_2020.docx

To the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item III (A-C):

- A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.
- B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar.
- C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health.

First of all, thank you for reading our thousands of pages of testimony last week and giving our concerns a serious consideration. In these trying times, it is without exaggeration when I say that our lives are in your hands. The decisions you make will designate whether we all live or if some of us are deemed expendable enough to die. My name is Anne Alves, I am a teacher at Waianae Intermediate School, and I am considered "high risk" for severe complications from Covid-19. I should be spending this time, on my last day of break, preparing to return tomorrow. But instead, here I am writing testimony yet again.

I honestly don't know what else to say that hasn't already been said. Covid numbers are on the rise. The DOE and DOH have not given us the answers to our many legitimate questions. Teachers have not been trained, as Dr. Kishimoto claimed. Schools are not equipped with the necessary cleaning supplies, nor have classrooms been sanitized, as was claimed. I spent Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of last week cleaning out the classroom I inherited (I transferred schools this year). It took my wife (who had to take time off work to help me) and I a full two days to clean out all the trash and wipe down all the surfaces. Even some of the faculty bathrooms are lacking soap. None of this is the fault of the custodial staff, who were busy with countless other tasks. Tomorrow we, teachers, return to school officially. In the

detailed “Welcome Back” plan for the next few days there is only one hour-long session on virtual learning.

Of course I want to return to the classroom and have students return as well, AS SOON AS IT IS SAFE. Unfortunately, it is not safe. Lt. Governor Green, a doctor, has confirmed all of our fears and recommended that we delay the return to school. I couldn’t agree more! Dr. Park herself has shared with administrators (via a virtual meeting) that Covid *will* spread in schools. I don’t understand how sending our keiki back into the classroom is something that is even under consideration. If parents need kids to return to school because this is their main form of childcare, that is a failure on the part of the government! The irony of this very board meeting virtually to discuss our return to in-person learning is not lost on me nor on anyone else. Please use your powers-that-be to keep all school staff and students safe!

Teachers need not be pitted against parents, as Dr. Kishimoto is doing. Her agreement to delay students’ return to school by two weeks comes off divisive and it does not address our multitude of questions. Many of us have been at the “schoolhouse doors” already, working diligently to prepare to return, but it hasn’t been enough. And much of the sanitation and safety materials that we were promised to be supplied with (hand sanitizers, face shields, etc.), according to the MOU, have not been received. We are *always* “here” for students. It is not safe to be physically present in the same space as our students but that does not mean we are not “here” for them. There has not yet been any detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the DOH to address all of the questions brought forward by parents, teachers, and even students.

What we need is a **phased reopening** plan with four phases, each of which are determined by clearly defined metrics based on disease trends.

1. *PHASE 1 - Training:* All educators, including substitute teachers, need to be trained on the technology necessary for virtual teaching. Technology should be distributed and parents and students trained. All school staff should also be trained on clear, written procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students. During this time, there should also be an evaluation on the ventilation of indoor spaces.
2. *PHASE 2 -100% Online Learning:* Classes will be taught 100% online to guarantee the safety of all as further preparation of the school buildings continues. Classroom ventilation modifications should be put into place as necessary and school traffic flow should be designed to minimize person-to-person contact.
3. *PHASE 3 - Hybrid Learning Model:* Students should meet with teachers at least once a week in the third phase. Classes should be limited in size to accommodate safe social distancing guidelines (at least 6’ apart) and therefore should be capped at 12 students per class. All students and school staff will need to wear face masks and surfaces must be cleaned between each class.
4. *PHASE 4 - Full Return to Campus:* In-person instruction may resume 100%.

Not only is this plan entirely reasonable, it is the only plan that guarantees the safety of all involved. Why are we rushing to be the first schools in the country to reopen? We should be focusing on reopening our schools **safely**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Anne Alves

Testimony BOE

From: Maria Falavinha <falavinha@kapaahs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Maria Falavinha
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

We are not ready to start classes using distance learning. Material for the lesson must be ready for physical class and distance learning, and we do not have that yet.

Please consider the reopening date for students August 17. This is for the students best interest.

Mahalo



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

July 30, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education
Special Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chairperson Payne, Vice Chairperson Uemura, and Members,

HawaiiKidsCAN offers comments to the memo provided in Action Item A) Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

HawaiiKidsCAN is concerned that the memo included for this action item does not articulate how the additional nine days of training will be used. Ideally, the memo would include a detailed plan on the specific competencies, platforms, and procedures that must be prioritized. These days will go quickly, and every minute of training time should be maximized in order to ensure successful and safe school reopenings. Unsatisfactory use of this time may result in continued anxiety around school reopenings, leading to calls to again delay the return of students.

Ultimately, we think this request for delay is an opportunity for the HDOE to operate with a sense of clarity, transparency, and urgency. This should certainly be the case when it comes to two way family communications, as any changes to the school calendar are likely to adversely impact families. We should be mindful of the voices of parents in any adjustments, as they don't have the benefit of union representation to create a collective voice.

It is highly unfortunate that great uncertainty remains and changes are still being made as we reach the beginning of the new school year. The time between initial school closures and the opening of this school year feels like a missed opportunity to ensure cohesion and alignment in official training around distance learning, clarification of health procedures, and the use of a single shared learning management system.

HawaiiKidsCAN opposes the recommendation the memo included for on Action Item B) Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar.

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly urges the board to protect the integrity of the school year and a quality learning experience by rejecting a waiver request to shorten the school year and required instructional hours. Students have already lost significant days of instruction, connection, and learning since the abrupt move in the 4th quarter of the previous school to move to non-required enrichment. Given that recent data show just 54%, 43%, and 44% of students are proficient in English Language Arts, Math, and Science, respectively, any cuts to the school year will just continue to widen the education opportunity gap between the public school and private school systems.

We urge the HIDOE and labor partners to explore creative solutions, including the use of existing planning, institute, and holiday days to make up for the delayed start time. Another possibility would be extending the date when the school year would end. Schools could also explore how at-home or community time through project-based learning could focus on competency and completion, versus the traditional measure of seat time for instruction.

Parents who have children with disabilities have already reported being deeply concerned about the loss of supports for their keiki. Our school system has come far in making sure students with disabilities don't fall through the cracks, and every option should be exhausted before school year cuts that would hurt our most vulnerable students. At the very least, this may proactively help to curb potential lawsuits from families.

HawaiiKidsCAN supports the recommendation articulated by Chairperson Payne for Action Item C) Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

HawaiiKidsCAN appreciates the care and thoughtfulness with which the board has approached feedback from community members in previous meetings. There are no easy or clear win-win answers in this time of great uncertainty, but there are approaches that prioritize risk minimization from a health perspective. Hawaii's recent record highs of COVID-19 cases speak to the continued seriousness of our health situation, even without tourists returning yet in large numbers. Failure to mitigate health risks could lead to long-term school closures and negative health outcomes for students, educators, and families.

We look forward to the robust discussion in today's meeting on each of these topics. For example, how will the board reconcile mask requirement policies that are imposed by county governments, which may be stricter than those practiced by HIDOE schools? Would county requirements supersede optional mask policies in schools?

Mahalo for your continued leadership in this time of crisis,

David Miyashiro

Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

PS – we wanted to provide highlights from our previous testimony on school reopening, in case it was missed in the flood of submissions.

Overall, the HIDOE's *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan* is a positive step forward with the start of school less than a month away. To further the discussion in advance of that reopening, we offer the following comments, questions, and suggestions:

- **Limiting in-person exposure in school models:** While the ability of school leaders to select school models provides maximum flexibility, we were concerned that full face-to-face models are being offered as an option at each grade level. Given the strong health concerns of students, teachers, and parents, it is disconcerting that schools may select a fully in-person model. The provided models in the plan also lack sufficient details on how to limit in-person exposure to COVID-19. For example, for all of the models, would there be full days each week where facilities could be closed for deep cleaning and preparation while learning shifts online?
- **Prepare for new shutdown:** Given that a new wave of COVID-19 cases is highly likely in the fall semester due to the resurgence of tourism, it could be clearer in the reopening plan how schools may quickly toggle between school models. Also, what flexibility is available to families with an expedited or simplified geographic exception process so that families are able to enroll in schools that best fit their health and safety needs as the health situation evolves?
- **Class cohorts:** The use of class cohorts/bubbles appears to be a fundamental element of the reopening plan, even serving as the basis for teachers and students to remove masks while in classrooms. Based on what has been presented in the plan, we found that **greater details would be helpful in defining the maximum and minimum sizes of such cohorts, and potential ways members of the cohort might be exposed to infections from outside the cohort** (such as recess, electives, and afterschool programs). Not requiring masks to be worn in the classroom sounds like a disaster in the making, particularly given that asymptomatic members of the cohort may cause infections for teachers and family members of the students in that cohort. We urge the BOE and DOE to strongly consider and mitigate potential health risks inherent in this model.
- **Attendance:** We were relieved to see daily attendance has an expectation for all schools, but it would be helpful to articulate and define how attendance will work across different school designs. To ensure equity, these definitions should be uniform and consistent. For instance, students could simply log on but not meaningfully participate or engage in a virtual setting, yet it is not clear if this would count as a student being

marked “present.” **School, complex area, and system-wide attendance data should be reported to the public and BOE on a monthly basis, at the least.**

- **Assessment:** We believe the use of the first two weeks of school to include assessing learning needs is critical and a valuable use of time. In particular, we encourage schools to target depth over breadth and prioritize academic content/standards in math and language arts for each grade and the precursor knowledge and skills most essential for work in that grade. Given the disrupted end of the 2019-2020 school year and likely ongoing disruption, teachers will need to prioritize the differentiation of instruction and supports, which makes early and frequent formative assessment incredibly important. **To the fullest extent possible, school, complex area, and system-wide academic data should be reported to the public and BOE at the beginning of the school year as a baseline, and progress throughout the year should be tracked and also reported out. We also believe it is premature to consider a USDOE waiver for 2021 end of year assessments.** It is prudent to focus on ensuring a robust learning environment and consider the long-term negative impact on our schools from two consecutive years without a full picture of student learning. Resources such as FutureEd’s *Blueprint for Testing: How Schools Should Assess Students During the Covid Crisis* offer thoughtful recommendations on an ideal timeline and framing of assessments for this upcoming school year (https://www.future-ed.org/blueprint-for-testing-how-schools-should-assess-students-during-the-covid-crisis/?mc_cid=bdd5c441e6&mc_eid=aa8ab27f5a).
- **Roadmap to close digital divide:** After reviewing the Digital Transformation for Learning Plan, it seems that more details are still needed to offer a clear and measurable roadmap to ensuring all students have access to digital learning. This includes a school-by-school accounting for the specific technology supports still needed by students and families, including devices, internet access, and supports. This roadmap should identify how the DOE can work directly with community partners to close gaps in access.
- **Clarity and focus:** Given the immense and unique challenge facing our schools this upcoming school year, it was not clear in the reopening plan the level of flexibility schools would have with their academic offerings. For example, Jal Mehta, a professor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, said the crisis offers an opportunity to fundamentally rethink how we educate students going forward. Since teachers’ in-person time with students will be limited, perhaps schools should concentrate on a few subjects in greater depth, while pruning away breadth in others, sort of like a college major.

Testimony BOE

From: Mady West <mdwest6@gmail.com> on behalf of Mady West
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha all,

I would like to write in favor of staying with the current reopening plans on August 4th.

I'm an elementary educator who has been preparing for this first day back since March 13th. I feel confident and comfortable returning to my campus to begin teaching in a hybrid in person-online model.

I do not understand what pushing back the start date 2 weeks will accomplish. It will not make educators and parents who are concerned about their health and their student's health more at ease. Our district has been aware and preparing to return during this pandemic for almost 5 months now. During this time I, along with many colleagues, have taken advantage of all of the free webinars, PDs, publications, and other sources of information to prepare to teach our students online and give them what they need during these unprecedented times. Our custodial staff and administration has been working tirelessly to install sneeze guards, set up classrooms, and deep clean campuses.

Pushing back 14 days does not change the real issues that many educators with underlying health conditions face. I am disappointed that there has not been a solution for those educators and I feel for them. Pushing back 14 days just means another 2 weeks where parents need to figure out how to care for and support their children who are craving the safety and consistency a classroom provides - something they have been missing since March.

I urge you to stick with the reopening plan and I urge all involved to spend more time figuring out how to help our most vulnerable educators stay safe by giving them an option to work from home instead of fighting for 3 extra feet of distance (in June) and 14 more days to "prepare".

Sincerely,
A Concerned Educator

Testimony BOE

From: Rich N <richardnn1@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rich N
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE

Very briefly, what is the rush in opening the public school to students for face to face contact? We have consistent COVID-19 community spread, mostly on Oahu.

The latest is foodland, Hawaiian Air, and the local bars. A flight attendant died.

Again the issue is not if BUT WHEN someone gets infected in a high risk gathering such as public schools especially at high schools, and enormous middle schools and elementary schools.

Teachers can work and remain in their classrooms, but having students in our overcrowded schools such as the waianae coast, ewa beach, waipahu, and kalihi is an infection waiting to happen.

Unless we control the community spread students should not be subjected to infection and/or be carriers of the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment.

I ask you to heed the warnings and not have students attend face to face instruction.

Thank you

Richard Nakatsu, Ed.D

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Brianne Clark <clarkbrianne@yahoo.com> on behalf of Brianne Clark
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:18 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Sending children to school

Aloha,

I'm a parent of 4 children and feel that if we delay their education it will affect their social emotional development and other areas of learning. The children on the island have missed so much. I also am an educator for early childhood and understand how parents feel. But there are parents that send their children to school. Because they have to work and want their children not to miss any more of school. My question is if school is pushed back 2 weeks. What says it could be pushed back another week and then another week. Schools, teachers and parents should have been preparing for the new school year, since school has been closed. I feel comfortable that my children's schools have taken the proper steps to make it safe for my children to go back. And the schools have offered distancing learning which gives the parents an opportunity to not send their child to school. So I plead that there isn't a push back on school start date.

Sincerely, Brianne Clark

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Waite <sarah@friedlotus.com> on behalf of Sarah Waite
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To the Honorable Board of Education:

This testimony is in regards to the postponement of the start of the student school year.

My name is Sarah Waite and I am SPED Pre - K teacher at Royal School. I have delayed giving testimony on this subject because I feel that my students need to get back to school and into my classroom soon, and to have direct instruction regularly. I feared that by expressing my concerns about the feasibility of protecting the health and safety of my very young students with disabilities (and their family and our school staff), that I might contribute to an outcome such as full distance learning for all students, so I waited to see what types of safety instruction, PD, and health precautions would be taken before expressing concern. I firmly believe that we must find safe ways to bring students, especially students with special needs, back to school! I support any parents' decision to opt for distance learning, but overall I think kids need to come back to school.

However as school opening for students is now one week away, I feel very unprepared to address my students' needs in this whole new environment. I'm unsure what, if any, appropriate training I will get in the next 4 teacher work days. I feel like I'm very under informed about what the protocols will be to ensure everyone's safety. I have students who need diapers changed, help wiping noses. These students put toys in their mouths, rapidly share toys, and have peer and teacher physical exchanges unexpectedly all day long. I not only need more training in the procedures of sanitizing, hand washing and masks, PPE, etc.

I also have to completely re-vamp my classroom arrangement both physically and in teaching structure. Routines, learning structures such as small groups, table work, circle time, and rotating centers all have to be changed or eliminated to prevent multiple physical contacts and potential bodily fluid exchanges between students. I know that, although to a lesser degree, my fellow teachers in Kindergarten and 1st grade also share my concerns. I don't feel like 2 days of safety training (if that) and 2 days of classroom work time is enough time to address these concerns. My students are learning life skills as part of their IEPs, and I will have to work to come up with ways for peers to cooperate, share, exchange greetings, etc. This is a conundrum that I will be left to solve on my own, without any training or support.

Further, unlike K-12, there will not be separate distance learning teachers assigned to my students who opt for full distance learning, nor a curriculum provided for Pre - K distance learning. I will be in charge of my students' distance learning curriculum content as well as delivery and data collection as well.

Also, how to deliver IEP minutes and services according to each student's IEP when students only attend 2 days a week or are fully distance learning is still a question unanswered by district, state and federal departments and not possible under the current plans. I am legally bound to provide IEP minutes and services under IDEA Chapter 60. I do not feel that 2 teacher work days with no PD will prepare me to provide both distance and in person learning, nor explain how minutes will be provided and data will be collected.

There is so much groundwork that needs to be done to be prepared to teach this year - for students safety and to address their needs appropriately. I would like to request that we delay the start of school for students and ask that we are provided QUALITY training for safety, for PD distance learning and technology, and to give teachers more time to prepare our classroom structures and routines.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Waite
Pre -K SPED teacher
Royal School
Honolulu
Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Kris Coffield <kriscoffield@gmail.com> on behalf of Kris Coffield
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:35 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY: Special Meeting, Action Item A (July 30th)
Attachments: Testimony-SchoolYear.pdf

Aloha,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus's testimony for the July 30th BOE special meeting, Action Item A (school year revision) is attached to this email. Mahalo!

--

Kris Coffield

Government Relations and Development Specialist

Executive Director, [IMUAlliance](#)

Chairperson, [Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus](#)

P: (808) 679-7454 **W:** www.kriscoffield.com

FB: www.facebook.com/originalaccident **TW:** [@kriscoffield](https://twitter.com/kriscoffield) **IG:** [@kriscoffield](https://www.instagram.com/kriscoffield)



SPECIAL MEETING ACTION ITEM A: BOARD ACTION ON REVISIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR: ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND DELAYING STUDENTS' FIRST DAY TO ENSURE HEALTH AND SAFETY PREPAREDNESS FOR SCHOOLS

JULY 30, 2020 · HAWAII STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION · CHAIR CATHERINE PAYNE

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus strongly supports revising the 2020-2021 school calendar year to reopen schools for students on August 17th.

As board members have already heard, our schools are not currently safe or prepared for student learning. To adapt to the rapidly shifting situation in which we find ourselves during the COVID-19 pandemic, more time is needed to allow teachers to prepare to deliver blended and virtual instruction and equip our schools with protective supplies.

It would be utterly irresponsible to reopen schools without adequate protective equipment that guarantees teachers and keiki will be safe from the coronavirus. The American Federation of Teachers has already endorsed a national teacher strike for educators who feel that their schools are unsafe. It would not be surprising to see the National Education Association and the Hawai'i State Teachers Association, our state's local NEA affiliate, do the same.

Science disproves claims that schools are safe spaces during the pandemic. Schools are high-contact zones for COVID-19, according to researchers at McKinsey and Company. Moreover, most schools cannot presently afford regular disinfection and healthcare programming thanks to chronic underfunding of public education, while many students and their parents may object to mandatory masks—38 percent of U.S. adults don't wear masks when they leave the house.

Not all kids will remain six feet apart, no matter what regulations the Hawai'i Department of Education attempts to implement. COVID-19 can definitely infect children, some of whom can pass it on to their families, teachers, school staff, and other children, and who may even struggle with medical complications of their own that can become fatal.

Teachers already sacrifice their time and financial well-being for their students. They should not be asked to die for them, too. In our view, Superintendent Christina Kishimoto has recklessly and aggressively pursued a school reopening agenda that puts corporate greed before our keiki's needs. Reopening schools prematurely will lead to depressed educational outcomes, an exponential increase in our state's teacher shortage, and, potentially, a public health crisis.

This, in turn, will buttress criticism of the educational quality offered at public schools and play into President Donald Trump's and U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos's education privatization agenda. As the historian Peter Montague recently wrote for the website Truthout.org:

It's no secret that DeVos would like to privatize all public schools. If public schools become hotbeds of infection, confidence in public education will diminish; perhaps then more parents would join DeVos in pressing to eliminate the public school system entirely. This agenda should surprise no one—it has been Betsy DeVos's religious mission for the past 25 years.

During this crisis, we must always put public safety before profits. We should never let the sinister pursuit of privatization undermine our commitment to creating the schools our keiki deserve. Now is the time to call upon our better angels to protect the health of Hawai'i's children and those responsible for crafting their future. If you fail to do so, you will be acting like angels of death.

Testimony BOE

From: Ikaika Plunkett <ask1kane@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ikaika Plunkett
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:43 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the start of the school year for students

Aloha e BOE,

I'm a parent of four keiki and I would like to give my children's school more time to prepare for students. My children attend Kahuku Elementary and I know they need more time to prepare.

Reasons:

- Teachers need TIME to prepare for three types of INSTRUCTION, 1- face to face, challenging because they don't have a full day with students and have to consider what and how to continue to teach knowing the students will be missing time with them and on their own. 2 - ASYNCHRONOUS Distance Learning, entirely new and foreign to public education outside of credit recovery or remediation. 3 - TOTAL DL, how the heck is a teacher supposed to teach partial face to face, partial DL, and then teach the students who are 100% DL choice? I'm a former HS math teacher and I would freak out.
- How are schools supposed to prepare their casual hire workers in the policies and procedures for safety that they were forced to create if casual hires first day is the first day of students? Adult supervisors for lunch, EAs, PPEs, etc need time to prepare, get trained, and practice, these procedures are all brand new. I know of other schools who are short staffed, so how are they going to implement their safety procedures without the bodies necessary.
- \$MONEY\$ all schools were asked to trim their budget and we all know schools are not allocated enough money to operate at the optimal level before the cuts and COVID, now the schools are trying to buy things to keep students safe with little or no money and they are competing against one another to do so.

Suggestions:

- Start with 100% DL first, face to face instruction for vulnerable students only.
- Buy the necessary safety supplies and items for schools so they don't have to carry the burden to educate and PROTECT
 - containers for storage, plastic guards, meal containers, online programs (get bundles and save money), hotspots for families who don't have wifi, containers for students to keep their items separate from others, guards for bathroom stalls, soap, hand sanitizer, hands free soap dispensers, garbage cans, etc. I think we have enough PPE, masks, etc. Computer/laptop bags because kids need to take them home and bring to school, headphones, mouses, etc. Copy paper for teachers to help with distance learning, copy machine contracts, a volunteer or paid adult staff to help supervise and implement school safety procedures or at least create a pool so schools can more easily find them.
- start school September 8 and get rid of fall break, shorten winter break, and spring break so we don't have to go to far into summer to maintain 180 days.
- COVID legislation to temporarily suspend 180 days and or 1810 minutes
- Provide COVID test to all DOE employees and families, according to POTUS any American can get one at ANY time.

Mahal for the opportunity to share my mana'o.

Ikaika Plunkett Hau'ula Elementary School 1985 on behalf of my four children, Mahealani, Kahuku Elementary 2017, Kupono, Kahuku Elementary 2019, Kekoa, Kahuku Elementary 2021, and Malia Kahuku Elementary 2023

Testimony BOE

From: carnationcastillo1 <carnationcastillo1@gmail.com> on behalf of carnationcastillo1
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:58 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: No what is this boe is doing my good ness close the school for now we have kids life come before anything wake up go my internet hello wake up I said no that's my kids not your aloha

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Heinlein <nikkidanielle@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole Heinlein
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I stand behind the Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA), United Public Workers (UPW), and the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) in requesting a delay of the school year start date to allow school staff paid time to safely plan and prepare for our students' return. I, along with thousands of other teachers statewide, have been working tirelessly all summer to learn more about COVID-19 so we know what to expect in regards to safety precautions and also learning more about distance and online learning pedagogy so I can better prepare my lessons for successful student learning. However, this has all been voluntary. And I haven't had access to my curriculum to make any actual plans. With only 4 days before students are scheduled to arrive on our normal schedule, I don't see how I can humanly set up my room for social distancing, move all my physical curriculum and lessons online to support our hybrid model, and also prepare all of the other beginning of the year duties that I have as the school's EL coordinator. The bottom line is we need more time. We want to do this right - we don't want to students thrown into online classes that were not carefully planned, like they were last spring. Please allow us the time we need to get it right this time. We all miss our students and miss how school used to be. But in order to move forward, we need time. As a parent, I want my children's teachers to have the critical conversations with their colleagues on the best way to do this. I won't want quickly and hastily slapped together lessons. I want my own children to look forward to their online lessons. This can only happen if teachers are paid to plan.

Thank you,
Nicole Heinlein
Iao Intermediate School teacher
Pomaikai Elem and Maui High parent

--

Nicole Heinlein

Testimony BOE

From: Patricia Blair <patriciablair@msn.com> on behalf of Patricia Blair
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:08 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Virtual learning only for our children, teachers. The coronavirus is increasing and to unpredictable. We should cherish our children and teachers. No sports! Let's use common sense.

Thank you,
Patricia Blair, RN, Kailua
Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: linda jones <jonesybcool@yahoo.com> on behalf of linda jones
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:22 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a veteran, home grown, public school educated teacher. I have been serving the state of Hawaii by teaching nā keiki for the past twenty years.

In regards to training for the

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Adriane Aaron's <naarona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Adriane Aaron's
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:27 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay The start/Distance learning

Aloha,

Please delay the start of school to allow the schools adequate time to train and prepare for the school year. In addition, we respectfully request a distance learning option. Given the rising number of Covid cases and the fact that we as adults are unable to contain the spread of the virus reinforces the fact that schools will not be able to provide a safe environment for anyone. I will not be physically sending my children back to school given the current situation.

Mahalo,
Adriane Aarona

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Ellery Galanto <egalanto@gmail.com> on behalf of Ellery Galanto
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:30 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

BOE,

I don't get you guys, Board of Education. You hold your meetings over video conference, yet you expect teacher and students to be in the same room. Where's the common sense there?

Oh brother,

Ellery Galanto
E: egalanto@gmail.com
C: [808-255-4991](tel:808-255-4991)

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: linda jones <jonesybcool@yahoo.com> on behalf of linda jones
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:33 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha. I am a veteran teacher who was educated in the public school system of Hawaii. I have taught for the past 20 years.

I am writing to address the training for safely opening schools in August. It is imperative that we take the time to do this correctly so that lives are not lost! This must be kept in mind at all times! We are talking life and death here not only for the faculty and staff at the schools but for the students and their families as well. This must not be taken lightly. The consequences of moving too fast are dire.

I would also like to ask that in your consideration of this that it also be included that teachers will be able to use the professional development towards a step movement. Teachers are being asked to do a Herculean task! That in March through May teachers were flying by the seat of their pants and doing their very best for their students with no training illustrated the dedication we have for our students and the professionalism we demonstrated in a crisis time.

Now that professional development is being offered it seems important to ensure the intense training we will be receiving will credit us with three credits of PD to our Step movement.

I ask that teachers be rewarded for the work they are about to embark upon... because it truly is life or death. Please attach PD step movement to the training.

Mahalo,
Linda Jones
Lāna'i High and Elementary School
ELA/Speech/Film/Peer Mediation Teacher

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Alice Kimura <4fun2learn@gmail.com> on behalf of Alice Kimura
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

Re: III-C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

While schools may possibly have a later start date of August 17, 2020, it still does not change this simple fact: The Hawaii DOE schools are not ready for an in-person student model. The schools are simply not safe for our children and staff. Although I believe my own school administration and teachers have worked hard during the summer to prepare, safeguarding the schools is an overwhelming task. Many fellow teachers report their own schools have not yet come up with adequate procedures for keeping children and staff safe throughout the entire school day.

In-person student models should commence only when the following have been fully addressed:

- screening for students and employees upon arrival for symptoms, history of exposure, temperature checks
- ventilation, cleaning, and disinfection
- plans and procedures for training all in the safety protocols of the school
- training of staff and families for online teaching
- set up of physical classroom environment (including 6' distance, transparent plexiglass/acrylic germ barriers or partitions, and mandatory mask use by all)
- Plan for distribution and access to distance learning requirements (i.e. laptop or ipad, internet access, and digital apps).
- Safety procedures for when student or staff is sick
- PPE distribution to all staff
- Protocols for handling, distributing, returning, and cleaning of school supplies, consumables, manipulatives, textbooks, or workbooks.

These concerns need to be dealt with before the children or staff become sick. Please protect all our children and staff. Please adopt a distance learning model for schools.

Respectfully,
Alice Kimura
Puu Kukui Elementary, Grade 3

Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Caffrey <ccaffrey2019@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheryl Caffrey
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: A Call to Postpone School Reopenings BOE Meeting 7/30
Attachments: 110146850_164307055212485_186151084666139229_o.jpg; 116129127_164888425154348_7111843852081987492_o.jpg; 110315416_164215598554964_1326744579663446328_o.jpg

A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools

Teachers need time to prepare for training for online Distance Learning or to teach remotely. Teachers have not had any training from the DOE to do so but have only been giving a directive. In the past 4 months, the DOE has not properly trained teachers. When schools closed down in March 2020, teachers were assigning work on their own accord and researching, preparing lessons on their own.

They received no formal training on what was expected of them. This continued through the summer as well. No training for the upcoming school year from the DOE.

B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180-day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

Due to COVID the uncertainty of these times, it is hard to keep to the 180 days of instructional days and to lengthen the school year. The situation with COVID changes from day to day or even from hour to hour. The length of time of this pandemic is highly uncertain. So to try and implement and lengthen the school year at this point would not be advisable. The school year has already been pushed back at this point. If we were to lengthen the school year to make up the two weeks could highly impact Summer School at the Middle and High School levels. Also, this would affect the students who are required to attend ESY in the summer.

C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding:

(1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning;

Consistent standard safety procedures for all schools need to be set.

Again nothing was given to schools over the past 4 months to plan for the upcoming school year. That is why there is such a large disparity within the schools. This leads to the dismay of all parties involved:

teachers, administration, support staff, parents, and children. If school is not safe, why is there a push for students to return? As a teacher, we do want to return to work but I for one am not willing to risk my own life, my family's lives, or the lives of my students and their families. During the first 4 months after the State of Hawaii shutdown, our case numbers began to taper off and it appeared that we had "flattened the curve". That was from March - June. Where we had about a total of 800 cases up until that point. Now during the month of July we have surpassed that total and have had over 800 cases.

Community spread is everywhere. A Costco worker, 2 Foodland workers, a school community member at Kaala Elementary. Bars, funerals, church gatherings. People are not social distancing. If people are not social distancing, the community spread will continue. Also, if adults cannot practice social distancing what makes you even think children will be able to. Especially since some of them have not seen their friends in over 5 months. Students are being asked to stay in their "Ohana Bubble". We have SPED students who will leave their homeroom bubble and then return. We have

kids being asked to social distance in the bathrooms during the school day when no one will be watching them. Do you think this is going to work? We have students who attend A+ who will be put in a different bubble during morning and after school care. But everyone thinks it is safe to reopen. If you have school-aged children, do you feel it is safe to send them in person? Oh and I forgot to mention, there will not be enough sneeze guards for each child, and masks are not required. Especially at recess. But this is where they will be running around and breathing heavily and lots of droplets will be flying into the air at this time.

All the while they will be in classrooms for over 6 hours with poor ventilation and air flow. All of this goes against what the CDC recommends to keep people safe.

I ASK THE BOE THIS QUESTION: IF YOU FEEL IT IS SAFE TO OPEN SCHOOLS, THEN WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO HOLD YOUR MEETINGS VIA WEBEX? WHY NOT HAVE IT OPEN IN PERSON AND INVITE ALL BOE MEMBERS AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO WOULD LIKE TO GIVE TESTIMONY.

Please also view the attached charts of current cases on Oahu - community spread, and the rise of cases.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Caffrey
Teacher - Mililani 'Ike Elementary

CASES ADDED TODAY

526 ACTIVE

42 RELEASED (0 NEW)
0 DEATHS
1 REQ HOSPITAL (0 NEW)

1419 O'AHU
(46 NEW)

924 RELEASED (12 NEW)
19 DEATHS (0 NEW)
134 REQ HOSPITAL (2 NEW)

154

MAUI COUNTY
(OLDER CASES INCLUDES 2 ON
MOLOKAI AND 1 ON LANAI)
(1 NEW)

125 RELEASED (1 NEW)
6 DEATHS
26 REQ HOSPITAL (0)

116

BIG ISLAND
(-1 NEW)

114 RELEASED (1 NEW)
0 DEATHS
4 REQ HOSPITAL (0 NEW)

0 PENDING (0 NEW)

167 CUMULATIVE
HOSPITALIZED (2 NEW)

47 CURRENT HOSPITALIZATION

108/244 (44%) ICU BEDS (15 COVID19+)

23 DIAGNOSED (0 NEW)
OUT OF STATE (2 CUMUL HOSP/
1 DEATH KAUAI RES)

26 DEATHS (0 NEW)
(1.8/100k per capita)

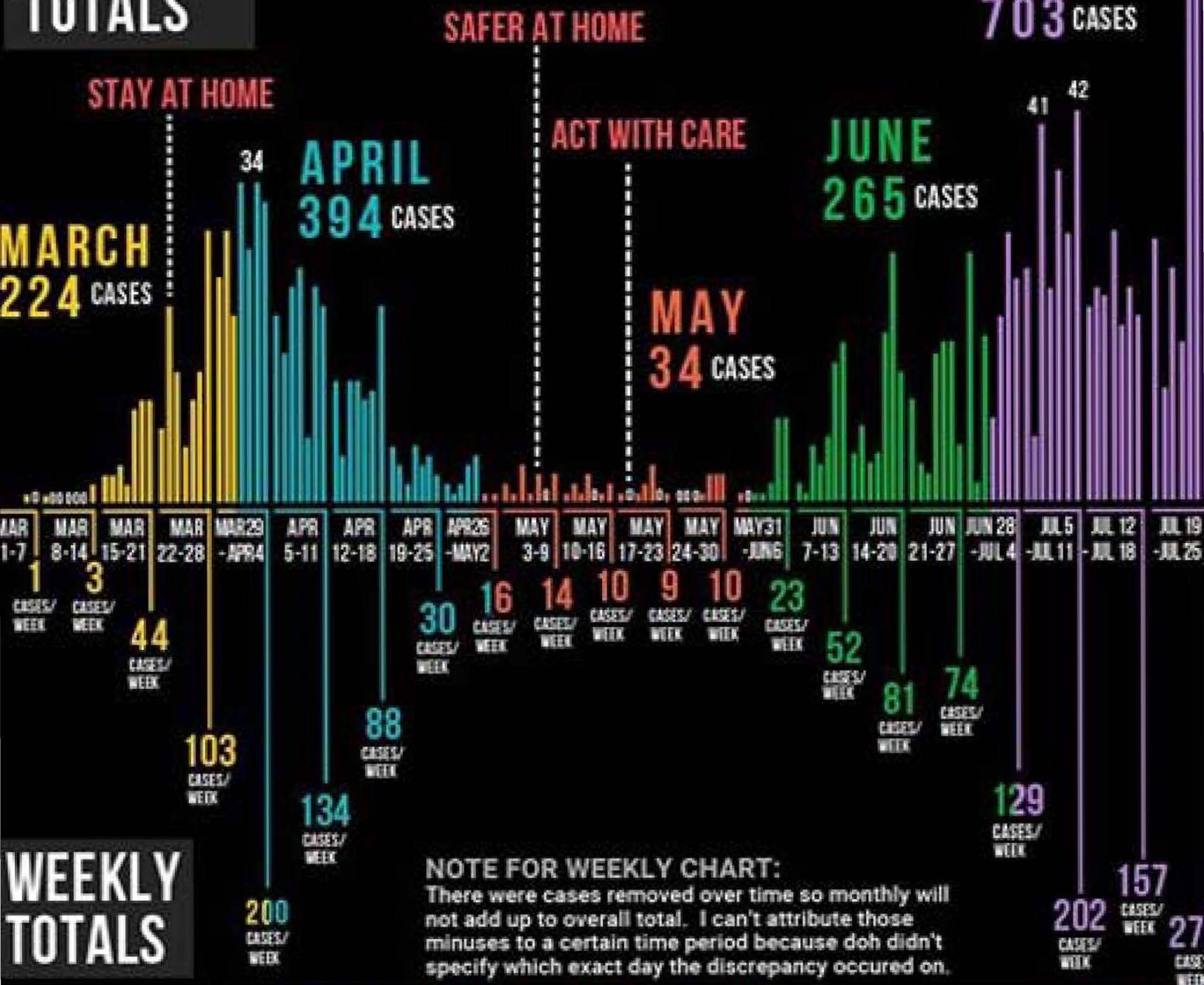
117,559 PPL TESTED (1,172 NEW)

1757

HAWAII COVID-19

@HawaiiUpdates808

MONTHLY TOTALS



	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY (1-25)	TOTALS
KAUAI	12	9	-1	18	5	43
OAHU	157	242	22	231	639	1291
MAUI	25	91	4	3	23	146
BIG ISLAND	15	58	8	6	30	117
DIAG OUT OF STATE	2	7	1	6	7	23
PENDING	13	-13	0	1	-1	0
TOTALS	224	394	34	265	703	1620

96789 MILILANI TURNED RED DK YELLOW (7/13)	7/26
96813 HONOLULU TURNED ORANGE	7/26
96818 HONOLULU TURNED RED	7/24
96817 HAUULA TURNED RED	7/24
96815 HONOLULU TURNED ORANGE	7/23
96795 WAIMANALO TURNED ORANGE	7/23
96822 HONOLULU TURNED RED	7/20
96825 HONOLULU TURNED DK. YELLOW	7/20
96731 KAHUKU TURNED LT YELLOW	7/20
96744 KANEOHE TURNED RED	7/17
96816 HONOLULU TURNED RED	7/14
96707 KAPOLEI TURNED RED	7/13



478
ACTIVE CASES
STATE TOTAL

Testimony BOE

From: jeffery harpstrite <drkimoh@gmail.com> on behalf of jeffery harpstrite
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:23 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Open schools

I am a pediatrician. I strongly support opening schools as planned on August 4th. So many studies and other countries have shown that this can be safely done. I feel teachers and staff have had sufficient time to get the advised distancing measures, safety precautions, and learning plans in place. It is dismaying to see and hear how little learning occurred for so many students the final 2 months of remote learning and the unhealthy and dysfunctional routines many families have slipped into with almost 5 months now of no or limited education.

If the start date of school is delayed, I would advocate that the total number of educational days for students not be decreased.

Please try and make science based decisions for our pediatric community, not emotional ones.

Amy Harpstrite MD

Testimony BOE

From: ann pecpec <annpecpec@gmail.com> on behalf of ann pecpec
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Here is my written testimony regarding School Re-opening.

Action A: I agree with delaying students First Day to ensure Health & Safety for schools. I agree a start date of 08/17/2020, no later, is reasonable enough time for schools to get [more] prepared. The pandemic started in March, we've had 4 months to prepare.

Action B: I strongly disagree with reducing the 180 day school year and 1080 instructional hours. Our keiki deserve their education. If we delay the start by 2 weeks, we should also then extend the end of the school year by 2 weeks.

COVID-19 is here. We will never be completely safe until a vaccine is created. We all understand the health guidelines and it is up to each individual to practice those guidelines to ensure the safety of oneself and others. We need to try to get back to normal-whatever that is. The kids, Our Future, are the ones that will suffer and are suffering the most.

I don't expect the Federal, State, City or local agencies to take responsibility of protecting my child outside of their jurisdiction, so I will teach my child how to protect him/her self. I just ask that everyone else do their part as well.

Sincerely,
Ann C Pecpec

Testimony BOE

From: Kristie Masatsugu <noahsark40@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kristie Masatsugu
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:57 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

Thank you very much for listening to the recommendations being presented to you and considering the safety of everyone as we return to school.

As a teacher, I feel preparation is key when planning a lesson, activity, or field trip which takes time. We are embarking on something unprecedented as we prepare for the upcoming school year. Schools are now tasked in keeping teachers, staff, students, and their families safe from an unknown and unpredictable virus and deliver curriculum at the same time. Without a plan, the task of teaching while keeping everyone safe is very overwhelming.

According to the current data, children do not seem as vulnerable to this new virus, however, can be carriers. So, it will be the teachers, staff and older members of our families who are at risk. Many of our children either live in a multigenerational household or are cared for by an older family member. I am relying on my elderly parents to help me with my elementary aged daughter as both my husband and I work.

With the rise of cases in Hawaii and already having a positive case in a public school, the idea of returning to school is uneasy for everyone. Why not start by giving teachers time to plan and be trained, have protocols and routines in place, and be better prepared for students to return? Then, have all schools distance learn first so teachers can practice with the program. If we do need to shut down schools, we will be prepared to distance learn since we had time to practice. Next, slowly open schools with only half the students returning regardless of the size of the school or age of students with a 6 ft circumference distance. The last stage is to have all students face to face. By watching the number of cases and following the protocols by the Department of Health we can safely return to school without a lot of disruption to students' learning.

As a teacher, and more importantly as a parent, safety is my number one priority. I do realize there will be hardships if students do not return, but I also know many parents who are choosing distance learning due to safety reasons. I would rather be proactive and err on the side of safety than having someone I know get sick from the virus. I believe if we work together and take things slowly, we can provide a safe place for our students.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristie Hotema
Iliahi Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Keith Yamaguchi <klyama9196@gmail.com> on behalf of Keith Yamaguchi
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a newly retired teacher. Due to Covid-19, age, and other health concerns, I have decided to retire earlier than previously planned. I love teaching and have done so for over 30 years. However, I felt that being in a high risk group as well as having elderly family members, continuing just wouldn't be wise.

Although, I won't be teaching this year, I truly believe that the opening of the schools need to be done in a right and not rushed way. To have a safe, and successful opening where students can return, teachers need more time! There are so many things that must be planned, learned, and shared. I know everyone at my school is doing their very best! With clear DOE guidelines and time to prepare, there will be a better chance for students, teachers, administrators, staff, and family members to all stay safe and have a successful school year! Let's do this right!

Testimony BOE

From: Flora Green <flora.green@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Flora Green
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: added information to my testimony

I'm just baffled that we are doing webex meetings, and yet we will be having students every day soon. I am anxious to get back to work and see students. However, I am nervous that unless we are ready with guidelines, and have plans on what we will do if there's a positive Covid 19 outbreak , chaos will take place!

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: dragonhee@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:06 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony- School Reopening
Attachments: Testimony07302020.pdf

Dear Board of Education

Thank you so much for your support of public education in Hawaii.

My name is Shino Hee, I teach at a public high school on Oahu.

I would like to testify for the special meeting on July 30th, regarding school reopening.

On our campus, I would say less than 10 custodians are working.

We have 60+ classrooms and I will receive FIVE different groups of students per day.

HOW would you expect all of the desks on campus will be cleaned before the next group comes in?

I do not think it is even possible.

We are not expected to clean the room contractually but what do we do?

Leave it as is and wait for the students to smear COVID-19 all over the campus?

Almost none of the students have the same schedule, which means they will move around the campus from one room to another.

This is NOT the "bubble" that Dr. Park mentioned at all.

Another concern is school closure upon new COVID19 cases.

If we had a case on campus it will close for 10-14 days and potentially we open and close again and again.

Consistency and stability are extremely important in the classroom and this does not support the students at all if it happens.

I also do not agree with how the closure will be decided.

The first action to take should be swift closure but the DOE protocol is telling that is not even school decision.

Yes, consulting with DOH and tracing is extremely important but also

we really cannot afford to wait for the decision that will be made by someone who is not on campus.

This protocol needs to be polished by focusing on the processing speed to minimize the spread.

Students need to wear face coverings.

This scientifically proven method should not be only "encouraged". It should be mandated.

I have quite a few cases of "at-risk" students, family members, and friends around me.

If we should "Act with Kindness", this is the start.

Lastly, we are going to feel fear every second in school.

With SO many unanswered questions, I really have to wonder what exactly BOE & DOE are expecting.

The classroom will be filled with unstable concerned students and an unhappy, stressed teacher,

and tons of chaotic protocol spice sprinkled---you are baking meltdown casserole.

It is very frustrating that underpaid teachers have to deal with this dilemma.

Dr. Kishimoto says "My expectation is that if the Board approves the two-week delay, that our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students."

This statement made many teachers concerned and upset because we do not feel any "togetherness" in it.

Teachers are not saying to keep schools closed.

We can start it. We should. We just need adequate time to discuss, prepare with a clear, firm protocol.

Many passionate teachers are considering leaving this profession due to uncertainty and fear of COVID-19.

We cannot let that regression happen.

I support:

1. delay of the school that will allow us to prepare

2. Starting in distance learning mode

We can distance-teach from the classroom.

At the same time, we provide in-person support to our

SPED, 504, ELL students, and the students who has no computer or wifi at home.

3. Face covering needs to be mandated and shools/DOE/BOE/DOH should back up teachers to implement it.

4. Written guidance based on science

Best regards,

Shino Hee

Testimony BOE

From: SCO TT MCCOY <scottmccoy197@gmail.com> on behalf of SCO TT MCCOY
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please postpone the start date for public schools

To Whom It May Concern,

Teachers have not been sufficiently trained and prepared for such a critical situation with so many unknowns. Our children and their families expect the best of teachers and we are not prepared for such a situation thus able to give our best at this moment — Who will be held liable if the worst possible scenario occurs, a student becomes deathly sick and the BOE and DOE are found negligent? We are liable for our students' safety, we are responsible for caring for student lives not gambling on them. I am an educator not a gambler, and I am full of anxiety and overcome with fear by the decision to start school on August 4th. What happened to our obligation to guarantee student safety with 0 new cases for 4 weeks?! Rolling the dice on August 4th is far from a guarantee, it means you're willing to risk the lives and wellbeing of all involved and you're willingness to do so frightens me and fills me with anxiety. Please postpone the start date for our public schools to guarantee a safe learning environment for Hawaii's keiki.

Sincerely,

Scott K. McCoy

2nd grade teacher, Maunawili Elementary as well as cancer survivor, father of a cancer survivor, spouse of a cancer survivor, uncle of a Corona virus survivor and son of 89 year old parents - My fear and anxiety are real, in my case, the risk the BOE and DOE is willing to take, is life or death.

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Judith Dahl <teacherjd0109@gmail.com> on behalf of Judith Dahl
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a special education teacher at Mountain View elementary. The school is not prepared. Sanitization stations are on back order and have no sanitizer or Enough staff to monitor this. We don't even have enough custodians at school to do the proper job.

I teach 2nd and 3rd grade inclusion class. Meaning I will be with a good amount of students and not able to just bubble and stay with one group ?

When you get sick with covid and have to be hospitalized. Who will be paying that?

Every time we have a covid student I will have to quarantine?

I use my sick and personal days for the hazard situation I'm working in ?

What substitute is going to want to come into a covid class.

Why are teachers and students not getting tested for covid before school starts.

Think about the widespread of students and staff. This is a disaster in the making. More guidance and discussion is needed.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lizzy Laliberty <puchanus@gmail.com> on behalf of Lizzy Laliberty
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, Chairwoman Payne and Members of the Board,

I feel the DOE could and should do more to assist teachers with school-age children during this difficult time of school reopenings. In response to the DOE reopening proposal, Superintendent Kishimoto stated, “My concern is the other health and safety matters we create when we can’t accommodate a high-need child or another risky situation; a child left alone in their home while a parent goes to work. And while that onus is not just on the school system, that’s the balance that we’re trying to consider here.”

This is great for parents and families of students, but what about when the parent is also a teacher?

At this point in time we are not even requesting that the DOE provide childcare services for teachers whose work schedules differ from those of their children. That would definitely be much appreciated, but at this late time, not realistic.

What teachers are asking for is to have the professional discretion to do their job from home if their bell schedule allows it. What does this mean? Although some high schools are still finalizing their schedules, it's looking as though 1, but possibly 2 days per week will be virtual learning days. Seeing as how all workplaces, including schools, want to minimize the number of persons on site, it makes sense from a safety standpoint. However, since MOU also includes a provision allowing teachers to attend meetings via computer, why not allow them to do this from the safety of their home, where they can also supervise and support their own children? If DOE could negotiate this provision it would help literally thousands of teachers with young children who are scrambling around trying to piece together a plan for childcare.

If teachers can be trusted to educate everyone else's children, isn't it reasonable to give them professional discretion to carry out their responsibilities from home? It's safer for the community, and better for their children who will be cared for at home by a parent. **We strongly urge DOE to negotiate an addendum to the MOU, authorizing teachers to telework on non-face to face teaching days.**

Thank you very much for supporting Hawaii's teachers!

Liz Laliberte
Head Faculty Rep, Hilo High school

Testimony BOE

From: maria rossman <mariarossman@yahoo.com> on behalf of maria rossman
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - delay school reopening

I have been a public school teacher for over 30 years and just chose to retire only because of the current covid situation. I love kids and I love teaching. My concern is not only for myself and my family but especially for the children who will be physically present in school. If there is one child's life lost or one child who suffers permanent damage due to Covid, that's not acceptable. The schools should not reopen. Every person on campus cannot always keep a mask on , nor can they social distance , even if they want to —it's not possible to keep kids from interacting closely with adults and each other. At least give the schools more time to plan for the likely event that schools will be forced to shut down again due to rising covid numbers. Don't you be a person responsible for the loss of one life.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: rexann dubiel <dubielsdesign@hotmail.com> on behalf of rexann dubiel
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:34 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am going into my 33rd year of teaching 3rd grade at Sunset Beach Elem.

I had two nightmares this week about returning to school. I have done my best to prepare, but I still don't feel ready.

I need more time emotionally, mentally, and physically to prepare for this big change.

With students in class and distancing learning, it will be a challenge to educate all of them properly.

Please...give me more time to get ready. I need it. I need tech training, especially.

I considered retiring, called ERS, but will only receive 50% of my salary and I still have a mortgage, am paying off student loans I took out for my daughter, and helping my son and his wife with their financial obligations.

I cannot retire, yet, although I have the years of service and age.

Please, again, give me more time to properly face the reality of teaching under these dire circumstances.

I sometimes question whether I am walking to the gallows.

Aloha,

Rexann Dubiel Shanahan

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Jenny Nishida <ainaolamart@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jenny Nishida
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am strongly AGAINST DOE's proposal to reduce school year instructional days from 180 days to 171 days. Due to the abrupt school closure last school year, students have already lost a whole quarter of learning time. The reduction of additional instructional days which equivalent to 54 student hours this upcoming school year will put the students learning further behind and prove to be detrimental for their future.

Most of our keikis are struggling to comprehend the things happening around them right now. Schooling and being around their friends/peers, teachers/mentors are what they need to stay mentally healthy and sound. They need to be in an environment where they can share their feelings and learn to understand the things around them. With safety measures in place, the schools and trained teachers can help our keikis understand this new world and better prepare them for the future by keeping them in school and enhance their ability to learn. Hawaii BOE, DOE and teachers should be looking for ways to make up lost learning time and not to take away more. We should look to extend the school year. If this is not doable, we can shorten the Fall or Winter breaks. We need to do whatever it takes to help our keikis learn and thrive!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jenny Nishida
Parent of Two

Testimony BOE

From: Karen Troester <erika1robyn1@gmail.com> on behalf of Karen Troester
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School opening

I am opposed to distance learning. This way of learning is NOT for all children. My son is an 8th grader with learning disabilities and no drive or focus. There is also NO supervision for him at home making sure that he is in compliance. What will happen if he fails? Who will be held responsible? Who will be held responsible when his self esteem drops because he is frustrated and cannot handle his work. Who will be held responsible when tension rises in my household causing family problems because my son is not doing his work. It is NOT fair that you blame the teachers. They had insufficient time and training and funding to deal with this. Its NOT fair you make the teachers feel as if they are doing the families and children wrong....they are NOT the ones YOU ARE! I filled out my surveys voicing my concerns AGAINST distance learning, I feel as a parent that I was NOT heard. I am sick to my stomach over this. I'd rather see an extended break till this is all done then see my son suffer and fail. I will NOT make this the death of me. If he should fail during this if distance learning remains I will expect that it will be on YOUR shoulders!

Kindly yours
Karen Troester
8086396112
erika1robyn1@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: shannon ankney <shannonankney@me.com> on behalf of shannon ankney
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools opening

Aloha,

We have always stood behind our children's teachers, but I believe it is important to now stand up for our children. They need "face to face" education. We did distance learning with patience and concern for our community and our children. We now ask the teachers to stand beside us as working parents and our children. Our numbers on Maui do not warrant this measure to continue to delay the opening of our schools and only allowing 2 days a week school with the proposed rotation schedule.

Grocery stores, home improvement stores, and many others have put up plastic and plexiglass to protect themselves around their cash registers for checkout. It would not be too difficult to put that in place around the kids' desks and the teachers desk.

Please consider allowing those parents who would like to send their kids back to school 5 days a week, to do so. Allow those parents who would like to keep their kids home for distance learning to do so -this would result in fewer students at school.

The majority of the working class parents need their kids to get a good education at school rather than being taught at home but unqualified parents.

Mahalo Nui loa
Shannon Ankney

Testimony BOE

From: Jeff Pollack <jmptravel2@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jeff Pollack
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Regarding Start up of school and masks

My name is Jeff Pollack, the parent of a 6th grader for Niu Valley.

I do believe that the planned start-up date, as the school has planned, should commence as planned, and not be delayed. It is important to proceed with the education of the children, but doing so with maximum possible safety is important.

I recommend that face masks, be made mandatory for all time on the school campus for students and teachers, unless the students and teachers need to take a drink, or during their lunch time while eating/drinking. Masks otherwise should be required to be used at all during classroom time. As long as a person is not wearing an N100 or N95 mask, a person can easily talk through other masks and be heard. Common cloth masks or hospital type masks can easily be spoken through.

Further, I recommend that for gym time, only gym classroom lectures or low intensity physical activity be done, so students can comfortably wear their masks during gym activity. The children's high intensity activity, like running, can be left for home activity, to be done with family.

Mask use is key, and of super high importance, to keeping COVID spread under control.

Aside from mask use, Niu Valley appears to have a well thought out plan for crowd control and social distancing.

So again, lets let the kids get back to school.

Mahalo for hearing input from the public,

Jeff Pollack

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lynn Otaguro
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: items III(A) and III(C) for BOE 7/30/2020 meeting

July 30, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Testimony for BOE Agenda, July 30, 2020, 1:00 p.m., items III(A) and III(C).

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I am writing because I have a daughter who is a teacher and many friends who dearly want to teach in person. I am writing because the families in our communities, including my sister who has a son in high school, are entrusting their children to the care of our schools. I ask that this Board work to ensure that all steps are taken to make our schools as safe as possible for these people that I love.

While much work has already gone into the DOE's reopening plan, the DOE and DOH need to do much more to help our schools open safely. A delay in the start of school is needed and the following should be required to help schools open more safely:

Specific guidance from the DOE and DOH. The success of school reopening will depend on the details and their implementation. The DOE and DOH must provide specific guidance to address schools' concerns such as those set forth in the July 23, 2020 testimony from the administrators of the Honokaa/Kohala/Kealakehe/Kona Complex.

DOE Training of School Personnel on COVID 19. All school staff members need training to ensure a common understanding about the disease and how it spreads, the protocols to prevent the spread of infection, and why those protocols are important. For consistency, the DOE should provide training for all the schools, just as it does annually for other subjects such as blood borne pathogens or workplace violence.

DOE/DOH Clarification and Guidance on Key Issues. The DOE and DOH must address questions and concerns on key issues, such as the operation of the "ohana bubble." My understanding is that the bubble provides protection because contact is limited to a classroom teacher and the students in the class. However, in practice, many people work with students from multiple classes and schools. Part time teachers (PTTs) help students from different classes. Educational assistants (EAs) and paraprofessional tutors (PPTs) float between different students. Speech therapists, behavioral specialists, and others work with multiple students, from different classes and schools. Teacher meetings can also jeopardize the integrity of a bubble as can substitute teachers. These issues need to be discussed to build understanding and allow schools to structure their interactions in order to mitigate risk.

Training for Online or Distance Learning. Training to enhance knowledge of the learning platforms as well as strategies to encourage student participation and engagement will help schools in the instruction of all students.

DOE Assistance with Training and Support for Parents. After schools are trained, parents should be provided with similar information about what schools are doing to deal with the risk of COVID 19. It is important that schools share health and safety protocols, the reasons for those protocols, and how families can support their child and school (by having their child wear a mask and socially distance, keeping their child home when sick or when there is a possibility of COVID 19 infection, and exercising safe practices outside of school). The DOE should provide assistance with the training to ensure consistent messaging statewide.

Schools also can use this time to provide parents with assistance and support for distance learning, and to clear up any confusion parents might have about the learning options that were offered and what each entails.

While I understand that nothing is risk free, we can work to mitigate the risks. Please help. Thank you for your commitment and work on behalf of our schools.

Sincerely,
Lynn Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Fukumoto <laurafkmt@yahoo.com> on behalf of Laura Fukumoto
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

A teacher's testimony to the BOE for the General Board Meeting (full Board) as they decide Delaying the start date of students' returning to school (August 17, 2020).

My name is Mrs. Laura Fukumoto, a 5th grade teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School. I am in support of the BOE delaying our students' returning to school until August 17, 2020.

I am a teacher who is in the high-risk category because of my age (76 years old). I love my job and am a very effective teacher. I am a Nationally Certified Teacher and have been for 16 years and was a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Education. In addition to teaching students, I am a Mentor for Beginning Teachers.

Because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, my school has tried its best to protect me as well as many other teachers who are in the high-risk category. On my grade level, two of the four 5th grade teachers are in this high-risk group (because of age); another teacher just gave birth, and she and her husband are worried that she might catch the virus and endanger her newly born infant; the fourth teacher lives with his elderly mother-in-law (who is his dependent) and is worried of infecting her. We have three 6th grade teachers – all are in the high-risk group. One for her age and underlying medical condition and the other two also with underlying medical conditions.

In order for teachers to prepare our class for our students, there is so much to do.

Physically preparing the classroom: Teachers need to redesign our classroom so desks are 6 feet apart, make enough room for at least 12 students, and yet have enough room for our teaching materials, books,

supplies, bookshelves, cubby holes, teacher's desk, equipment, etc. We need to make arrangements with our very busy custodial staff to haul away and store the rest of our furniture and chairs. In addition, I plan to have students work on our lanai outside because outside is safer than indoors. To do this I will need to clean and sterilize the concrete lanai, place 6 ft apart markers on the concrete, etc. More importantly, I need to plan how I will daily sanitize the class and high-touched areas. I will also need to figure out how to educate my students (Ss) on routines that will keep them safe and healthy in a room full of others and tantalizing things. Ss (students) must learn to habitually monitor their hands and purposely not touch their faces. These are behaviors that even teachers have not yet learned to do instinctively.

Curriculum: I need to re-examine the 5th grade Common Core Standards and think of how to condense and sequence all of these Common Core Standards in half the face to face instructional time and how to address them effectively in a virtual setting.

INSTRUCTION: This is my greatest challenge. Math, for instance requires that Ss (students) SEE math concepts and DRAW these concepts. For example, Ss need to draw $2/5 \div 5/8$. Teachers thus need to take on very visual, hands-on teaching strategies to help students these abstract concepts. I need a lot of time to re-think my instructional strategies while being 6 ft away from students – some students will be 28 feet away (near the back of the room) from me as I teach.

Because of the mask wearing, this will affect my voice and volume; I will need to purchase a mic and learn to use it effectively. I will also need to purchase a camera that can project my demonstrations of using manipulatives to teach abstract concepts more visually. Half of the time teachers will be teaching on-line. This is a new way of teaching, and we will need time to learn how to effectively do this and learn new on-line strategies.

Because this pandemic will change how we relate with our students, how we structure the class physically, how we teach Ss face to face as well as

virtually, how we keep the entire classroom sanitized, how to protect each child from giving or getting the virus, and how to keep ourselves safe, healthy, encouraged, determined – and how to keep our students safe, healthy, encouraged, determined, and feel successful.

To be successful and behave smarter than a very tricky virus, we will need more time to plan, design, and execute a safe environment - time to redesign new strategies that will effectively help Ss learn in this new “classroom.” More importantly, we need time to guarantee that we can STOP this pandemic from hurting our students, our colleagues, and ourselves.

Testimony BOE

From: Noelani Kauahikaua <cchow78@gmail.com> on behalf of Noelani Kauahikaua
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:24 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Meeting: [July 30, 2020 Special Meeting \(Virtual\)](#)

III. Action Items

- A. [Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools](#) **New material added 07/28/2020 at 1:20 p.m.**
- B. [Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar](#) **New material added 07/28/2020 at 1:20 p.m.**
- C. [Board Action on Board expectations regarding: \(1\) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; \(2\) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; \(3\) mandating masks on public school campuses; and \(4\) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health](#) **New material added 07/28/2020 at 1:20 p.m.**

Aloha mai kāua,

In the best interest of balancing student and teacher health and safety, I support action items IIIA, IIIB, IIIC. I am deeply concerned that IIIC(2) is not an option for Kaiapuni students. We do not have an "off the shelf" distance learning curriculum and therefore if Kaiapuni 'ohana choose to opt-out of face-to-face instruction, they will either have to homeschool or switch to English medium of instruction for distance learning. I would like to see more efforts made by the state to increase the number of Kaiapuni teachers, Kaiapuni distance curriculum and supports for Kaiapuni education in general.

--Christine Kauahikaua

Secretary - Hui Makua o Pū'ōhala (Kaiapuni Parent Group of Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala)
Parent of student at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo

Testimony BOE

From: Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com> on behalf of Brandon Cha
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:25 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: July 30 TESTIMONY.docx; 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

Please see the attached documents for my testimony. Thank you.

--

- Brandon

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I would like to testify on all 3 agenda items at the special Board of Education meeting on July 30th and ask you to approve all 3 agenda items.

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 science teacher at Pearl City High School, and I live with a family member who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19.

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 the work that the DOE has made in recent joint meetings with the public sector unions to come to fruition by the Board's acceptance of these recommendations.

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 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.

I would like to suggest the attached phased planning document for your consideration as well.

Thank you very much.



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Testimony BOE

From: Shelby Loo <shelby_loo@wmpccs.org> on behalf of Shelby Loo
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

Mahalo for listening to the concerns expressed by many tied to your Board of Education meeting agenda items last week and agreeing to meet again this week to address and determine next steps for many of those concerns.

I am grateful for the very thoughtful and thorough testimony submitted by the partnership of my union, HSTA, and HGEA and UPW.

I am focusing my testimony, this week, specifically on Action Item A, which is Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-21 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness of schools. I am grateful with the suggested extension of delaying students return to campus till August 17th, but feel that instead of setting a date, the things that our union requested, especially in regard to the things we are asking for from the Department of Health and a plan for addressing potential staff and substitute shortage problems be addressed. I don't quite understand why we would set a date rather than make sure that all of the things required to safely open our schools are in place?

Thank you for your attention to all of the critical decisions ahead of you.

Shelby Loo

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Shelby Loo
6th Grade Mathematics Teacher, NBCT
6th Grade Level Chair
Waimea Middle PCCS
Phone: (808) 887-6090
Fax: (808) 887-6087



Waimea Middle School
Pa'ahana - That's My Tradition

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Testimony BOE

From: Mike Landes <jmlandes@gmail.com> on behalf of Mike Landes
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 meeting

Aloha Board members,

I'd like to start by thanking you for hearing and responding to the overwhelming amount of testimony at your July 23 meeting. The outpouring of stories, concerns, and questions from teachers, administrators, support staff, students, parents, and community members speaks volumes. Having listened to and read that testimony, it is painfully clear that our schools are not ready to reopen for in-person instruction, and that they should not reopen until they can do so safely. Health and safety, we've been told, is the number one priority of the DOE and DOH. The people have spoken, and they agree: we must preserve the health and safety of our children and our educators. Now, we leave it to you, our Board of Education, to make sure the DOE holds firm to the agreements they've made, to make sure they actually follow through on that number one priority: health and safety.

I met the superintendent about six months ago when we were both at the state capitol to speak with lawmakers about the need for properly funding our schools, including measures to more appropriately recruit and retain teachers. After speaking with her, I was heartened to have an advocate and an ally as the leader of our DOE, and I was proud to stand alongside her in support of what we know our schools and our educators need. Now, however, I am disappointed.

The superintendent seems to be borrowing a page out of the Trump-Devos playbook, something that flies directly in the face of common sense (and mainstream opinion here in our islands). Her video message and email to all DOE employees were not well-taken. The message she made clear was that educators are chickens and cowards, who are selfish and unwilling to sacrifice their very lives so children could be babysat. It was intimidation and bullying, and I would think many educators would report such behavior per the directives of the start-of-school-year compliance videos...except, I guess the reports would ultimately go to her.... Educators are not United States Marines. School employees did not sign up to risk their lives or the lives of their family members. Parents did not sign up to risk the lives of their children. Children did not sign up to be guinea pigs in a cruel experiment with fate.

The superintendent says you have not heard adequately from parents. We are parents. My children are two of the public school students you are responsible for. Please, do not wear their blood on your hands. Please delay in-person instruction for students until it is safe to reopen school buildings. Our schools need statewide plans and protocols for all of the health and safety concerns...not this half-baked idea of each school individually figuring out their own procedures. The virus doesn't care whether my children's schools come up with an A/B rotation or an A/B/C rotation, and it doesn't care whether my children's principals believe in science or not. It kills indiscriminately. Leaving these life-and-death decisions up to individual schools is a roll of the dice we cannot afford. We need a comprehensive statewide plan and protocols that all schools, all employees, and all students must follow to ensure that number one priority: health and safety.

Nobody is saying schools shouldn't resume instruction. Please. My children need the education and socialization they get from school. But, that cannot come at the expense of their health and safety. I implore you, please force the superintendent and DOE to comply with the MOU, and to follow through with statewide plans and protocols. If they do, schools should be able to reopen safely. If they don't, schools should not reopen for in-person instruction, period. Students can always get distance/virtual instruction from their

teachers, and this time around, the DOE can make attendance and participation mandatory. While it's not perfect, it's a whole lot better than having funerals for our keiki, our educators, and their family members. It would be far better for our children to learn remotely to keep them healthy and safe, than it would be for them to have to learn remotely because some of their classmates infected their friends, their teachers, and their community.

If you were serious when you said that health and safety was the number one priority, then you must delay the reopening of school buildings for in-person instruction until it is 100% safe to do so. Anything else would be putting our children's, our educators', and our community members' lives at risk.

- Mike Landes
Kihei, Maui

Testimony BOE

From: katielrobinson10@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

I have previously written in testimony to share my thoughts and personal experience with the reopening of schools. With the recent news of the likely decision to delay the school year, I would urge you to truly listen to what community members are asking. Although the delay of the first day of students returning to school would help teachers and schools prepare for our upcoming year, there are many issues that still have gone ignored. The reopening of schools needs to be phased in. With the cases at their highest, it does not make sense to reopen face-to-face learning even with the delay of two weeks. The start of 2020-2021 school year needs to be down in distance learning mode! This is the safest way to ensure our keiki and school staff are safe and healthy! As a special education teacher, YES, I do want to return to school and be with my students, but when the time is right. I am in shock that schools are even considering reopening to students. We closed the schools when numbers were lower; it is incredibly dangerous to open them back up when the numbers are hitting new records everyday! We are still not equipped with proper PPE for each and every classroom. We still are not prepared with proper scheduling and guidance for safety in schools. We still have so many questions and concerns that have gone unheard.

We need to start the school year with distance learning. We need stronger health procedures and health screenings at schools. We need procedures for what happens when a member of our schools community gets sick. We need PPE.

Mahalo,
Katie Robinson
Third Grade Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Lester Rivera <rivalrg@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Lester Rivera
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:31 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Mandating Masks in Schools

Aloha BOE,

I'm testifying in support of mandating masks and/or face shields on public school campuses to protect students and adults in the school. Mandating some type of face covering will send a message to families that schools are trying their best to keep their families from getting seriously sick or experience mortality from COVID-19. Some states are experiencing an increase in children hospitalization and infection, please refer to the following current articles:

[7,572 school-age children diagnosed with COVID-19 in Tennessee, new data shows](#)
[Child hospitalizations from Covid-19 surge 23% in Florida as schools statewide must reopen](#)
[About 1.5 Million Teachers \(1 in 4\) are at Higher Risk of Serious Illness From COVID-19](#)

Everyone wearing masks and face shields decreases risk of infection, please consider that we are not only protecting students and school staff, but also families of each school community. If students and school staff don't get infected at school, then the family of the student and school staff will not get infected at home. Please make the decisions to ensure that we did all that we could to protect families from COVID-19 by providing a safe learning environment for our keiki. I've heard the perspective that the risk of infection is minimal, but we can all agree that one lost life is too many, when not everything that could be done wasn't done.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts.

Lester Rivera
Elementary School Teacher
Keonepoko Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara <pkstonefield@ymail.com> on behalf of Patricia (MM) and Keith Ishihara
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony (July 30, 2020)

30 July 2020

Keith Ishihara: Current public school teacher, HIDOE (24 years)
Patricia Ishihara: Current public school teacher, HIDOE (29 years)
General Business Meeting
Agenda item III-A & C
OPPOSE (opening on August 4) / Comment

We are testifying on Agenda Action III-A ("Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools") and III-C ("(1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health).

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Keith Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 24 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending a Hawaii public school.

My name is Patricia Ishihara and I am a Hawaii public school teacher of 29 years, a concerned citizen, and a parent of a 15-year old child attending a Hawaii public school.

We are both in what is considered an "at-risk category". Regardless of safety measures in place, there is still no guarantee of complete protection. We care for two elderly parents in our home, and one elderly parent who lives elsewhere. We do NOT want to transmit anything to them since they are in a "high-risk category".

Reported statistics:

- 47 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 28, 2020
- 28 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 27, 2020 (lower only because labs were closed due to Hurricane Douglas)
- 64 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 26, 2020
- 73 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 25, 2020
- 60 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 24, 2020
- 55 new COVID-19 cases reported on July 23, 2020

Dr. Scott Miscovich: <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/video/2020/07/24/dr-miscovich-discusses-covid-clusters-schools-reopening/> (starting at 3:25) "I strongly concur that they should delay past August 4 ... such randomness in the spread that even the contact tracers can't figure that out ... if we get this into our schools it's going to spread back into the homes and into the communities and then could spread

out to our senior citizens ... I don't buy the argument that all the children are healthy, that if they get it it's not a problem ... it's about them spreading it to other family members and seniors in multi-generational homes, so I definitely believe we should not be opening schools right now."

Lt. Governor Josh Green: <https://www.khon2.com/coronavirus/lt-gov-says-doh-owes-teachers-more-planning/>

"There is not a plan ... that's not adequate ... 180,000 young people with 13,000 educators ... there's going to be spread ... some of them (teachers) are vulnerable, some have chronic disease, some are seniors."

Both of them are medical professionals. What they say should be taken very seriously.

As classroom teachers, we know first-hand what it is like to be on the "front lines." When the schools closed for 4th Quarter 2019-2020, Keith's department still worked hard to provide enrichment activities for our students online without much extra technology training. When summer break started, taking care of family and three elderly kupuna was our family's priority, while trying to have some semblance of a Summer Break. Keith taught a 2-week math enrichment online course, with limited training and technical support (no fault of the school because they had to work with what they had and it was summer break). It was a high learning curve (even though Keith considers himself to be somewhat knowledgeable with technology), and it was a struggle by himself to juggle all components of distance learning. And he was not teaching actual curriculum; it was enrichment. So now teachers have to teach actual content curriculum, a whole year's (or semester's) worth with only two days to plan? Student performance will be graded, so how do teachers communicate all the details to students and their parents?

By our contract, teachers get four days of preparation before students report. Two of those days are Administration days, and the other two are teacher work days. With this pandemic and many teachers on summer break, how are four days adequate in order to prepare to teach students in a new and different way?

Curriculum and distance learning aside, what about COVID-19 preparedness measures in the schools? We all know it is also a high learning curve for everyone, especially teachers who have been on Summer Break. Planning for the new school year is not the same as planning was for 4th Quarter of last school year. School personnel are not medical professionals. Adequate time is needed to learn everything that is important to safely accept students back on campus and maintain safety protocols. Teachers cannot learn and be expected to be able to practice this with only two days of preparation. And as teachers and parents know, making sure children, pre-teens, and teenagers comply is not an easy task. Especially when you have a group of them together in one class. Teachers need time to set up their classrooms with all the possible PPE they can get, and to be informed of the necessary protocols for the various situations that may occur.

We suggest a tiered or phased approach to opening our schools:

Outline of the Phase plan:

Phase 1: Training and Preparation - at least 4 weeks

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Planning time for teachers to deliver curriculum in various forms of blended/hybrid schedules
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Start ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies

- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: No Contact

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- Training for parents on use of technology and distance/blended/hybrid learning expectations
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: Minimal Contact

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: New Education Model

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon ALL stakeholders and based only on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable (just as in SMART goals, M = Measurable).

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

Comments regarding the Phase plan

Phase 1: Give teachers and other school personnel time to set up classrooms, learn about new health and safety protocols, prepare for students' return, redesign curriculum instruction for distance learning, and have professional development. We propose that **AT LEAST 4 weeks from July 29 - AT LEAST until August 25** will give us a better chance at doing what's right for our students. **We do not agree with the August 17 start date that was proposed on July 27.** We are literally redesigning an educational instructional model, which includes preparing physical spaces (e.g., classrooms) for safety, planning for learning experiences which need to incorporate strong virtual delivery, and train for the use of digital media. The proposed nine extra preparation days will also be taken up with various meetings (which is expected), so more time for actual hands-on preparation is critical (i.e., teachers won't have nine full work days to get ready for all the issues mentioned in the first sentence). In one of Superintendent Kishimoto's earlier memos, she asked us to be innovative in delivering essentials, as funding would become an issue. We are being asked to deliver our curriculum without materials that we would normally have, with the added layer of having to plan for virtual delivery. This takes collaboration and lots of time (more than two work days, and more than partial of nine additional work days).

Phase 2: Allow educators to meet the students and their families, either virtually or in-person. In addition to using the time to explain the new health protocols, this stage will be used for social emotional wellness checks, basic needs assessments, an evaluation of technology needs and reconnecting with students, families and school communities. Instruction would then begin about August 25 or when it is absolutely safe — 100% remotely. Academic curriculum should be informed by what students need and by what will engage them and

should be created by ground-level educators. Business-as-usual instructional approaches — organized around 'covering the curriculum,' test prep and test administration — must be avoided, as these will distract from real learning, cause unneeded stress, and produce meaningless results in the case of standardized tests (which is mandated by HIDOE to be completed within the first two weeks of schools - per Return to Learn: Principal's Handbook Page 16).

Phase 3: An assessment of educational progress and public health could possibly take place four to eight weeks after school starts. In this phase, schools will decide whether to continue as planned or change course

- If safety protocols have been shown to work and the number of cases in the community have decreased dramatically, then we can start hybrid learning (combination of face-to-face and remote instruction).
- When it is deemed completely safe (pending further health and safety guidance), all students will return to in-person instruction (but with a remote option).

Phase 4: As described in the outline above.

This delay to plan, prepare, and then start also gives school personnel adequate time to look into and apply for options of leave and reasonable accommodations from ADA guidelines.

With all of these factors in mind, **we both request that a start date of NO SOONER THAN August 25 should be chosen (later, if it is deemed necessary for the safety of the community)**. Please remember that teachers were on summer break. They were not expected to work to prepare for the upcoming school year for technology and COVID-19 issues. Many were taking care of their own families and elderly kupuna (like us). Please take that into great consideration when deciding on the opening school date.

Regarding PPE: Everyone who is in a school should be required to wear and mask. It is better than no protection at all. Masks protect others. At-risk and high-risk personnel (and students) need protection. For people who have hardships wearing masks for long periods of time, a thorough and well-established plan should be in place for them and for educators who have to deal with such possible instances when they arise. Please also remember that teachers have to make quick decisions due to the unpredictable nature of their job. Having as much support will help them. Schools are not like businesses that DO have access to PPE and other supplies. Teachers should not have to purchase supplies like plastic, plexiglass, PVC pipes, masks, shields, etc. on their own (which is what some are doing, check social media).

Regarding Department of Health Plan: While the Department of Health and Education say that a plan is in place, every single educator is not ready to learn it within two days. School administrators need much more time to educate and train their faculty and staff on this plan. Learning takes time (as we all say for students). It is not any different for adults. We can't be expected to learn and be experts in something with one or two days of "training." Asking for detailed, written, publicly posted guidance is just a start. EVERYONE (not just educators and school personnel) needs to know exactly what those plans are and what will be done to prevent and (hopefully not) attend to any cases that do occur on campus.

These are important points that we are asking for:

- Benchmarks based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system

- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (will NOT be the same as 4th quarter or 2019-2020 school year)
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- Disinfecting protocols must be better for teachers' classrooms in between classes
- All students deserve a real teacher if learning from home, not just a program
- School nurses should be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community needs to be launched

After the 7/23/20 BOE meeting, Superintendent Kishimoto claimed, "All schools have what they need to reopen safely." That is FALSE.

13,000+ teachers are part of "schools." 13,000+ teachers were on Summer break. 13,000+ teachers have only four days until students report (if they report on August 4). That is NOT enough time to get ready for anything except a normal, non-pandemic school year (and I could make a case for that situation too, but I digress). It is NOT enough time to plan, prepare, and be ready for safety, classroom, curriculum, technology, discipline, etc. and each and every procedure that has to be altered to fit the new model of instruction caused by this pandemic.

Everyone on Oahu can seek financial aid for child/kupuna care and other bills if schools open later with programs such as this if delaying school openings is a concern/hardship (and these hardships should not be solved only by the schools):

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/24/hawaii-news/kokua-line/kokua-line-eligible-oahu-households-hurt-by-pandemic-may-seek-2500-a-month-to-pay-for-child-care-other-bills/> ("Eligible Oahu households hurt by pandemic may seek \$2,500 a month to pay for child care, other bills")

Educators are expected to be innovative when planning instruction for students. This should be true for everyone else who are instrumental in educating our keiki. Here is a plan that we found online that seems innovative. Why couldn't something like this have been discussed and thought of (and be transparent to the public if it was discussed and rejected): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/opinion/coronavirus-reopen-schools-economy.html> ("How to Reopen the Economy Without Killing Teachers and Parents: All classes should be online, but school buildings could still serve an important purpose for the kids who need them most")

We 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-19 in our state (which has been the case in the past several days), 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. We, as teachers, are disheartened to hear us as being "a test case" for the rest of the nation. Children may not get sick or critically ill, but they can be asymptomatic carriers that infect adults (especially at-risk adults like us) on campus. And then those educators' families will be put at risk too, especially if they care for

kupuna (like we do). We do not want to be in the situation where we get the virus **at all**. Regardless of how many medical facilities we have. COVID-19 is not curable! Who knows what will happen to any one person who contracts it? We do not want to take that chance since we (and our kupuna that we take care of) are at-risk. Even Dr. Bruce Anderson said at the most recent Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 hearing that we will probably have transmission in schools! It is a cavalier attitude by anyone who believes that statement AND still wants schools to open that disregards any adult educator's health who is at-risk and high-risk (30-40% of educators) and our students. As we mentioned in our last testimony, there are not many viable options except leave of absence and filing a claim with Civil Rights Compliance Branch using ADA Guidelines (the latter which is not guaranteed and can be rejected by CRCB and/or Employer). Any leave of absence will affect the Employer (rescheduling positions, finding and training substitute teachers, etc.) and they could reject our claim for "undue hardship."

Finally, since we are in the at-risk category, here is AARP's view on this: <https://www.aarp.org/work/working-at-50-plus/info-2020/teachers-coronavirus-risk.html> ("1 in 4 U.S. Teachers at Risk of Severe Illness from Coronavirus COVID-19 complications a heightened threat for nearly 1.5 million educators"). We don't want to return to the classroom until it is 100% safe.

We have to care for **ALL** people, not just a select few. Government is "for *the people*."

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

Best regards,
Keith and Patricia Ishihara
Pearl City

Testimony BOE

From: Alicia Alcaraz <berthaaa2018@gmail.com> on behalf of Alicia Alcaraz
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: July 30, 2020 Special Meeting

Aloha,

My name is Bertha Alcaraz, I am a school counselor at Keaau Elementary. I am testifying on Meeting Agenda item 3: Board Action on Board expectations regarding, section (3) mandating masks on public school campuses.

If schools are forced to reopen; face coverings should be mandatory for everyone to wear (students, staff, visitors, etc...) while in or out of the classrooms. According to the CDC, coronavirus is more likely to spread when indoors, such as a classroom, as aerosols can be emitted through talking, breathing, laughing, coughing, or sneezing. The aerosolized coronavirus can remain in the air for up to three hours and survive on plastic and stainless steel up to 2-3 days (Harvard Medical School, "COVID-19 basics: Symptoms, spread and other essential information about the new coronavirus and COVID-19", 7/10/20, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-basics>). In addition, COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can be spread by people who do not know they have the disease (Harvard Medical School, "COVID-19 basics: Symptoms, spread and other essential information about the new coronavirus and COVID-19", 7/10/20, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-basics>).

Dr. Eli Perencevich, an infectious disease physician and professor of internal medicine and epidemiology at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, states that face shields can be used in lieu of masks, as face shields block aerosol droplets. The research concluded that face shields reduced exposure to inhaling cough droplets by 96 percent. Thus, students and adults should be mandated by HDOE to wear face-covering at all times, either a face mask, face shields, or the option of wearing both, to show that "The health and safety of our students and staff remains a top priority" (HDOE).

Schools where masks are mandatory have had fewer virus outbreaks than schools that are relaxed on mask-wearing requirements. "China, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam all safely re-opened schools after reducing the rate of infection in the community. All four countries required near-universal mask wearing on campus...Israel sees rise in campus infection Israel reopened schools last spring with a variety of protections, including use of masks and frequent testing...In roughly two months, they found infections among 503 students and 167 staff after temporary closures of 355 schools...Several of those outbreaks occurred after school officials relaxed mask-wearing requirements after sweltering hot weather made the masks uncomfortable" (Aleshire, p. "Studies look at the risks of reopening schools", 2020, https://www.paysonroundup.com/covid-19/studies-look-at-the-risks-of-reopening-schools/article_d315bac5-6290-5d8f-b815-ccf6db61b42e.html)

There are different beliefs in our community regarding wearing a face covering. The DOE has given teachers the authority to direct students to wear an enforce face-covering, however a teacher's belief will influence whether the teacher, a keiki and/or the whole class will be instructed to wear a face-covering. Teachers have the best intentions at heart and mean no harm, but a teacher's belief, that the virus is not as bad as the media makes it seem may put everyone's life in danger when they choose not to wear a face-covering in the classroom and choose not to have their students wear a

face-covering either.

I'm pleading for face-covering to be mandatory for all, in and out of the classrooms, face shields can be worn by individuals who waive wearing a mask due to health conditions. As those individuals will emit aerosols through talking, breathing, laughing, coughing, or sneezing.

Families are putting their keiki and the community in our hands, this is a huge responsibility. It's better to be safe than sorry. It's better to say, I over-prepared than to say, I should have done more.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and for helping to make a difference in our community.
Bertha Alcaraz

Testimony BOE

From: Britney Carey <b14eeyore@gmail.com> on behalf of Britney Carey
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I am submitting this testimony in favor of Agenda Item III, Action Items A, B, and C.

I support postponing the start of the student school year to Monday, Aug. 17, with full instructional days beginning on that date. These days are necessary to ensure that all employees receive proper training, are issued necessary personal protective equipment, and have adequate time to prepare for students' return to campus. Claims made about training of staff have not been based in truth. No teachers (or any DOE employees) I know have had any official training from the DOE this summer. Furthermore, staff at my school have been told that sanitizing supplies are on back order; we will most likely not have these kinds of supplies (beyond what we bring from home) by August 4. We are not prepared to receive students on that date.

I also support waiving nine instructional days from the 180-day school year as well as the 1,080 student instructional hours for school year 2020-21. Unless, of course, teachers and staff receive compensation for any extension of the school year.

Although I would prefer to be in my classroom with my students under normal circumstances, these are not normal circumstances and we must stop pretending they are. It is very likely that school buildings and/or entire campuses will have to be closed down by the due to COVID-19 at some point. HIDOE and DOH must provide comprehensive state-level written guidance regarding the potential shutdown of classrooms, buildings campuses, and/or entire complex areas and how the continuation of educational services via a full distance learning mode will occur.

- Minimum procedures for health check screening of employees, students and campus visitors;
- Procedures to address employees, students or campus visitors who become sick on a campus or show signs of illness; Health room and isolation room procedures;
- How schools will handle incoming new students, especially new military students who are not subject to the 14-day quarantine order;
- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for various personnel;
- Procedures to support any contact tracing that will need to occur related to COVID-19;
- Proper physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting protocols in line with CDC guidelines.

If efforts had been focused on making such a plan, rather than on dragging feet and shaming employees, we would be much closer to being able to open safely than we are now. Please help us to reopen in the safest manner possible.

Thank you,

Britney Carey

Testimony BOE

From: Lauralee Baoy <lauraleebaoy@hotmail.com> on behalf of Lauralee Baoy
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:37 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay start date of public schools

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I support the idea to delay the start date of youth back to school. I feel that the extra time will help school staff become familiar with new policies and procedures that will be implemented in order to keep students and Staff safe amidst COVID-19.

Having students return back to school without sufficient supplies (personal protective equipment and other supplies such as hand sanitizer) already on hand in every classroom/office/shared facility is ludicrous and puts staff and students in an unsafe situation. Our students and school staff deserve better than that.

Aside from familiarizing Staff with policies and procedures, the extra time will help teachers have more time to collaborate and prepare curriculum, especially if they will be implementing online learning platforms with their students.

Please delay the start date of public schools.

Concerned Hawaii citizen,
Lauralee Baoy
P.O. Box 8670
Honolulu, HI 96830

Testimony BOE

From: Jasmine Zendar <jasminezendar@gmail.com> on behalf of Jasmine Zendar
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:47 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha All,

My name is Lani Powers, I am the parent of 10th grader with a compromised immune system. Almost every year, my son has managed to successfully bring home to my multi-generational household some kind of cough or cold/flu and, the occasional dreaded “ukus” ...regardless of how many different preventative medicines or vaccinations we have both taken. I am extremely concerned about sending my son to school given the current state of this worldwide epidemic. Before I continue my testimony, in support of the urging the DOE to implement the suggested 4 phased plan...I’d like to suggest this food for thought by way of a powerful quote we can all agree upon by Mahatma Ghandi:

Gandhi says “It is Health that is the real Wealth, and not pieces of silver and gold”.

As parents, our job is to be our children’s advocates, to protect and represent their best interests above our own.

I would like to urge the BOE to implement the 4 phased plan to the 2020-2021 school year, based upon benchmarks met with reliable science, and not, pre-scheduled dates. As I parent, I need the guarantee that my child will be in a safe learning environment where he will not contract Covid-19, and spread it into my home and community. Personally, with all due respect, I would like to have a distance learning option available to me for the rest of the school year, with the ability to have specialized in-depth classes with a real time teacher. Sending my child to school during these uncertain times poses too great of a risk for my son and for my entire family’s health.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and listening.

HAWAI'I FOR A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOLS



4 PHA

2020-2021 REOPENING

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the current school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. This plan, without the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce c

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online learning
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to safety

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, and social distancing
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

--

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Testimony BOE

From: Krislyn Cha <krislyn.cha@gmail.com> on behalf of Krislyn Cha
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: Testimony.docx

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this testimony as an extremely concerned community member and daughter/sister of two teachers (one high-risk elementary school E.A. – educational assistant – and one high school teacher). To begin with, the management and communication displayed by **Superintendent Kishimoto** and the HIDOE has been absolutely disgraceful and disappointing. Students returning to school for full time face-to-face learning is an asinine decision and the fact that Superintendent Kishimoto keeps pushing for this option shows her lack of concern safety for the children and faculty of Hawaii. Yes, she (along with the HIDOE) announced that schools will be pushed back another nine days to allow for teachers to “prep”, but teachers and faculty are “prepping” for the wrong things. Teachers should be learning how to begin and implement distance learning for the remainder of the school year until a vaccine has been developed.

How can teachers prepare for distance learning? I think the proposed **FOUR-PHASE APPROACH** should be adopted and practiced by all schools to ensure that students can continue their education without putting themselves, teachers/faculty, and loved ones at risk. There are other factors that need to be addressed as well in order to successfully shift to a distance-learning system: (1) educating parents about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher). All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place at home (not just by an educational program). (2) Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community. (3) Educating/giving parents training for online programs to help their children navigate the system(s); and so much more.

Teachers WANT to get back in the classroom and to see their students, but it must be done in a safe and well-thought out manner. Why not have the students who are physically and mentally able to distance-learn, learn from home, and the students who aren't capable, come to school. This way, the number of students who need to physically be at school is cut down dramatically, lowering the spread of COVID. Suddenly throwing teachers, faculty, and students back into a school setting with no proper training, direction, or back-up plan is just out right irresponsible and a demonstration of lack of leadership (everything that Superintendent Kishimoto is displaying right now).

In my opinion, I think that Superintendent Kishimoto should be fired and replaced with someone who has the best interest of the students AND SCHOOL FACULTY at heart; and not just wanting to get the students back in the classroom so that parents can return to work and reboot the economy.

This is the outline of the **FOUR-PHASE APPROACH PLAN** in detail. Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from one phase to the next:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on scientific findings.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Failure to meet benchmarks in current phase will trigger a return to the previous phase.

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Lee <danaklee@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony July 30, 2020

July 30, 2020

TO: The Honorable Catherine Payne Chairperson, Board of Education

FROM: Dana Lee, Waiiau Elementary Parent

SUBJECT: Change to School Calendar - Oppose; Delaying Students' First Start Date - Oppose, Distance Learning - Submit for Consideration

I am going to humbly admit right upfront that I was wrong. A week ago I commented in a survey to my children's principal that I believed sending my children back to school in person would be best for their health and well-being. But after months of sleepless nights, being torn between options, and trying to convince myself to decide already one way or the other, I have finally come to the conclusion that I was indeed wrong.

I was wrong to apply the current data to a situation that has not yet happened. In the few months that the CDC has compiled and analyzed covid-19 data, it could be argued that even though school-aged children, from 5-17 years old, appear to have optimal rates in all categories against the covid-19 virus, they were also primarily sheltered and not attending school. Will those same low rates prevail as schools reopen and added stressors are applied to the child? Indeed, regular school has not yet begun and the scientific data can not be had until the children are actually put to the test in a school scenario.

I was wrong to assume that in the more than 4 months that school has been in recess, well-formed and accessible covid-19 student and school related policies would now be in place at the Dept of Health, the Dept of Education, and at our school. At 6 days prior to the originally planned start date of school, I am still wondering what happens when a student tests positive for covid-19? Will all students go into 14-day quarantine? Will the entire school go into quarantine? When will the parents be notified? What happens when a teacher tests positive? What happens when a student's parent or in house relative tests positive? How will community spread rates affect school? What should the maximum number of students per class be to minimize exposure risk? How many times and after what cadre of students will the common bathrooms be disinfected? What is the covid-19 room ventilation policy? What covid-19 training will the teachers, subs, A+ personnel, lunchroom personnel, custodians, school staff, and students receive or be required to do? The list continues.

And in the turmoil of discussions being had, here we sit in the safety of our homes, offices, or socially distant safe spots, attending a virtual board meeting that is to decide when and how it is safe for thousands of children and adults to meet face to face at school. A board composed of intelligent adults capable of properly wearing face masks, capable of maintaining 6ft distances, capable of self-assessments to know when to stay home from work, yet who continue to choose to meet virtually instead of in person. A board composed of those who are arguably no higher in risk category than any of the hundreds of teachers, parents, and student households, yet who choose to avoid meetings in person.

How can you ask of children what you yourselves would rather not do? My children are 5 and 7. They will not be able to properly wear a mask let alone wear one for 6-8 hours per day, they will find a way to be close to their friends and break social distancing rules whenever possible, and they will do whatever their parents tell

them to do even if that means attending school when they don't feel well. You are asking our children to be the guinea pigs that will either confirm or disprove what little data we have to go on. Despite my desire to have my children attend face to face learning in a school environment and professing to the school principal that I would do whatever I could to help achieve that goal, I was wrong.

However, it is not too late to make a correction. I think it can be agreed that there will not be enough exposure, hospitalization, and mortality data specific to the attendance of children in schools known by the newly proposed start date of August 17th. Will there be clear and accessible policies and guidance in place by August 17th and what school specific covid-19 data will these policies be guided by? I am reluctant to hold my breath for the answers. Hawaii's choice will be an example for all no matter what is decided. With covid-19 cases on the rise not only locally but nationwide and in the absence of years of data and research guiding our decisions, let Hawaii's choice first be the safest choice for our children and school personnel. And let it be an example that proves that children can thrive through distance learning. The claim that the DOE is not set up as a distance learning institution could have been everyone's argument pre-pandemic yet many businesses, governments, families, yourselves, all went virtual and improved in many ways. It can be done and done well when we are allowed to focus on the one task, without the fear of falling ill. With the circumstances we face today, I ask you to reconsider your positions and make a commitment to switch from in-person to all distance learning, beginning on August 4th, for our children on O'ahu, for the next semester, at which time the situation can be re-evaluated.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Lee, Waiiau Elementary Parent

C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode, i.e. “where the teacher delivers instruction virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote medium.”

Aloha e Chair Payne and members of the Board,

I am testifying in support of starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode (Phase 2 of the Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools Plan) at least on the islands with the highest COVID spread. The focus of the training at the beginning of this school year should be preparing educators with recent technology skills, to provide higher quality Distance Learning.

Our Department should have ample data and resources to guide schools and teachers. In Spring 2020, during Quarter 4's extended closures, every school collected data on the efficacy of this model for “enrichment only.” Based on this two and a half month experience, our DOE could have been planning to provide more equitable access to an appropriate device and an adequate internet connection, both of which are necessary for virtual or online distance learning.

Please consider the IMPLEMENTATION that has not yet taken place sufficiently from your June 18, 2020 Board School Reopening Resolution, especially:

- i. Testing distance learning systems and procedures before they are needed.
- f. Specific school-level strategies for, in the event of school closures and a return to distance learning, supporting teachers with managing class assignments, content, and assessments delivered remotely, including strategies and protocols for providing backup support for teachers who are themselves caring for children or elderly parents or who are sick themselves and cannot be as attentive to their jobs;
- g. Specific school-level strategies for providing technical support for students, families, teachers, and administrators in distance learning contexts;
- h. Developing plans for instructional models that allow parents and guardians to continue their children's education while keeping them at home.

Rather than simply defaulting only to purchase off-island canned videos to supplant our licensed teachers, we should be developing greater capacity on-island. Especially for our place and culture-based Hawai'iian-related social studies, we should be creating our own courses on open source software and resources. Local sources available to support this include Kamehameha Schools, Ulukau, and our Hawaiian Charter School Network (HCSN). Nowhere else in the world are people more qualified in regard to Hawaiian language and culture. Can you imagine the savings from extending this to model no longer buying paper ELA/Math workbooks, which are pedagogically poor anyway?

HOW can our Department leverage its expertise to support better quality distance learning? Our Department has been preparing over a decade for Schools of the Future (SOTF), which is NOW. Within the Extended Learning Branch, [the DOE Digital](#)

Design Team “Provides guidance on the implementation and integration of media, information, and technology literacy tools that support student engagement and achievement.” The DOE Digital Design Team can help us Extend Learning.

Hawaii has decades of developing its digital/distance learning capacity. In October 1994 the [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) announced the award of a grant of \$2.1 million to the University of Hawaii to fund the Hawaii Education & Research Network (HERN). <http://www.hawaii.edu/henc/page5.html> Other media initiatives have developed into long-term partnerships, such as PBS's **Hiki No**. Our youth benefit from developing digital literacy skills, particularly in this century of “fake news” and social media.

Hawaii has had visionary technology leadership under Dr. Phil Bossert, now with HAIIS yet partnering with the DOE for SOTF. With Julie Tomomitsu coordinating, we trained in phases of Telecom & Technology for Teachers (T3). I am just a tiny cog in a vaster organization, yet I can testify to the impact our technology leadership has had. The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) trained us to teach TLCF Boot Camp. As a Technology Coordinator, I used e-rate to wire our Waimea Elementary and Intermediate School campus for the internet, taught TLCF classes, and participated in NETS Standards Development. We have many well-qualified innovators to leverage in support of hybrid and distance learning needed during this pandemic.

We are approaching the quarter-century mark for Hawaii's *supplementary* electronic school (e-school), <https://sites.google.com/hawaiidoe.k12.hi.us/e-school/home>. Around 1994-1995, the primary grant-writer coordinated committees to contribute in the grant-writing process for a 1996 USDOE Technology Innovation Challenge Grant. I participated in this process, and during my 1996-7 sabbatical I taught in e-school. Part of this TICG grant was to develop Hawaii's expertise for supporting distance learning models. Grant funds were used to develop almost 50 high school ACCN (Approved Course Code Number – Carnegie) credit courses. A number of the courses were developed in collaboration with University of Hawai'i professors. From 1999 – 2001, these courses have undergone rigorous evaluation by a team of five national distance learning experts.

In August 2002, Hawaii's E-Charter changed its name formally to Myron B. MBTA (MBTA), <https://www.mbta.me/about>. Instead of totally relying on E-School courses, during the first two years, MBTA decided to utilize two additional curriculum providers, Class.Com and APEX Learning. “With the rapid pace of advancements in technology, MBTA will provide Hawaii's children with quality education and skills to prepare them for the digital workforce.” MTBA is an online secondary and home-based elementary school that provides standards-based instruction to students on Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Maui and Hawai'i. MTBA colleagues and retirees have expertise which can assist other DOE schools with their distance learning programs. This is another example of DOE capacity.

Now that we have migrated our staff into Google e-mail, more teachers have had some experience with Google Classroom. Every person who is reading this “ancient” tech history, laughing and filling in their own much newer favorite software can contribute. How long has it been since the DOE surveyed its own employees to ask about their technological capabilities/assets and training needs?

I have been asked to switch from being an analog Library Media Specialist to our intermediate school’s Distance Learning Coordinator using [Acellus](#), starting today, Wednesday, July 29 when on-time BOE testimony is due. Acellus support is offered from Kansas City, Missouri only during their Central Standard Time zone regular hours (a 4-5 hour difference). I have had no official training yet, and would like to have a network of other Acellus Administrators developed to support each other in our time zone. We need more time than two days to get our distance learning program going.

Mahalo for considering starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode in Island Complexes where it is necessary. As we enter school year 2020-2021 this July-August, what we have learned from this history of e-experiences should be part of training our teachers. When the criteria are met for moving into the next phase (Hybrid Phase 3 of the Hawai’i for a Safe Return to Schools Plan), then we will be safer to return to face-to-face instruction (Phase 4 of the Hawai’i for a Safe Return to Schools Plan).

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Deborah V. Anderson, M.Ed., M.L.I.S., NBCT, “oldie but goodie”
(Castle High > Kailua High > WEIS > HHIS > Waiakea Intermediate)

Testimony BOE

From: David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com> on behalf of David Negaard
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 5:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Testimony on Action Items A-C:

I am David Negaard. I have been teaching for 21 years, the last four at Baldwin High School on Maui.

Teachers WANT to teach. And we REALLY want to teach the way we learned to teach; face-to-face on a near-daily basis. What we don't want is to risk the health, well-being, or lives of our students, ourselves, or anyone's family members. And we TRAINED to synthesize understanding from available evidence, and as a result of that we see the stakes for which public schools and public educators are being asked to gamble.

As a consequence of late and insufficient planning on the part of the Department of Education, together with the current uncertainty surrounding the prevalence and transmission of COVID-19, our public schools are unequipped and unprepared to open to face-to-face learning with students at this time. Schools have not received sanitation supplies or Personal Protective Equipment, staff has not been trained in protocols either to limit transmission on campuses or to address the INEVITABLE community spread that WILL occur when groups of students gather together, and guidance from the DoE and the Department of Health is vague, general, and aspirational when it needs to be pointed, specific, and realistic. As circumstances worsen and stakeholders—without a concrete plan to deal with contingencies—have to improvise with insufficient knowledge and inadequate guidance, the outcome is a health AND education debacle.

A far more appropriate approach than the DoE's current "damn the torpedoes" plan is the phased approach outlined by the group Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools. This approach does NOT have a timetable; rather it establishes specific benchmarks that must be met for each phase. With conditions shifting like they are, a rigid timetable is a countdown to clusters of COVID-19 cases centered around our schools.

"Phase 1: Training"—thorough and specific training on both distance learning and protocols in the event of illness—would go a long way toward easing the anxiety many educators, parents, and students feel when considering a chaotic, frantic, hasty return. Reduced anxiety will make subsequent steps far more effective and meaningful.

"Phase 2: 100% Online Learning"—personal safety and compromised but meaningful learning—buys schools time to train staff on sanitation and class protocols, as well as the chance to make necessary improvements to school campuses to improve the odds.

"Phase 3: Hybrid Learning Model"—transitional, with face-to-face instruction done with appropriate social distancing and the universal use of PPE—eases us toward a more "normal" routine while maintaining high levels of vigilance to prevent a spike in infections.

"Phase 4: Full Return to Campus"—the new normal, informed by the lessons of previous phases—what we ALL long for, but know we have to wait for if we want to finish with everyone with whom we started.

A rigid timetable is an inexorable countdown to tragedy. If our decisions are predicated on dates rather than circumstances, we WILL be burying someone. Haste makes waste, the saying goes, and in this case that "waste"

is the waste of health and life. Kids are dying of COVID-19. If we can prevent it and don't, what does that make us?

Slow down, step back, focus on the important things. Lives first and foremost, health secondarily, social and emotional learning and support next, and academics after that. They are ALL important, but some are more important than others, and academics can be made up so long as our students are alive and healthy on the other side.

Set us up for success, rather than flailing failure. Set our students (and us, and all our families) up for life, rather than possible lifelong illness or even death. Prioritize life. Slow this train DOWN.

--

David Negaard

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

Testimony BOE

From: Kawika <david.freitas82@gmail.com> on behalf of Kawika
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 5:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School meeting

Aloha - I want to write in about the meeting to open schools. I think schools should open ASAP. The science is still out on exactly what this is so why are we taking the absolute worst case, like its ebola. Why are we not taking the Bird Flu or Swin Flu approach when no one closed schools? These are the same coronavirus strain as COVID so it is more then likely its the same.

Shame on the education system to put our kids in such a spot where they cant learn.

Thanks
Kawika Freitas

Testimony BOE

From: Kiele Akana-Gooch <kiele.aloha@gmail.com> on behalf of Kiele Akana-Gooch
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 5:49 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening but don't reduce school year

Aloha,

I am a parent of two DOE students. I support teachers' calls to delay the reopening of school to better prepare for the school year amidst the onslaught of changes brought on by COVID (and hopefully we can get our case count down by the time school opens).

But I do not support fewer days and hours of this school year. Students are already behind from having to distance learn on a dime at the end of last school year. If school starts later in the year, it can end later in the year. Kids would simply have a longer summer now but a shorter one next year.

Distance learning should be an option for all keiki whose families choose to keep them home.

And to prevent the further spread of the virus, as much as I want our keiki to be comfortable in school and learn important facial cues and body language, I would support face masks being required in the classroom, even for my own kindergarten child.

Mahalo for your dedication, hard work, and good thinking for the health and wellness of our keiki and our community.

Me ke aloha,
Keiko Gonzalez

Testimony BOE

From: Gene <kini62@gmail.com> on behalf of Gene
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 6:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School opening delay

Quite frankly I find this delay is ridiculous. It will be just the first of many since the HSTA wants their members to keep getting paid for doing nothing and will continue resisting any attempt to have them do what they're being paid to do.

The/this reaction to Covid 19 is completely overblown. As it stands the mortality rate is less than many strains of the flu. It is far less deadly to the young than any strain of the flu. Do the schools close every year during flu season?

Might as well at this point de-fund the DOE, disband the HSTA and fire the teachers, close all the school buildings permanently, give back the DOE budget to the tax payers and completely privatize education. The good teachers will find plenty of private sector work, the bad and lazy ones, well good riddance.

The state could then rent out or convert the buildings into something more useful than what they are now.

Open the schools on the 4th or just don't open them at all and give me my taxes back so I can hire someone that actually cares about my child's education since the DEO and BEO don't give a sh:-)t.

Gene

Testimony BOE

From: gk <cgkk2008@gmail.com> on behalf of gk
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 6:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

Please make it mandatory for all public schools to do temperature checks on staff and students each morning prior to entering the classrooms, cafeteria, office buildings, bathrooms, etc. Please make it mandatory for staff and students to wear both face shield and mask in the classrooms and only a shield during snack time, lunch, and outdoors. Please apply the same safety protocols to before and after school programs on campus (morning care, A+, robotics, etc.).

These basic measures should help prevent or minimize the spread of Covid 19 and help parents feel comfortable sending their child to school especially with the surge of positive Covid cases on Oahu.

Thank You for your consideration,
Gwen (concerned parent)

Testimony BOE

From: Thomas Davis <thomasdavis808@gmail.com> on behalf of Thomas Davis
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 6:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,
Concerned about spreading Covid 19.

Please delay school opening to give teachers and administration proper time to prepare their classrooms for this Pandemic.

Thank you,
Thomas Davis

Testimony BOE

From: Ellee <youngtaupou@aol.com> on behalf of Ellee
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 6:44 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of school

Hi,

From a concerned parent please delay the opening of schools for now until there's a sure plan on how to protect our children and our teachers. I know everyone's safety will be at stake once school opens next week. There's studies being done on this virus if we could hold off until we have more word on it and then create a better game plan in place for our kids and teachers please. I am afraid that there will be a cluster reported from a school, and I know no parent want to sue a school because of what happen, also for a teacher to be out on a work comp because they contracted the virus from school. Like that saying Better safe than Sorry. Please find a better plan before opening the schools.

Thank you kindly,
Ellee

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Holly808Books Usborne <holly808books@gmail.com> on behalf of Holly808Books Usborne
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 6:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

Thank you for holding this meeting to consider pushing back the opening of school buildings to children.

I am writing as a concerned parent of two elementary age children on Maui.

We love our school. My children want to go back and we all know face to face is preferable for most.

However now there are more important issues to consider.

Please do not choose an arbitrary start date for students to report to campus. Instead, ensure that the DOE has a real plan in place for protecting our students and school community, that teachers have proper PPE and that everyone on campus has received adequate training. This training should be virus related, but it also needs to be distance related.

My fear is that teachers will be given 2 weeks to come up with their own plan. This is unacceptable. Teachers need high quality, DOE lead instruction on distance teaching. Our schools should first open with distance teaching only- until our virus numbers go down. As long as there is community spread schools are not safe! They will become the vector for massive and uncontrolled spread throughout the islands.

Please do not sacrifice our children and school community at the altar of the economy.

Please insist on opening the school year with distance learning. The objective of schools is to TEACH, this is achievable for everyone online while keeping the greater community safer.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

With Aloha,

Holly Lee

--

Usborne Educational Consultant
Maui's Online Children's Bookstore

K4230.myubam.com

Changing Children's Lives, One Book at a Time.....

Testimony BOE

From: Gerald Kimura <22gkimura@gmail.com> on behalf of Gerald Kimura
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:08 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Distance Learning should be the only option.

Aloha Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the opening of schools for our keiki on a face-to-face basis at this time. As we are still in the middle of the covid 19 pandemic there is no guarantee that our keiki and school staff will be safe from infections. As long as there is no vaccinated population, the specter of being infected with the covid virus is a significant threat.

The safety guidelines of being masked and keeping distance are the only defenses we have against this virus. The schools are a breeding ground for covid spread due to the limited space and the fact that the students will have a difficult time adhering to keeping their masks on and keeping distance from each other.

As you are aware, many homes consist of multi-generational members as well as multiple family units living together in close quarters. These living conditions have already shown themselves ripe for a cluster spread as seen on Oahu and the Big Island. This scenario could be played out time and time again as our students get exposed and go home to expose their family members who then expose their coworkers and friends. Exponential spread of the virus is not a theory as this already has happened.

I will take exception to the Department of Health's Doctors Anderson and Park as they are missing the point. The point being that we want to prevent our students from getting infected and spreading the virus to their families and our community. Their cavalier statements concerning our learning community's safety and ease of contact tracing are both tone deaf and brain dead. We should expect more and better from them to protect the students and staff in our community.

So in conclusion, the only safe and reasonable method of opening is to have all schools open with "distance learning" as no other alternative can guarantee the safety of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Gerald Kimura

Wailuku

--

Gerald

Testimony BOE

From: Erica DiCosmo <ericaboss13@gmail.com> on behalf of Erica DiCosmo
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:12 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School opening

Aloha,

My son is in kindergarten at Kanu in Waimea. Kama' aina kids has been open all summer. With no face masks and no outbreaks. Vote to open schools. We as a family are eating healthy, getting outside and exercising. I have a flexible schedule so I can continue to homeschool my son but many of my mom friends work full time and their kids are not getting the attention they need. Let those who want to stay home homeschool and those who can't must be allowed to send their kids back. Our tax dollars insist it. Also studies show kids don't get the virus as bad and I don't believe I have read one study of kids passing it to adults. That's remarkable, don't you think? In the whole world, 160 countries dealing with this virus not a transmission from child to adult. Safety And security are important but as Ben Franklin said we mustn't trade our liberty and freedom for it as we will deserve neither. Be brave, encourage teachers to live a heathy lifestyle. In this day no one is going anywhere with even a sniffle.

Mahalo,

Erica DiCosmo

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Alexa VanHorn <aewvh2003@gmail.com> on behalf of Alexa VanHorn
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Please open schools as soon as possible. Delaying further or opening as distance only does not serve everyone's needs. My children are suffering from lack of socialization and have not found the support they need in distance learning. I do believe kids are going to suffer long term from not finishing out the year in person and will only continue to be farther behind with more distance learning. If parents want distance learning, they have the option, but do not make my child suffer, give us the choice to send to school before our children are permanently damaged in both mental health and lack of education.

Alexa Van Horn

TESTIMONY

Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 3:30 PM

Reply-To: Liz Benson <lzbenson58@yahoo.com>

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



Elizabeth Benson
444B Mauna Iho Place
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

July 28, 2020

To the Hawaii Board of Education;

I cannot emphasize the grave consequences the board will face if we plan to bring students back to campus in mid-August. It can't be done. If anyone saw last night's national news report, schools who HAVE opened are already seeing cases after just a couple of weeks. Despite the pressure our current president is putting on states, governors must stand strong and resist the temptation to reopen schools. I beg the board to proceed with the distance learning/telework plan for the entire fall semester for now. We all know the covid situation is not improving. We are not flattening the curve. The curve is rising exponentially and you can see the concern in our state leaders faces on the nightly news and see the fear knowing that this situation could quickly get out of control. Even after hiring 200 new contact tracers, the registration program to train them has reopened because the state anticipates that numbers will continue to rise as we approach the fall season. Google announced yesterday that its employees will telework until the summer of 2021. Yes, 2021. Farmers' Insurance employees have been told that they'll be

teleworking until at least January. That should be a red flag for our board and government officials that the worst is yet to come. Let's not exacerbate the problem by putting our teachers, students and staff at further risk when you hold the power to avert the problem in your hands.

I understand there are questions about teachers and accountability. Where's the trust? Whether teachers telework from their classrooms or from home, know that we go above and beyond the line of duty for our students. There is enough technology to monitor us if you must. Join our Zoom meetings to see if we're there conducting classes, get added on to our Google Classrooms so you can see the curriculum for the week with due dates, participation rates, etc. The vast majority of us have the integrity and heart to do what it will take to keep our kids on track, but changing the play book in the next few weeks will just serve to exacerbate an already intense situation. We are all terrified. Especially those of us who are close to retirement age. I'm sure the numbers of questionable teachers is small and administrators already know who they are. Deal with them as you must, but don't penalize the rest of us who are giving our all during this God-awful situation. Parents and students must also be accountable in regard to attendance issues. This is something we must all work through together as a community in the best interest of our keiki.

The board cannot plan to bring students back this semester only to close by October. That's all that will happen and we all know it. We ask the community not to gather in groups larger than ten yet we are asking our kids, staff and teachers to do just that.

Give teachers the option to work from their empty classrooms or from home. Those young teachers with children will have to be there if their school-age children's schools are closed. Allow teachers flexibility to do what we do best...teach and care about our students. We rallied to the challenge back in March and finished out the school year no worse for the wear. A bit frazzled, perhaps, from the chaos of changing play books midstream, but we rose to the challenge. Now that we've experienced the distance learning model, let us continue to do that and hone our online skills while keeping everyone safe. Hawaii has many multi-generational households. Are we willing to risk our kupuna too? Why isn't anyone listening to Dr. Fauci? He's served under six presidents.

I cannot speak for elementary teachers. I understand elementary schools are a different animal that will require further consideration, but secondary schools could absolutely operate quite successfully through telework and distance learning. Parents and guardians will also have to take a more active role in assuring student attendance. Let's make sure to emphasize that fact. This will not be a one-model-fits-all solution so let's take great care and make the hard decisions that will assure the public that we understand the gravity of the pandemic and you, as a board, will decide on the best practices recommendation to our governor.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth M Benson
Sociology Teacher

E.M. Benson
444-B Mauna Iho Place
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Mobile: 808.238.4885

"In a world where you can be anything, be kind."





Yahoo Mail Stationery

Testimony BOE

From: Maureen <rainbowmomhi@gmail.com> on behalf of Maureen
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Special Meeting 7/30/2020

Aloha Chair Payne and respected members of the Hawaii Board of Education.

We are very grateful that the board has agreed to address the many lingering concerns regarding the reopening of our public schools with this special meeting. We know you are listening and hearing the many concerns school staff and parents have.

As parents, we stand by our teachers and school staff in the many concerns they have voiced regarding safely reopening our schools. As parents, we share those concerns.

To assure for a safe reopening of our schools, we respectfully ask you to consider at a minimum implementing the following so that every student and staff member will be safe at school.

1. Social distancing of 6 ft in all classrooms between students.
2. Training of all teachers, subs, staff and support staff for all students including safety protocols and online/virtual learning and all new procedural and protocols. This must take place prior to reopening our schools.
3. Provision of adequate PPE for all classrooms, school campus's and staff. Many teachers are outfitting their classrooms out of pocket.
4. Needed and necessary health screenings for all staff and students to include temperature checks (not merely visual checks)
5. More nurses and health aides to assist with health screenings at schools
6. More clearly defined and transparent protocols specific to our most vulnerable students- special education and medically fragile.
7. Opportunities for our vulnerable teaching staff to provide virtual/online learning.
8. Providing a more clearly defined phased in approach for reopening schools- not physically reopening while our Covid numbers are surging.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide our testimony. We stand behind our teachers, administrators and student support staff in their need for a safe reopening of our schools.

Respectfully,
Mr. and Mrs. John McComas
Honolulu

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a Kindergarten teacher at a Leeward school on Oahu.

I would like to share my testimony anonymously. Please remove my name and email address from the publicly shared version of this testimony.

I am writing today to request the board's consideration of the following items:

- 1.) Please delay the start of school for students to:
 - 1.) Give teachers time for training on distance learning
 - 2.) Give teachers time to prep materials for students for distance learning - prepare manipulatives, work packets, books, etc. to send home to each student in order to make distance learning more effective.
 - 3.) Give the DOE and DOH time to problem-solve issues with distance learning such as:
 - a.) Create wifi 'hubs/hotspots' for students to use during the school day (as is being done in the UK)
 - b.) Determine alternatives (mail home packets, call-in options for lessons, etc.)
 - c.) Determine how high-risk students (SpEd, ELL, etc.) will be supported by support staff
- 2.) Please start school for students in distance learning, after the Aug 17 start date, until the number of cases on each island is at zero for four weeks. Oahu has had far more cases than any other island. So, for example, if Oahu continues to still have cases, but all other islands are down to zero cases for four weeks, Oahu would remain in distance learning while others could resume regular face-to-face learning. Distance learning is far from ideal, but it is the safest way to continue for our teachers, students and their families. Returning to 'face-to-face' classes is also not ideal at this time because students will not be able to share materials, play together, or socialize as is developmentally appropriate.
- 3.) Please give clear, written guidance from the Department of Health on procedures such as:
 - 1.) At what specific point(s) are students allowed to remove their masks during the day?
 - 2.) What will happen if a student, family member, or staff member tests positive for Covid?
 - 3.) How will students who receive additional services receive these services without further endangering the students or the teachers and staff by having students or adults move room to room?

Thank you for your consideration of these important matters.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]



7/30/2020

Hawai'i Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

RE: Board Action on Revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 School Calendar

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Lara Bollinger and I am the Vice President with Together For Our Keiki, which is a non-profit, special education advocacy organization. As an organization, we would like to thank the Board of Education for the opportunity to submit written comments on this issue. We would also like to send a huge mahalo to the Board for supporting our teachers and voting against removing the pay differential for our hard to staff teaching positions. We are writing today with regard to the Board's agenda items, specifically as they pertain to our keiki with special needs.

We are concerned students may be unintentionally harmed if we are not diligent in outlining protocols and procedures to ensure the rights of students with 504 and IEPs are being met during this time. We have heard concerns with guidance given locally, which in some cases, we believe is in direct conflict with guidance issued by the US Department of Education. <https://tinyurl.com/USDOECOVID19>.

As Board Member Bruce Voss noted when discussing delaying the start of the school year, there needs extra consideration for our most vulnerable students, including keiki with special needs. We are concerned, because to date, we have not seen a detailed plan addressing the needs of this population. In the [Superintendent's letter to the Board](#), it reads, "...Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams will meet during the first quarter to determine any compensatory education that would be warranted for qualified students who were not provided with these services." However, there has not been any guidance, which we are aware of that speaks to what questions IEPs teams should use to guide them throughout the process. We have attached for your consideration this guidance from the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (<https://tinyurl.com/MassSpedCOVID>). Upon reviewing the document, you will see clear guidance and prescription for teachers and parents regarding special education assessments, compensatory services, on-campus and in-home access to services, access to related services, training for related service and contracted providers, protocols for students who cannot wear masks, and how teams can ensure inclusion and access to general education peers for our special needs keiki.

On July 28, when asked his opinion about delaying the start of the school year, Lt. Governor Josh Green noted, “There is going to have to be a delay. We have had over 500 cases in the last 14 days, and teachers are fairly vulnerable”. As an organization, we stand in full support of (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar to focus on health, safety, and distance learning; including for teachers of our special education keiki. In his interview, Lt. Governor Josh Green classified teachers as “first responders” and said they need to be “fully prepared”. Other states, like Massachusetts seem to agree, and have also announced reducing the number of school days from 180 to 170, for the purposes of professional development for their teachers (<https://tinyurl.com/Mass170days>).

[In Chair Payne’s letter to the Board](#), she noted, “All staff and teachers who interact with the public and students need to receive appropriate health and safety training and understand the COVID-19 protocols relevant to their Positions”. However, in the Superintendent’s letter to the Board, she stated, “Most substitutes and casual employees will not be reporting to work during the nine (9) days of training and professional development”.

With regard to this matter, we would like the Board to:

- a) Confirm with the Superintendent that there is a plan in place to adequately coordinate training for all contracted providers, as well as employees, working within the DOE (e.g., Educational Assistants, Paraprofessionals, Substitute Teachers, etc.),
- b) Clarify the reasons why “most substitutes and casual employees” need not also be trained, and
- c) Clearly define what constitutes “most substitutes and casual employees”.

While we agree (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode may need to occur, when we resume in-person services, we believe priority needs to be given to special education students. As Chair Payne noted in her letter to the Board, “There are competing concerns regarding serving students who do not benefit from distance learning” ... “[the Board should] discuss whether the Board wants to provide in its expectation that schools should be given the latitude to determine whether there are students that need to have more intensive supports, including in-person supports, during this distance learning period and to provide those supports as schools deem necessary”. We support this proposal suggested in Chair Payne’s letter.

We fully support (3) mandating masks on public school campuses generally speaking; and ask that detailed plans, instructions, and safety protocols be put in place for keiki who can not safely or reliably wear masks (e.g., as confirmed by their physician). Additionally, some parents and teachers have expressed concerns that keiki who do not wear masks will be bullied by other students (or possibly adults) who feel threatened or uncomfortable in their presence. We are not sure what can be done to alleviate their fears, other than to outline clear protocols for these situations. We also urge you request the Superintendent provide clear guidance for what teachers and direct support workers (e.g., Educational Assistants, Registered Behavior Technicians, Paraprofessionals, Skills Trainers) should do when encountering a student in a crisis situation, or when a student is aggressive, self-injurious, or poses a flight-risk. We have reports of a student running out of their classroom during their extended school year (ESY) program and into a parking lot, multiple times, because staff were trying to socially distance

themselves. We understand their hesitation and caution, but we must also design and develop protocols to keep our keiki safe. Educators need clear guidance.

We applaud the request for (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health, as well as from the Department of Education, and support anything that will provide more transparency for our teachers, parents, students, and community members during what is otherwise an uncertain and anxiety-provoking time.

Mahalo,

Lara Bollinger, JD, BCBA, LBA
Vice President, Together For Our Keiki
On Behalf of the Board, Advocates, & Ambassadors
www.fourkeiki.com



Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, Special Education Directors, Collaborative Leaders, and Leaders of Special Education Schools

From: Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner and State Director of Special Education

Date: July 9, 2020

Subject: Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education Services

On June 25, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“Department”) released its [Initial Fall Reopening Guidance](#), which prioritizes the safe return of students back to school by following a comprehensive set of health and safety requirements. The Initial Fall Guidance also asks schools and districts to prioritize and begin planning for in-person instruction, while simultaneously preparing blueprints for both remote learning and a hybrid school model (a combination of in-person and remote learning), should local conditions change this school year. This document supplements the Initial Fall Reopening Guidance by providing further information on supporting students with disabilities during the upcoming school year. It also provides necessary information in support of schools and districts, as they develop the portion of their reopening plans specifically related to special education.

Schools and districts were unexpectedly required to rapidly transition to remote models of special education service delivery when in-person learning was suspended from mid-March 2020 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Now, with more planning time and an emphasis on returning to in-person services in the school year ahead, this document is designed to provide guidance on these critical points:

- School districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Students with disabilities, particularly preschool-age students and those with significant and complex needs, should be prioritized for receiving in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. These students should receive as much in-person instruction as is feasible within the health and safety parameters in effect at each particular time. Even if schools or districts are operating in a hybrid or remote model, educators and administrators must make every effort to continue to provide up to full-

time in-person instruction to such students. If in-person instruction cannot be provided and students with disabilities must receive instruction remotely in full, or in part, through a hybrid model, they must receive special education instruction and related services necessary to provide FAPE through an Instruction and Services model of delivery (e.g., structured lessons, teletherapy, video-based lessons, etc.) instead of relying solely on a Resources and Supports model (e.g., packets and assignments). For students with more significant and complex disabilities, providing one-on-one in-person instruction in the home or in a community-based setting should also be considered and made available as feasible, if it is not possible to provide instruction in an in-school setting.

- When school resumes in-person, with health and safety requirements in place, general education, special education, and English language education staff members must collaborate in order to determine the unique modifications that will be necessary to ensure the least restrictive environment (LRE) is in place for students with disabilities. This will require careful planning and scheduling.
- Family engagement is a critical component of school reopening. It is essential to reach out to parents and establish ongoing communication in a manner that works for the family. Parental input is always valuable, but is particularly critical during this time, when parents are ordinarily best positioned to observe their children and provide feedback on their children's experiences. Data from parents on primary areas of need, their children's ability to access remote learning, and other observations about their emotional and social well-being during the state of emergency will be essential to determining how to meet students' needs when schools re-open.
- It will also be important for families to provide input and to fully understand how the school or district plans to provide special education services to their children in the new school year.
- For limited English proficient parents and guardians, the school or district must provide interpreters, translating special education notifications sent to families, as well as schedules, learning plans, IEPs, and Progress Reports. Districts and schools must also use interpreters at all IEP Team meetings. The school or district should arrange for parents to have a specific contact person(s) within the child's special education Team and provide access to interpretation, if needed to communicate. The communication should be provided in language understandable to the general public. Many limited English proficient parents will require ongoing support in their own language so that they know what to expect from the school or district and how to support their child.

This document covers other important topics such as positive approaches to behavior, monitoring student progress, and transition services that the Department wants schools and districts to have at the forefront of their planning for the reopening of schools in the Fall. The Department recommends that schools and districts start to implement this guidance immediately and continue to develop additional supports throughout the school year to further enhance the quality of learning for students with disabilities.

Delivery of IEP Services

Students must receive all services documented in their IEPs through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both, with a strong emphasis on providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while abiding by the current necessary health and safety requirements. In particular, the Department urges schools and districts to prioritize in-person instruction for two particular groups of students with disabilities: preschool-aged students, and students with significant and complex needs. Remote learning is often more challenging for these students.

For the purposes of this document, students with complex and significant needs include:

- Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “[Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3](#).” ***Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:***
 - Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
 - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
 - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students dually identified as English Learners.

Even if the rest of the school has entered into a hybrid or remote model of instruction, schools and districts must make every effort to maintain in-person instruction for students with disabilities, particularly those with complex and significant needs and preschool-aged students. For example, if a school or district needs to implement a hybrid model of instruction for its students, teachers may be able to simultaneously maintain full-time in-person instruction for students in self-contained special education classes. In such situations, schools and districts should first attempt to maintain full-time in-person instruction (i.e., having the students remain in school for the entirety of their school day). If this is not possible, schools and districts are encouraged to provide as many in-person services as possible on a part-time basis (such as having the students come into school for related therapies, social skills groups, or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services). Finally, in-person services may be provided in the home or in community-based settings where feasible for students with significant and complex needs, if it is not possible to provide services in the school setting. In sum, schools and districts must make their best efforts to take all necessary steps to ensure that students with disabilities, particularly preschool-aged students and those with complex or significant needs, receive as many services as possible in-person, whether full-time, part-time or in a student’s home or community-based setting (if feasible).

Learning Models

The sections below describe expectations for providing special education services through the three learning models schools and districts are expected to prepare prior to the reopening of school: in-person learning, hybrid learning and remote learning. While each model is described below, the Department re-emphasizes the importance of prioritizing in-person learning for students with disabilities, particularly preschool-aged students and those with complex and significant needs, if the school or district is unable to safely provide full-time in-person learning for all students.

1. Full-time In-person Learning (while meeting current health and safety requirements)

- Considerations for maximizing in-person learning for students with disabilities should be made when developing schedules.
- When considering staffing alternatives for reducing class size, students with disabilities must receive specialized instruction and supports from qualified professionals.
- Flexible solutions for reducing the mixing of student groups should be considered to ensure students with disabilities are receiving services safely in the least restrictive environment.
- When considering the use of alternative school spaces or external facility spaces, considerations for providing students with disabilities with inclusive learning must be made and placement of students with disabilities in groupings or cohorts that support learning goals in the least restrictive environment should be prioritized.
- When planning for full-time in-person learning, schools and districts should carefully consider the specific needs of their students with disabilities. While having classes outdoors may be a possibility for many students, this option may not be suitable for some students with disabilities. For example, students with visual impairments may have light sensitivity and/or outdoor settings may be too distracting.
- Identify staff trained in various areas of special education to be included in the COVID-19 Response Team.
- Provide additional training time for educators who will provide direct physical support to students with disabilities on the use of the additional protective supplies they will need, including appropriately donning and doffing disposable gowns, face shields, etc.
- Consider using strategies to pair peer models with students with disabilities to promote social interaction.

Districts and schools should partner with parents to support a smooth transition to re-opening of school, given the introduction of the new social distancing protocols and schedules. It is particularly important that educators work closely with parents of children who experience difficulty with changes in routine (for example, students with autism) or children who experience anxiety with such changes. (For example, schools and districts may create social stories or video introductions from providers and teachers, recorded tours of new buildings or programs, or

provide opportunities for students to ride new bus routes and visit new school buildings in person before the school year begins.)

2. Remote Learning

- All schools and districts are required to have a comprehensive plan for delivering special education instruction and services remotely. This model must be available for individual students who are not returning in-person, and for all students in the event of future classroom or school closures due to COVID-19.
- Remote learning in school year 2020-2021 is expected to be more robust than the models of remote learning implemented in the Spring of 2020 when schools and districts did not have time to fully plan for the changes in instruction and service delivery due to emergency school closures.
- During the Spring of 2020, the Department described two models of service delivery that could be used to satisfy the requirement to provide a FAPE to students with disabilities: Resources and Supports (e.g., sending packets and assignments home coupled with frequent communication with parents) and Instruction and Services (e.g., structured learning time, teletherapy and video conferencing). With the ability to plan for the possibility of remote service delivery during the 2020-2021 school year, schools and districts must be prepared to provide services through “Instruction and Services” mode of delivery. The “Resources and Supports” delivery model can only be used on a temporary basis for a limited period of time (no more than two weeks), until which time the school or district has overcome the hurdles preventing service delivery through an “Instruction and Services” delivery model.
- In accordance with 603 CMR 27.08(3)(b), as adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on June 30, 2020, remote learning models shall include the following requirements:
 - Procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation;
 - Remote academic work aligned to state standards; and
 - A policy for issuing grades for students’ remote academic work. Teachers and administrators shall regularly communicate with students’ parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.
- For school year 2020-2021 Instruction and Services must include the following components:
 - A regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services and therapies as required by the student’s IEP, offered synchronously or asynchronously;
 - Structured learning time designed so that the student can access state standards; and

- Frequent interactions with teachers and other staff members to ensure participation.

The consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services and therapies must include time spent interacting directly with teachers and related service providers on a regular basis, as well as some independent work time, as appropriate, and opportunities for interacting with classmates. Synchronous remote lessons or tele-therapy sessions can be provided via telephone or video conferencing. Students might also benefit from asynchronous pre-recorded videos of lessons to follow at home. For students receiving the majority of their daily instruction through special education, teachers and therapists should assign supplemental work (beyond lessons taught synchronously or asynchronously) during the school day that can be accomplished independently with guidance from and accountability to the teacher or therapist.

- Schools and districts must support the infrastructure needed to put in place the required Instruction and Services, including availability of computer devices and internet connectivity in students' homes, appropriate communication platforms, and educator and parent training. Parent training topics might include the use of devices and electronic learning and communication platforms, troubleshooting technology issues, expectations for structured learning time, supporting students' social/emotional needs, etc., and trainings need to be offered in parent's primary language

3. Hybrid Learning

- When planning for hybrid learning models, consideration for continuing to maximize in-person learning for students with disabilities should be prioritized. Preschool-aged students with disabilities and students with significant and complex needs should be considered for continuous in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. For example, even if most students are not in school each day, schools should consider scheduling small groups of students with significant and complex disabilities for daily in-person instruction. Where appropriate, peers without disabilities should also be included to ensure inclusionary services.
- Learning and services provided remotely via a hybrid learning model must follow the guidance provided in the section below on Remote Learning. Similarly, learning and services provided in-person must follow guidance provided in the section above on Full-time In-person Learning while meeting the current health and safety requirements.
- In-person services offered within the student's home or in a community-based setting, particularly for students with significant and complex needs, can also be considered as part of a hybrid model to ensure that as many services as possible are provided in-person instead of remotely.

Promoting Inclusive Services and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

When planning for the physical distancing requirements for students and adults in a classroom, schools and districts should be mindful of the additional special educators and related service providers who will need to enter the classrooms throughout the school day to provide services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. As such, the following should be considered:

- Schools and districts should carefully develop classroom assignments and service delivery schedules for students with disabilities so that they receive services consistent with their IEPs in the least restrictive environment, as defined in [603 CMR 28.02\(12\)](#), while also maintaining the current health and safety protocols.
For example, special education teachers and related service providers (speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.), could provide special education services in the general education setting (“B Grid”) services remotely from within the school building via video conference, instead of coming into the classroom to provide services. This practice would help to minimize foot traffic in and out of classrooms while also providing access to services that support the inclusion of students with disabilities.
To support this model, schools and districts could train paraprofessionals to serve as facilitators for push-in services. Training should address technology-related issues, such as device use, electronic platform use, troubleshooting procedures, and other student-specific needs and strategies.
- If service providers are not able to provide special education services in the general education setting remotely within the school building via video conference, those educators or related service providers should schedule services in a manner that maintains physical distancing requirements and avoids overlapping with other staff in the classroom or physical setting. Some classrooms might need to have a marginally reduced number of students in order to accommodate the additional educators and staff members who are needed to support students with disabilities throughout the school day.
- Schools and districts are encouraged to partner with parents to think creatively about how they can maintain opportunities for inclusion for students with disabilities. For example, students with disabilities often benefit from peer models, and providing inclusive groupings of students or using technology might help to support peer-to-peer connections while maintaining physical distancing requirements.

Parent Engagement

The Department strongly recommends that schools and districts cultivate excellent two-way communication with families. For example, schools and districts should ensure that classroom teachers, special education teachers, or related service providers communicate regularly with parents. The frequency and type of communication will vary depending on the child’s individual needs, language and technology access barriers families may face supporting their children with remote learning and the preferred mode of communication. The Department recommends that

school personnel document all of their communication with parents. All written and oral communication must be provided in the primary language of the home and in language that is understandable to the general public. This includes translating district-wide and special education notification sent to families, as well as translating special education documents, schedules, and instructions; learning plans, IEPs, Progress Reports and using interpreters at IEP Team meetings.

Ongoing engagement will help educators, related service providers, and parents develop a comprehensive plan for students to receive individualized instruction and related services. IEP team members must consider information from parents regarding their children's experiences during the state of emergency, including primary areas of need, ability to access remote learning during these past months, and other information critical to meet students' needs as schools re-open. Keep in mind that school closure can be traumatic, students may have regressed, **and may have developed new disability-related areas of need, e.g. anxiety.** Since most students will have spent several months in the full-time company of their family or caregivers, schools and districts should take the opportunity to obtain as much data and information from parents and caregivers as possible. Schools and districts should use all available data to anticipate the student's present areas of need and levels of need during re-entry. In addition, it will help school personnel and families be prepared to quickly pivot should in-person services suddenly become unavailable. Ongoing engagement will also promote and sustain important connections between students and their teachers, a source of vital support and stability for students. Engagement between teachers and parents can occur through scheduled phone conversations, "office hours" when parents know they can reach teachers via phone or email, webinars for parents, etc.

Schools and districts should explain to parents how decisions will be made relative to health and safety issues as they come up during the 2020-21 school year. Parents need to know at the start of the school year that schools and districts must take into account many different factors in totality when making decisions about adjustments to health and safety guidelines. Certain issues cannot be divulged to parents due to student privacy and confidentiality protections (such as the ways in which an individual student's health needs might require unique health and safety protocols in a particular classroom). Student privacy and confidentiality must remain core to parent communications and should be respected by all parties.

Parent engagement is particularly crucial when determining if and how special education services will be provided differently as a result of the changes to the overall learning environment associated with any of the three models of instruction schools and districts might employ during the 2020-21 school year (in-person, hybrid or remote learning models). Teachers or IEP liaisons should contact the parents of their students as soon as possible to discuss how a given student's IEP services will be delivered if different than described in a student's IEP, giving particular consideration to potential changes to how and where special education services will be provided. Using input from that discussion, teachers or liaisons must provide parents with written notification containing specific information about how IEP services will be provided promptly at the start of the 2020-21 school year. For example, if during in-person learning, a student will receive related therapies via video conferencing while in the general education classroom, parents must receive written notification describing this different mode of delivering

IEP services. Examples of this written notification include the use of DESE's suggested Documentation of Modified In-Person, Remote or Hybrid Services template (forthcoming), Notice of Proposed School District Action (N1), letter or other written documentation.

If special education services are provided differently than as they are described in a student's IEP, parents must be notified in writing with specific information about how those services will be provided after they have discussed such matters with a teacher or IEP liaison. Written parent notification describing any differences in how special education services will be delivered should include how, where and when specialized services are being provided, and should be dated to reflect when services that are being provided differently begin. Parental consent is not required to implement modified in-person, hybrid or remote special education services; however, such documentation should describe the school's and district's efforts to provide services as closely aligned to the way they are described in the IEP as possible. Schools and districts can provide notification of remote services to families in multiple ways, e.g., U.S. mail, email, student information systems, or online communication platforms if schools and districts determine that parents can access online communications effectively. It is also critical to note that these notifications must be provided in the primary language of the home. Furthermore, special education interpreters must be fluent in the primary language of the home and in English and familiar with special education terminology so that information is accurate and conveyed in a manner that is understandable to the parent.

Developing Positive Behavior Supports and Safe Learning Environments

Schools and districts should continue to create safe and supportive learning environments and provide proactive support to prevent unwanted behaviors in each of the three learning models planned for the 2020-2021 school year. Proactive direct instruction for school- and class-wide routines, social skills instruction, individualized social stories, and other preventative measures will be necessary, particularly following the disruption to normal school routines. Schools and districts should engage in conversations with parents about how their child is doing emotionally and behaviorally, and partner with parents in planning for the transition to in-person learning. Schools and districts may also need to provide additional supports for promoting positive behavior and reducing challenging behavior as schools reopen. Students will reacclimate to learning and school life at different rates. Additional considerations regarding how anxiety and/or trauma may impact the reintegration into normal school life should be considered, including providing Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports available to students under a [multi-tiered system of support](#).

Under the present circumstances, schools and districts should utilize disciplinary action as a last resort for students with disabilities exhibiting behavioral challenges. Wearing of masks, maintaining social distance, adapting to new routines and protocols, and other nuances related to changes in the learning and the school environment may be challenging or frightening for students with disabilities. Retraining and development of strategies that directly address student concerns regarding the pandemic itself and/or other current events should be integrated into lessons and/or classroom routines.

Before administering discipline, it is critical that special educators and school administrators determine if behaviors deemed inappropriate are a result of situations brought about by the pandemic, or if such behaviors are caused time away from in-person learning. Appropriate planning for newly-identified concerns should be part of reentry planning. In addition, restorative practices and other diversionary strategies should be utilized in place of punitive measures to help focus on correcting the concerning behavior. Additional de-escalation training and/or training on trauma-sensitive practices for staff including school resource officers may be needed to support the transition back to full-time in-person learning in an environment altered by public health and safety needs, and the potential of increased behavioral concerns.

Early Childhood Special Education and Preschool Children

Preschool children with and without disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop the socialization, motor and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. Schools and districts should prioritize in-person instruction for this age group but should also be prepared to adjust to hybrid or remote services if necessary. As stated previously in this document, providing services in a student's home if feasible might be a beneficial option, particularly if it is not possible to provide services in the school setting.

In general, public preschools should follow DESE guidance, but can consult guidance provided by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) for additional information. However, for public preschools that enroll children who are eligible for and receive a voucher for [financial assistance for childcare that is issued by EEC](#), districts and schools should check in with their EEC regional funded program monitors for additional information.

District and school leaders should work with families to ensure family engagement strategies are in place, especially for families and children who are new to schools. For example, co-developing protocols and [social stories](#) that help children learn social distance guidelines with families can be helpful. For additional guidance for IEP matrices across environments to assist children and families to address goals throughout the day, please see this guidance on the [Florida Technical Assistance and Training System](#).

Below are additional recommendations to consider when addressing the unique needs of preschool children with disabilities:

Transition from Early Intervention

An extension of Early Intervention (EI) services is available for children who turned 3 between March 15, 2020 and August 31, 2020. For those students, EI services can continue until special education eligibility determination can be completed and the child has transitioned to special education, or until October 15, 2020. Because as a result of the pandemic, many districts may have been unable to conduct evaluations, convene IEP meetings, and initiate services by the child's third birthday, districts can expect an increased number of children needing to complete the eligibility determination process and an increased number of children needing special education services. School and district leaders should be prepared to complete the transition

process, have completed assessments, and an IEP signed for this group of students by October 15, 2020.

In partnership with EI providers, districts should develop a plan that explicitly outlines the transition process for each child with extended EI services and who are potentially eligible for school-based services. Additional resources are available in the Technical Assistance Advisory [SPED 2019-1: Transition from Early Intervention Programs to Early Childhood Special Education](#). Districts should establish policies and procedures addressing the potential increase in assessments and the increase of children requiring special education services and should consider allocating additional staff, as necessary to complete assessments. There are several currently available [tools that can be used to complete remote or face-to-face eligibility determinations](#).

Natural Environments and LRE for Preschool Children

In addition to public preschool programs, the LRE for preschool children includes natural environments which are comprised of childcare centers, community centers and the home. By developing IEP Activity Matrices, childcare center staff and families can see how IEP goals can be addressed in a variety of environments. For sample IEP Activity Matrices, see the [Florida Technical Assistance and Training System](#).

If children are attending childcare or Head Start programs, and IEP services are being provided, collaboration with the childcare staff is critical to ensure a smooth transition and delivery of IEP services. Public preschool staff and childcare staff should collaborate to ensure that special education services are being provided within current EEC guidelines as outlined below:

[The Requirements refer to “coordinating space and facilitating support services for children, including when identified on an Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) or Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\).” Programs should interpret this to mean setting aside appropriate space for the remote services or tele-health services to take place, rather than attempting to receive visits from outside adults into the program.](#)

The Department recognizes that schools and districts face unique challenges related to preschool programming for children without disabilities and therefore providing in-district inclusive education might be impacted. Districts that have part-time preschool programs and those that charge tuition are at an exceptional disadvantage. An updated process for seeking an alternative compliance waiver under [603 CMR 28.03\(5\)](#) for inclusionary programs for young children during the COVID-19 pandemic is forthcoming.

Kindergarten Screening

Kindergarten screening requirements are set forth in [603 CMR 28.03\(1\)\(d\)](#). Districts are required to screen three- and four-year old children for the Child Find process and for all children who are of age to enter kindergarten. The Department recognizes that because of the rapid shift to remote operation in the spring, kindergarten screening may have been delayed for some children. We recommend that schools and districts resume the screening process this summer (e.g., family interviews) using phone calls or virtual meetings. It may be helpful to complete in-person

screening when children return to school in the fall and have an opportunity to first adjust to being in the classroom environment. The exception to delays in screening protocols is if a student has a suspected disability and/or already has been referred for a special education evaluation; in these cases, the district should move forward in a timely manner with evaluation procedures.

In-person Instructional Environments and Physical Distancing for Preschool Children

When determining classroom arrangement to accommodate physical distancing requirements, schools and districts should factor in the additional special educators and related service providers who will need to enter the classroom to provide services for young children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. In light of the Department's guidance that students at the elementary level remain in one classroom for the majority of the day, districts may want to consider whether pull-out services can be offered in accordance with the health and safety guidelines or, instead, if services should be pushed into the classroom.

Given the specific health and safety requirements, schools and districts should reconfigure space to discourage prolonged close contact and instead encourage activities that allow for children to spread out. Programs may use different means to divide classrooms as needed to support group sizes and promote distancing requirements. These may include movable walls, partitions, or other barriers that clearly define and separate areas, ideally clear partitions so that children can see and interact with each other, while maintaining physical distance. Barriers should be robust enough to keep children physically separated and prevent materials and toys from being shared.

- Schools and districts may also design their own strategies to implement this requirement, e.g., spacing chairs at tables, designing games and group activities where children may engage in play that can be spaced apart (for example, by using visual cues like hula hoops or developing social stories to support children in learning new rules), and increasing outdoor time.
- Visual supports and strategies for direct instruction for children to maintain physical distance and comply with other health and safety guidelines will be critical. For additional ideas related to supporting social/emotional instruction and positive behavior supports, visit the [Pyramid Model Consortium's](#) webpage.
- Educators may also develop individual bins with activities/materials that still foster social interactions such as music and dancing; additionally, educators could identify materials that stretch across learning centers so that children can be working together on projects while remaining physically distanced (e.g., mural size paper).
- The balancing of health and safety requirements with child development needs is something that will continue to evolve during this time of significant transition. The Department will rely on the expertise of educators to ensure daily schedules and activities are designed to foster physical distancing in the most effective way to mitigate virus spread while continuing to help children enjoy their day, support the development of social-emotional competencies, and foster learning.

Hybrid/Remote Learning Considerations for Preschool Children

As described above, the Department recommends that young children be prioritized for in-person instruction. If remote instruction becomes necessary, balance screen time and non-screen time by considering shorter virtual sessions and consider providing flexible offerings of live, recorded, small group instruction.

- Pre-recorded enrichment activities aimed at providing practice and/or generalization opportunities can be provided outside of live learning time.
- Keep learning opportunities interactive and similar to the routine of what children already were familiar with (e.g., circle songs, etc.) and when appropriate, pair new learning with familiar activities.
- Given the remote aspect of learning in these circumstances, educators should be mindful of wait times to maximize opportunities for as many children to be engaged.
- In-person services offered within the student's home, particularly for preschool age students with complex and significant disabilities, can also be considered as part of a hybrid model to ensure that as many services are provided in-person instead of remotely.

Monitoring Student Progress

School districts, collaborative programs, and approved special education day and residential school programs must continue to issue Progress Reports at least as often as report cards or progress reports are provided for students without disabilities, in accordance with [603 CMR 28.07\(3\)](#). Progress Reports must be sent to families, guardians and state agencies involved with the student through mail, email, student information systems, or online communication platforms, and translated into the language of the home when required. The school must maintain documentation of when and to whom Progress Reports are issued.

Educators and service providers must collect data and use this data to monitor the student's progress to develop Progress Reports. If there are periods of remote learning, educators, service providers, parents, and students should review a student's IEP and identify the types of data that can be collected from the student, family, and home environment. Staff can reimagine their roles in a hybrid or remote context, e.g., by using a tracking sheet to collect data from student videos, interviewing parents and students, or using assessments. There are many resources to aid in this work, for example:

- [The Texas Education Agency Phase 4 Remote Learning Plan Monitoring](#)
- [Student Progress Monitoring Tool for Data Collection and Graphing](#)
- [Measuring and Reporting Progress Toward Mastery of Annual Goals](#)
- [Data Collection During Distance Learning](#)
- [Using Google Drive to Collect Data for IEP Goals](#)

Transition Services

Although in-person participation in community-based programs and inclusive [concurrent enrollment programs at institutions of higher education](#) may be limited at this time, schools and districts should make best efforts to develop plans collaboratively with community-based providers, colleges, parents/guardians, and students in order for students to access as much transition programming as possible. Current health and safety requirements must remain a priority when making decisions as to the extent that transition services are able to be accessed in community-based settings; however, it is highly recommended that in-person transition services resume as soon as it is safe to do so with the proper health and safety measures in place.

Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations and IEP Team Meetings

The Department recognizes that due to the closure of school buildings and settings and the unexpected suspension of in-person education in March, annual review Team meetings, evaluations and/or parts of evaluations may have been postponed. As we plan to return to in-person services and instruction, schools and districts will need to plan for addressing the backlog of assessments and meetings while simultaneously addressing the need to maintain timelines for annual review Team meetings and evaluations for students who are newly referred and/or due for an evaluation. Schools and districts should continue to follow the direction on meeting special education timelines as described in the Department's [Implementation of Special Education Timelines During the COVID-19 State of Emergency](#).

IEP Teams must continue to conduct annual review Team meetings as they are due, in accordance with [603 CMR 28.04 \(3\)](#). Districts are advised to update the IEP as though the student will be attending school full time in-person; however, given the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 virus, schools and districts must be prepared to be adaptable in their approach to delivery of IEP services, based on the current health information and trends at that time. As was the case when schools closed in March, any changes to service delivery should be documented in writing to the parent.

It is important to note that a change in the delivery of services due to a school's change in learning model, in-person, hybrid or remote, as a result of COVID-19 **does not result in a change in placement**. The services outlined in the IEP remain and are considered "stay-put." Schools and districts must maintain open communication and collaboration with families as they respond to the trajectory of the virus and make decisions about the opening and/or closing of school buildings and settings and the learning models to be utilized.

Considerations for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

- Students with high risk medical conditions
 - Parents/guardians of students with [high risk medical conditions](#) should be encouraged to consult their child’s healthcare provider to discuss the appropriateness of attending in-person instruction. This includes students who depend on mechanical ventilation and students with tracheostomies. School health professionals should work with primary healthcare providers to identify alternatives to nebulizer treatments in the school setting and to inform decision-making relative to how the student can safely access in-person instruction.
- Students with visual impairments
 - General considerations
 - Students with visual impairments do not acquire information incidentally and often need additional instructional time devoted to visual efficiency, technology, orientation and mobility (O&M), recreation and leisure, self-determination, independent living skills, career education and compensatory skills, including communication.
 - Consider grouping students who need braille and/or tech instruction in centralized locations for specialized instruction in order to reduce Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) moving between several locations.
 - Academics of braille can be provided remotely; however, technique of braille and writing and reading should be prioritized for in-person learning.
 - O&M should be prioritized for in-person learning. Reteaching may be necessary once in-person learning resumes.
 - Technology Considerations
 - Use technology or software that allows screen sharing easily with the TVI to “see what they are seeing.”
 - Provide braille notetakers with Wi-Fi access, braille curriculum materials, and braille production capability from home, if possible.
 - Be sure links and sites that are shared with the classroom are accessible to students with visual impairments.
 - Students with low vision may need a larger monitor to interact with class remotely and for others the visual multitasking required to participate in live remote classes may be too overwhelming. Pre-teaching and reinforcement may be needed to assist with processing the live lesson.

- Provide Bluetooth keyboards for students with visual impairments who have iPads to allow students to use accessibility keyboard shortcuts when in online platforms. Touchscreens have proven very difficult for students with visual impairments to use when accessing Google Meet or Zoom.
 - Reinforce technology skills such as using screen reading or magnification software, teaching keyboarding skills, and learning to navigate and use the Windows or Mac environment so that they are (1) more easily able to access remote learning and (2) more independent with their technology.
 - Provide accessible online typing program memberships to increase keyboarding skills for students with visual impairments to help ready them for more remote learning (Typio by Accessibyte is one option).
 - Provide check-ins with the district assistive technology specialist, the student/parent and the TVI to make sure equipment is working and to take care of any accessibility problems.
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH):
 - Consider the needs of students who must be able to see the lips of the speaker.
 - Purchase clear masks or shields, as needed, for staff.
 - Consider the need for an interpreter in the classroom for deaf or hard of hearing students and determine the logistics of social distancing and classroom setups.
 - Face shields and masks distort voice and are difficult with FM systems. The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is working on resources to address FM system use and will disseminate these when they are available.

Staffing, Specialized Safety Supplies/Protective Equipment and Training

Due to the need to be closer than the minimum physical distancing requirements when instructing some students with disabilities, the Department recommends that school and district special education service providers follow the guidelines that the Center for Disease Control describes for “[direct service providers](#)”. Direct service providers include personal care attendants, direct support professionals, paraprofessionals, therapists, related services personnel, assistants, school nurses, health office staff, and any other staff who must come into close contact with students with disabilities.

Direct service providers are essential for the health and well-being of the students they serve. Direct service providers should be aware of and trained on how COVID-19 spreads, risk factors, and prevention actions. Additional preventive measures may need to be taken depending on the activity and the risk level of that activity. Please note that DESE provided [guidance on the provisioning of key safety supplies](#) on June 5, 2020 in order to help schools and districts determine the quantities of the protective equipment described below:

<i>Classification of Individual Wearing protective equipment</i>	<i>N95 or KN95 Respirator</i>	<i>Face Shield</i>	<i>Disposable Gowns</i>	<i>Disposable Gloves</i>	<i>Gowns/ Coveralls/ Other Body Covering</i>	<i>Cloth Face Covering</i>	<i>Disposable mask</i>
DSPs in care areas of students with suspected COVID-19	X	X	X	X	X		X (with face shield if N95/KN95 not available)
DSPs in the same facility but not in the care areas for students with suspected COVID-19						X	
DSPs providing personal care to students without suspected COVID-19 but who may potentially be exposed to bodily fluids		X (preferred)		X			X
DSPs performing or present during aerosol generating procedures such as nebulizer treatments, chest PT, suctioning, trach care	X	X		X	X		
Transportation personnel/monitors who must come in direct physical contact with passengers (e.g. buckling/unbuckling, performing wheelchair safety services)				X		X	

Some students with disabilities will require unique supports that may make it less possible to practice physical distancing. In addition, some students with disabilities will not be able to wear cloth face masks as frequently or at all. In order to support such students safely, schools and districts must ensure that:

- Classrooms are adequately staffed, and in accordance with any approved student: licensed educator: aide ratios;
- Educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals and other staff members are prepared with any additional protective equipment that may be needed as unexpected situations arise, such as disposable gowns, face shields, etc.;
- When assessing the amount of protective equipment needed, considerations should be made for itinerant staff who interact with multiple groups of students in multiple locations, staff who perform tasks routinely that require close proximity and/or physical contact with students, and those who go out into the community to support students' educational programming;

- All staff members using additional protective equipment are [properly trained](#) to accommodate children's needs (See [BU SHIELD COVID-19 training resources](#) for videos, posters and other training materials); and
- Families are consulted as partners to ensure the health and safety of students.

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Ueno <jwueno@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Ueno
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:02 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 30th special meeting

As the parent of a public high school student on Oahu, I am writing to provide testimony for the following agenda items at the July 30th Board of Education's Special Meeting:

A. [Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools](#)

B. [Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar](#)

I understand and share the concerns of teachers regarding their return to classrooms at this time. What I do not understand is how the Department of Education has allowed us to arrive at this point. From the time schools closed last March, it has been clear that COVID-19 would create an unparalleled public health challenge. It has never been purported by any source that vaccines would be approved for use and available for mass immunization of the general public prior to early 2021. Given this information, it would seem logical that the DOE would have spent the 4th quarter of the last school year focusing on developing equitable online learning for all students for at least the first half of the 2020-2021 school year. Investment should have been made in technology resources for students. Teachers should have been given extensive training to enable them to provide quality, effective instruction via a DOE's designated/approved instructional platform. We should not be seeing a piecemeal approach to this challenge in which individual schools are left at the 11th hour to choose and implement plan "options" that have been shoved upon them with little guidance or support for implementation. My child's school has just offered (within the past week) a distance only option, but it is via a contracted outside service which will not allow my child to take the full 7 credits that they would have been enrolled in this school year. Lesser is not equal.

I do NOT support a reduction to the 1080 student instructional hours currently required via HRS Section 302A-251. Our children should not be penalized by the Department of Education's failure to respond to this crisis in a timely and effective manner. I cannot understand how a few additional days of preparation are going to make any difference at this point but, if they are approved, the school year should be extended to compensate for the instructional time lost.

I am highly disappointed in the lack of leadership, flexibility, and service to our keiki that the Hawaii DOE has displayed during this crisis. No teacher or child should be forced to choose between their health and the pursuit of education when the technology exists to make this current "Sophie's Choice" situation totally unnecessary.

Jennifer Ueno
concerned parent

Testimony BOE

From: Eiger Kim <eigerkim@gmail.com> on behalf of Eiger Kim
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Facing the Fact of COVID 19 as a 65 Years Old Teacher

Aloha,
Please let's face the fact of the COVID 19 in Hawaii.
The fact is that COVID 19 is increasing, not decreasing, in Hawaii.
I am begging you to consider the fact.

I am a 65 years old teacher at the HSDB.
One thing clearly I can say about me as a teacher is that I am hard working and enjoy teaching.
I really want to go back to teach if the environment is safe enough for teachers like me at school.
But I do not think we are not ready to open schools, not safe enough.

The fact is that COVID 19 is increasing, not decreasing, in Hawaii.
I will not risk or compromise my health under the fact of COVID 19.

Please consider it.
Sincerely,
Sung Kim

Testimony BOE

From: Raechelle Villanueva <rvillanueva@waialae.edu> on behalf of Raechelle Villanueva
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopening Testimony

Aloha Esteemed Board Members,

My name is Raechelle Villanueva. I am a third grade teacher and parent of two public school students. I am writing in favor of pushing back the reopening of school. That means to hold all instruction as well. We are currently trying to frantically get ready for school. We are simply not ready. Teachers are at an all time high with anxiety. Teachers are quitting, retiring, going on leave and Admin is frantically trying to fill positions. This results in unqualified teachers to fill positions because there simply isn't anyone to fill the position. Is this right??? As a parent, I'm appalled and so upset that our BOE is allowing this to happen. Our teachers are also terrified by the rising COVID numbers everyday. We feel stuck between our families, personal health, and our students. I am so exhausted and burned out. I really do not know how much longer I can last. We are trying so hard and as the 8/4 date quickly approaches, our schools are desperate as things change by the minute. BOE please, push back the start date of school. Our children need it. Our schools need it. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Raechelle Villanueva

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Testimony BOE

From: Kelly Gorniak <kgorniak@waialae.edu> on behalf of Kelly Gorniak
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha,

My name is Kelly Gorniak and I am a Special Education Teacher at Wai'alaie Elementary PCS and I am writing my testimony to support the decision to push the start of the student school year back to August 17th. As teachers, we are NOT PREPARED to start school. We are NOT READY to have students on campus. In order to ensure students' first day is safe for EVERYONE we need this time to undergo additional training and professional development for all teachers and staff as it relates to COVID-19.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

--

Kelly Gorniak

Student Support Teacher
Wai'alaie Elementary Public Charter School
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816
(808) 733-4880 ext. 274

<http://www.waialae.edu>



TO THE STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice-Chairperson

SPECIAL MEETING

NOTICE OF MEETING

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

1:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

RELATING TO SCHOOL REOPENING

POSITION: **COMMENTS**

Aloha Chair Vice-Chair and Board Members,

I stand in support of the comments made by HSTA, HGEA, and UPW. Those comments mainly emphasizing the prudence of postponing the start of the student school year to Monday, Aug. 17, with full instructional days beginning on that date. This is a delay of nine (9) instructional days I feel that they are necessary to ensure that all employees receive proper training, are issued necessary personal protective equipment and have adequate time to prepare for our students' return to campus. Thus, reopening should not be rushed as we have seen major spikes in the infection rate.

Along with further safety protocols I am in further agreement with a policy of mandatory face coverings and cloth masks be worn by all individuals on school campuses and related facilities. Also, there should be a standard system-wide policy for any exception(s) to this policy, including but not limited to a medical note for anyone claiming they cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook Contingency planning. There is a need for clear instructions for administrators, teachers, educational assistants, custodians, and other school employees who are ill and/or must self-isolate due to possible exposure to COVID-19. It was a prudent suggestion made by HSTA, HEGA, and UPW that employees will have no unnecessary direct contact or interaction with students or parents on campus. Furthermore, contingency plans must also be in place if significant portions of the staff choose to retire, resign, take leave, and or utilize their FFCRA leave benefits.

Finally, there is no indication that HODOE has a plan or guidance for administrators on what to do if there are inadequate staff and teachers to start the school year. There is also no plan to assess substitute availability and/or how substitutes will utilize and access the technology and equipment teachers will use for the blended and distance learning.

This is a learning curve for all of us and if we work together, we can ensure the health and safety for all concerned thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm (Speaking in my personal capacity)

Testimony BOE

From: Tim Shim <mauisbest@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tim Shim
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board Members,

I am writing you all again as a parent and a principal. Please support the motion to delay the start of school with students. We need that time to prepare our school to the best that it can be. This time will allow me to work with our entire staff to create, develop, and review all of the necessary protocols and processes in place to support social distancing and health and safety standards.

I would also encourage the Board to delay all learning until the 17th. Our teachers are being asked to provide distance learning with very little time to research best practices, train on new learning platforms, and develop their curriculum. Please understand that we all want the best education that can be provided but we are being required to navigate new waters. Before going on a long trip, it's important to plan for it. This is the same with what is being asked of teachers. It would not be prudent to require teachers to provide distance learning from August 4th to the 17th when they didn't have the time to develop what that would even look like.

Students have been out of school since March. I believe that parents would understand why we would delay start by 2 weeks. I would. This is what I've been communicating to our families and have not received any complaints.

I am a principal that always puts students' best interests and needs at the center of every decision. We have enough room on campus to house 3/4 of our school population. I want to have all of our students here everyday because that is what our students need. However, I had to tell myself that I cannot move forward with that decision because the health and safety of our community is actually in the best interests of students. These are unprecedented times and so every decision at this point should be based on safety and health. Our teachers want to provide quality educational experiences for our students. In order to do so, they need planning time. Giving them the two weeks without students is ample enough time for them to prepare quality experiences for their students.

Thank you for listening.

Mahalo,

Timothy Shim
Father of 3 DOE students and Principal of Pōmaika'i Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Shahinaz Nassar <shahinaz.nassar@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shahinaz Nassar
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

After returning back to school, I realized how much we are not ready at all for students to return back to school next week. We do not have a plan to ensure students, teachers, and staff safety. We are simply hoping for the best!!! This is not enough! We need clear guidelines and assurance on how safety will be implemented. Who will take responsibility if a child, teacher, or EA gets sick? Who will teach my class when I get sick? I have a family to take care for and I am sure others do as well. This is not OK and not enough to tell us "Do your best!". This is a pandemic! We need a PLAN!!

Solution: Give us time to properly plan!! I realize the importance of face to face, but we cannot simply neglect the fact that it is not safe. Virtual teaching is essential at this point. We just need time to successfully plan and train/transition students to a virtual setting.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration.

Shahinaz Nassar
Wailuku Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Hiro <jhiro@innovationspcs.net> on behalf of Jennifer Hiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:51 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony July 30, 2020 Special Meeting

Aloha Board Members,

I will keep my testimony short. For the well-being, spirit and our community network that needs to activate to support whatever decision is made - please make a decision regarding whether or not students will report to campus for learning or if learning will be delivered on-line. I know there are pros and cons and opinions and facts, unions and leaders, Department of Health and mainstream media.

The most important thing that needs to come out of your special meeting tomorrow is **A Decision!** A decision that allows for teachers, education leaders, community support efforts, families and employers to plan and prepare for whichever decision is made.

This day-by-day, two-week-by-two-week decision making is deadly. Whatever the decision, we need it to be made for a significant amount of time so that we can appropriately and effectively plan for whichever delivery is determined. If we aren't prepared to say students can return to campus with existing documents, guidelines, procedures and structures, then set a timeframe for that to be accomplished, rather than waiting week by week as to whose perspective rises to the top as to whether or not that has been accomplished and is satisfactory.

Some schools in the mainland have already set timeframes such as: distance learning until Thanksgiving, distance learning until December, in-person now. We know that creating a starting date that unions don't support, will cause continued intermittent delay - we can't handle that kind of timing - it's deadly to collaboration, planning, supporting our families with planning for appropriate care for keiki in our community.

The indecision, threats of consequences, untimely communication through the ranks of county policies, state level policies, BOE decisions, DOE decisions, Union negotiations and media reports is proving DEADLY for the well-being of our community.

Please make a decision - give a clear timeline and put an end to the: "this is a first step", "we've already provided that guidance", pointing fingers and delay in clear information battle that we are all entwined within as teachers, school leaders, instructional coaches, parents, families and community partners who will need to step up to care for our keiki if they do not return to campus.

While I personally believe students should be back in school, as a school leader and teacher - we need a clear timeline and decision to plan with and prepare for. Please - be the agent for clear, purposeful timeline that can break-up the fighting, negotiations, battles and back and forth between all other agencies impacting educators and families.

Testimony BOE

From: Kiele Maria <kielemaria@gmail.com> on behalf of Kiele Maria
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:55 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to Reopen Schools

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Sharon Muraco. I am a grandparent of a 3rd and 6th grader at Sunset Beach Elementary School on the North Shore of Oahu and a long term resident. As a concerned family member I don't believe the DOE is ready to handle distance learning education for all students this fall. I support the reopening of schools this August with the proper protocol for sanitization and social distancing. Classroom instruction is the best modality for learning. We cannot expect all kids will be able to complete or engage in online learning. Therefore, this will continue to breed a gap.

Issues with distant learning:

- Internet reliability, worse what about the children that are homeless and have no equipment at all?
- Not enough devices – there were times we had to choose which child was able to call into the classroom and who got to engage due to lack of equipment and classes being scheduled at the same time in the same home. There is also the issues of worksheets. Not all kids have printers.
- Children's questions – sometimes kids had to wait hours/day for a response. This would never happen in a in person environment. Questions keep kids engaged and on task.
- Miscommunication – Many mixed messages occur with online learning. Lessons were misinterpreted and we felt ill equipped in the last quarter of 2019-20. There was wiggle room last year due to the newness of the pandemic, but I feel that our children will be at a major disadvantage if we continue to only offer DL. Not to mention their grades when they are trying to move into college and need to apply. Online instruction cannot engage the mood and involvement children need to thrive.
- Child Care – For those of us who are still essential workers how are we going to have elementary kids follow a schedule and log in from home alone? Will BOE or the government be providing funds to cover childcare for those of us who are still reporting to our jobs daily? Who will be responsible for getting them to get their work done while we work? Is my 8-year-old going to be held responsible for not being able to sign in on his own, on time and not being tardy? There are too many unanswered issues with having children stay at home.
- Safety at home – some kids homes are unsafe. We have seen a rise of domestic and child abuse among the Covid Stay at Home Orders. We can not assume all children's homes are safe. Many of them rely on the safety and reassurance of going to school.
- Student Meals – many children and parents rely on not only school lunch but school breakfast to keep them healthy and their brains working. How are they going to eat? Is someone going to be able to feed them and drop off meals or pick them up? I am especially concerned for children in poorer areas who I see daily living in Hawaii's parks and on the beaches.

Ideal Solution from and Essential Working Parent:

Please open up the schools 100% Monday – Friday and try to make the best social distancing practices. The reality is we need to learn to live and adapt to the virus and not avoid it. Online learning is an entirely up in the air and an unreliable slew of problems that I feel both the schools and parents are not prepared to deal with. Please do not mess with the education of our children who are trying their best to succeed in life and let our kids safely return to school.

The article below is a peer reviewed science and evidence journal from around the world demonstrating that children are not driving the pandemic and they are less likely to become infected and seem less infectious.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0962-9>

I whole-heartedly appreciate your review and concern on this matter as we all want what is ultimately best for our keiki!

Aloha,

Sharon Muraco
59-053 Hoalua St
Haleiwa, Hi 96712

Testimony BOE

From: Nancy Brown <nancyjohnsonbrown@gmail.com> on behalf of Nancy Brown
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE testimony for special meeting 8/30/2020

Aloha,

I am a public school parent, military spouse, and an early-childhood educator. I am writing to express my opposition to the reduction of instructional hours and the 180 day school year.

I **OPPOSE the waiver "to allow for reducing the 1,080 student instructional hours and 180-day school year."**

Once instruction begins, we should consider an extended school calendar to account for the many months lost due to the pandemic. A year-round schedule should be considered to accommodate for the uncertain times that we live in now. Perhaps schools will have to close again and students need options open to continue education during summer break and other holidays now.

Nancy J. Brown

Testimony BOE

From: Betty Tamayo <btamayorn@gmail.com> on behalf of Betty Tamayo
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am truly disappointed that there is discussion still occurring regarding start of school for students when they go back next week! I received information about our school restarting as planned at the beginning of the month and had made arrangements with my employer to take vacation to accommodate the 2 weeks of 1/2 day's. To hear about the change in start date is inconsiderate and a failure of other schools for not being prepared.

My children need to be in school to learn and catch up on the loss of education they had since March of this year. Distance learning is NOT an option for working parents. Our school is ready, as I received multiple updates stating the plan for reopening. I don't see how 5 months didn't allow enough time for planning. This virus is not going anywhere and we will all need to adjust and recreate as time progresses, but keeping children home is not acceptable.

Two weeks of additional time will not prove anymore preparedness and is just an excuse. This is not fair for parents and their children.

Betty Tamayo

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kristin A <kris_yellow72@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristin A
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a third grade teacher at Kapolei Elementary. I'm writing my testimony on the following:

[A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools](#)

As a teacher, I want to be able to see and teach my students in person! I miss teaching and being able to interact with students. But, I do not want to be teaching in person without being completely trained and prepared! I feel that we have not been trained and prepared with all the new health protocols and that worries me for the safety of my students and myself!! We have not had the time to be properly trained and we need time to do this! I hope that we will have 2 more weeks to do this!

Thank you!

Kristin

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Olson
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:05 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony regarding delayed student start, S/Y 20-21

Aloha esteemed members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education-

Thank you for listening to the thousands of voices that have explained- some in excruciating detail- why this school year should not be treated as 'business as usual' or anything close to it. I feel confident that you will grant the waiver for instructional hours requested by the DOE, UPW, HGEA and HSTA in order to prepare for a school year unlike any other that ANY of us have ever endured. For that, I thank you as well.

Please note that virtually every educator would prefer to return to a normal, face to face, five-days-a-week instructional model WERE IT SAFE, but as your continued virtual meetings indicate, IT IS NOT YET SAFE. I don't know what kind of training the DOE leadership thinks has been provided to teachers over the summer, but I would defy you to find 100 who have been well trained in either best practices for distance learning OR how to optimize a socially distanced classroom. (Spoiler alert, you won't be able to.)

Regarding the 'push' to have teachers 'standing at the schoolhouse door'? Surely we are not now trying to pretend that our schools are little one room buildings with only a handful of students, who all live on isolated farms.

Distance learning is not the ideal but given the critically necessary restrictions on face to face instruction, it is the best option going forward for now. Nobody should be trying to shame teachers into giving more than they already do. Until every BOE and DOE decision-maker is willing to literally stand shoulder to shoulder with teachers inside those classrooms that are supposed to be so safe, the push should be to provide the best distance learning possible and to provide equitable access for every student to that excellent distance learning.

There seems to be an effort to imply that teachers have been absent since March. I would suggest that it has been DOE leadership- clear plans, clear answers to critical questions and clear communication- that has been completely absent.

Until there are clear, acceptable answers to the critical concerns that the HSTA, HGEA and UPW have shared, I urge you to continue to listen to the voices of those who will actually be in the schools, in the classrooms, with our keiki.

Mahalo-

Ashley Olson
Lahainaluna High School
Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Sulun Novikoff <sulun.novikoff@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sulun Novikoff
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha,

As a first grade teacher and mother to young children, I do not feel safe going back to work. I know that our admin and other health officials are doing their best to follow CDC guidelines, but, there are just too many unknowns to go back... We have given parents the option to do distance learning if they do not feel comfortable sending their children to school, well I do not feel comfortable sending my children to a day with 6-10 other families or teaching face to face in a classroom. I have heard our governor say that, he feels like it is okay for children to go back to school because he has learned that children aren't as affected by the virus...But, what about our grandparents. My mom has underlying health conditions that could be very dangerous if she was to get covid-19.

We as teachers should have the option to work from home and distance teach and care for our children. I don't want to take leave because I know I can teach distantly and care for my children from home... If parents and students are scared, then you should know, so are teachers... Last school year, we left for Summer with guidelines saying that schools should not reopen unless there are 4 weeks of no cases. I thought that was a reach, but I felt safe knowing we would be taking those precautions, so I agreed to come back this year. I thought schools would reopen if there were no cases...But now we are re-opening as our state is having record high infection rates!!! We are trusting that parents will care for their children and monitor their health and not send them to school if they are unwell...But we can see that adults will not follow rules and are spreading the virus, how do you expect children to follow the rules?

We need to get our numbers under control, and we are not going to do that by opening up schools and putting more people together...Our mayors are saying that we should be in groups of 10 people or less? That is not possible with schools open, even if we are trying our best. It is just not safe... Please think about this again and ask yourself, is this risk worth the health and lives of potentially students, their families, teachers, their families, and staff and their families?

Mahalo for your time,
Su Lun Novikoff

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Testimony BOE

From: Sue <kukana@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Sue
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha,

Please! I would like to ask that you **reconsider** sending our keiki to school at this time in the middle of a pandemic. I agree that they have to keep up with their education; however, losing a few months will not make them illiterate. Their lives and the lives of their families are far more important at this time.

We were promised when the school's first had to shut down that they would not open until there were 3 consecutive weeks of ZERO new cases of covid. The numbers are now, double & triple the amount and you wish to send our teachers and children into the "lion's den" and hope for the best.

So many of our homes are multigenerational and it is a known fact that children are carriers and have no problem sharing germs!!! Quoting the low number of cases of infected children is so unfair as a justification, the children have been home and protected and not socializing.

How do we justify exposing our teachers, children, and extended families to the risk when you are telling us to "stay home", "social distance", "wear a mask" and no large gatherings to help keep this virus at bay? Not to mention the extreme heat you expect them to endure, as not all schools have a/c,

In times of war we did not send out keiki to school! This is a war of a different kind, with an invisible enemy and until we can find the right weapon to destroy it, we must stay vigilante and protect our people.

In these modern times and with all the technology there must be a better way to teach our keiki and protect our teachers and families safely. In speaking with other family members in different states/countries with children they have shared that their children are:

- a. Being taught via the public broadcast system (as not everyone has a computer or the money for internet) at the beginning of each week and are given assignments that have to be turned in at end of week and the teachers will review correct etc.
- b. Some are just picking up packets at the beginning of each week and completing and returning the next week when they pick up new packet.
- c. Then there is online completely. And for those that do not have internet or computers, the school boards have obtained donations of laptops and a few hours a day free from internet providers

Right now the schools are not ready and I would not recommend any child/teacher or staff to go back to school. How can they truly concentrate while worrying if they are going to catch coronavirus or if they will be the cause of their family getting sick.

Mahalo,
A vulnerable Kupuna

Testimony BOE

From: MICHAEL ALLGAIER <michaeljamesallgaier@gmail.com> on behalf of MICHAEL ALLGAIER
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:17 AM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Time of students' return to the classroom

Please push back the start of students' return as much as possible. We are in the midst of a pandemic! Waiting until next year would be the best.

Regards,

Michael Allgaier

Testimony BOE

From: tgb Bernales <tgb103@gmail.com> on behalf of tgb Bernales
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:18 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Opening

Dear Legislators,

I urge you to vote for the DELAY OF SCHOOL OPENING a for the sake of our children and the whole school community.

Thank you,

Teresita G. Bernales Ed.D.
IVLP Liaison
PO Box 579
Kailua, HI 96734
Phone: (808) 256-8747
Email: tgb103@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: -Nancy Halley <nancyhalley79@gmail.com> on behalf of -Nancy Halley
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

It is very obvious to me that teachers need a couple of weeks (I prefer students starting back Sept. 7), to learn how to use and prepare not only online curriculum but classrooms and new safety procedures.

I'm listening to our web meeting with our Principal this morning. Teachers are in their classrooms and listening to our meeting on WebX.

One thing our Principal mentioned was the PPE and cleaning supplies that have been ordered are still on Oahu and he is not sure when it will be delivered. This does not make me feel safe to have students on campus.

Cafeteria flow and schedule is still being worked out.

The new procedures and new hybrid bell schedule is a lot of information that needs to be re-read numerous times and practiced by all staff.

We are not ready....yet. We are working towards being ready, but we need some time please.

--

REMEMBER: Buy local! Support our island community. Support local sustainability. Maui no ka oi :^)

Testimony BOE

From: Adrienne Hale <adriannahale@gmail.com> on behalf of Adrienne Hale
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education:

I am a public school teacher at Holualoa Elementary on Hawai'i Island.

I am concerned about the health and safety of our keiki, school staff, kupuna, and community regarding the physical reopening of schools.

I ask that you mandate the use of masks on public school campuses. It is known that the simple act of wearing a mask significantly reduces the spread of Covid-19.

I ask that the Department of Health create clear and posted written guidelines and protocols for schools should a child be diagnosed with Covid-19. These protocols should not be left to individual schools to decide.

I ask that teachers are given the option to telework. Many teachers have underlying health issues that make the particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Many teachers also take care or live with of loved ones who are at high risk for Covid-19.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Adrienne Hale
Holualoa Elementary
Hawai'i Island

Testimony BOE

From: Kathryn Sherwood <kathryn.sherwood@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kathryn Sherwood
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:32 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Please find below my testimony regarding the plan for opening Hawaii public schools. Thank you!

Name: Kathryn Sherwood

Title: 2nd Grade Teacher, Kamali'i Elementary School

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode

Position: Starting the school year in distance-learning mode defeats the purpose of moving the students' start date back to August 17th. If teachers are expected to teach during this time, they will not be able to use this time to prepare for effective distance learning or safe in-person instruction. Please allow teachers to use this time fully to prepare by moving the students' start date to 17th with no distance learning before that time. Thank you for your consideration.

All the best,
Kathryn Sherwood

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Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Masutani <jm202@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jennifer Masutani
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Special Meeting

Aloha,

This is testimony for the BOE Special Meeting. We are providing comments regarding Agenda Item III. C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health.

With the anticipated delay in students returning to school, we urge the BOE to encourage schools to use that extra time to plan how afterschool programs can work alongside teachers and schools to support students during non-school hours and distance learning days.

Many students who have to do distance learning will not have a safe space, academic or social-emotional support (see [results from our recent parent survey](#)). This is not just for elementary students, but also for middle and high school students who still need caring adults in their lives to ensure their safety, social-emotional development, and academic success. We know that families with resources are forming their own "learning pods" with 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 in remote learning hubs. To do so, we ask the following:

- Encourage principals to **invite afterschool programs to schools' planning discussions**, involving them early so they can identify the best ways to share resources and facilities. The most successful school reopening plans will be developed jointly by school leaders, afterschool programs, community-based organizations, parents and teachers, so that together we can ensure our children are learning, safe, engaged, and building academic, social, and emotional skills during the hours their parents are at work.
- Allow afterschool programs to **use school facilities** including outdoor spaces, libraries, cafeterias, and other spaces that permit safe social distancing.
- Create **flexible funding** for schools to partner with afterschool programs to provide a safe learning environment for kids while their parents are at work. Below are some of the federal dollars that can be used to support a redesigned learning day that includes supports that extend beyond the classroom:
 - CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund)
 - CARES Act Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund
 - Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for school-age care
 - Nita Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center funds
 - Perkins - Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding
 - ESSA Title I and Title IV Part A funds
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth employment funding
- Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps and VISTA

Regarding health and safety guidelines, we ask the Hawai'i Department of Education, Hawai'i Department of Health and Hawai'i Department of Human Services to create a unified set of guidelines to mitigate confusion and have a consistent message across the board. Our students and staff's health is of the utmost importance, and unified guidance will not only make it easier for afterschool programs to follow, but for students and families to understand and practice as they go from school to afterschool. Unified guidance could also help standardize health and safety best practices across other child care or youth programming (e.g., sports clubs) so the same practices used in school could be used out of school and better protect all parties involved.

Mahalo,

Paula Adams, Executive Director
Jennifer Masutani, Program Director
Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

COMMENT on C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

Aloha, my name is Dianne ***** and I am a parent of two children in the HIDOE system.

Professionals are saying that some of the long-term effects of COVID-19 related mental health issues include:

- Memory deficits (hippocampal damage)
- Problems with attention
- Difficulty learning

Students will have difficulty focusing their attention and may display irritability, which is an expression of the anxiety that they are experiencing. In the classroom during a pandemic, students will constantly be told to: **“sit down and face forward!” “keep your mask on!” “don’t go near your friend!”** Dr. Matthew Stanford (expert on PTSD) states that with the constant exposure in that kind of context, **“children will not be able to learn effectively.”** In fact, he goes on to say that it will be an **“impossible environment to learn in.”** Right now, the mental health of children is more important than their education. He cautions that, **“We have to be careful not to double stress them,”** by forcing them to return to the classroom during a pandemic with community spread increasing. This is especially true when there are **no clear written guidelines from the Department of Health (DOH) for school reopening; no clear protocols and no training from the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE); and, no clear financial plan from HIDOE to address the \$65M shortfall** that affects the shortage of teachers, substitutes, custodial staff and the procurement of appropriate PPE and cleaning supplies.

When asked about PPEs, including masks, Brian Hallet (HIDOE CFO) replied, **“If they’re not available, we can’t get them.”** That is not an acceptable response. That is like asking soldiers to go to war, but not issuing them Kevlar vests to protect themselves. **Teachers and students cannot merely be considered collateral damage in the classroom.**

HIDOE needs to:

- **provide the proper training for ALL teachers, substitutes, administrators and staff;**
- **supply the schools with the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, and classroom tools related to safe in-person curriculum delivery; and,**
- **deliver effective and equitable distance learning options with actual HIDOE teacher-led instruction/curriculum.**

Please provide schools with adequate time and the proper training to prepare for a safe and successful return to learning.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Lum <jennifer.lum@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Lum
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:41 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Board Meeting 30 JUL 2020

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Pearl City High School. I am a 16 year veteran of the DOE. I am an Air Force Reserve Retiree and a parent of 2 graduates from the public school system here in Hawai'i.

I am a member of Hawaii for a Safe Return to School, a grassroots group of nearly 5,800 community members, mostly parents and teachers of our keiki. We are in favor of a four-phase plan (attached) to reopening our campuses to students. We believe in a proactive approach that is not just reactive after outbreaks of COVID-19 cases occur.

We stand in solidarity to demand answers to the following questions before campuses open to students in our public schools throughout the islands:

What are the criteria by which schools will deal with any person on campus who tests positive for COVID-19?

Has each school been evaluated for ample access to hand-washing sinks, soap, and time during breaks from class to follow the 20-second protocol to be safe? Has this been calculated to accommodate the expected numbers of people on campus at any one time?

Will bathrooms be monitored after each use throughout the day to maintain necessary sanitation?

We have the following feedback to share from members of our group regarding the following memos being presented today from Superintendent Kishimoto:

RE: Agenda Item A.

Under 4. i. "Most substitutes and casual employees will not be reporting to work during the nine (9) days of training and professional development."

We believe that substitute teachers need to be trained as soon as possible to be able to work with students online for virtual learning so they are ready to work. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that there must be a "back-up staffing plan," and **we believe HIDOE must provide training and incentives to ensure there is not a shortage, especially when outbreaks occur. It is only right that these substitute teachers be fairly compensated for time spent in training. In fact, with the risks they are taking to cover classes, we believe they deserve health care coverage during this perilous time.**

Under 4. j. "Facilities implications: None."

Although 4. f. mentions the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS), it is worrisome that there are NO concerns? Things need to be built to make classrooms safe. This is always done on the backs of the teachers.

RE: Agenda Item C.

Under III. 2. "distance learning instructional mode [will last] for at least two weeks or until the Superintendent believes all schools are prepared, whichever is longer."

and

III. 4. “The Board expects the DOE to rely on detailed, written, publicly available guidance from the DOH when formulating its own guidance to schools and the Board urges the DOH to issue such guidance.”

We have lost faith in the Superintendent to make this decision independently and call for an *expert-led multi-stakeholder process conducted using externally-defined benchmarks* to ensure the safest possible schools before students return to campuses. ***We also have lost confidence in our State Department of Health after the release of their “ohana bubble” fallacy which is contrary to science and common sense.*** It is completely dangerous to assume students cannot carry the virus and infect others [cite NY study - 10 and up]. The community is being misled by this false narrative and will lead to community spread of horrific proportions. We need facts to inform these life and death situations, not opinions. We call for a robust community education campaign and suggest using something memorable and easy to understand, like “six degrees of COVID Bacon,” to educate our communities about how quickly community spread can overwhelm our islands with cases.

We recommend the BOE appoint a Task Force for a Safe Return to Campuses to be assembled and have trust in our Lt. Governor Josh Green to lead this effort.

In collaboration with health care professionals and first responders, we and they are appalled that teachers and other staff on campus are being expected to triage potential COVID patients with no medical training nor the appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment). This is beyond an OSHA violation. It is inhumane, unethical, and reckless.

Finally, under III. 3. “The Board expects everyone on public school campuses to wear a face mask (or a face shield if a medical condition prevents the extended use of a face mask)”

We believe the word “documented” must be added before “medical condition” to make sure that there is a valid reason why a person would not be wearing a face mask on campus.



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

Mahalo,

Jen Lum
Academy of International Business and Design
SkillsUSA Advisor
Anime Club Advisor
Pearl City High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Kekoa Michael Bay <kbaysquared@gmail.com> on behalf of Kekoa Michael Bay
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

Thank you for your diligent effort to make decisions that are best for our schools. I would like to testify in regard to the school calendar. After reviewing the proposal from the DOE, it is not a feasible solution to cut 9 instruction days out from the first semester. For schools on a block schedule that would removes 1 – 1.5 units of instruction for students who attend on a daily basis. If there are any changes to the calendar, the reduction needs to be balanced between both semesters so our students can have appropriate and adequate instruction.

The option to do distance learning to start is a far more feasible option if we are focusing on the education of our students. If all the concern is only about the fear of COVID rather than the needs of the students, cutting out educational days makes sense. However, if we truly are concerned about our role to educate students, we need to educate them properly and removing 9 instructional days is not reasonable or fair to our students. The loss of instruction from fourth quarter last year is already significant, we don't need to compound it by sacrificing instructional days this school year.

We are educators. We teach students. It doesn't matter if it is distance learning or in-person, but we need that time to teach. If we make any delays, let's only delay the face to face instruction, not our students' learning.

Mahalo,

Kekoa Michael Bay
Pearl City High School
Special Education - Science

Testimony BOE

From: Scott Muromoto <smuromoto@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Scott Muromoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

7-29-20

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm again testifying on Discussion of Educations Comprehensive Plan for reopening schools plan for 2020 – 2021 school year.

Just within the last day or so the Mayor of Honolulu was on tv saying that he wants to limit the number of social gathering participants to 10 people or less, and that each individual “must,” wear a mask. When I go to any business, there are reminders of social distancing guidelines and protocols posted and verbalized to patrons all the time. All of those procedures need to be followed before being admitted into the place of establishment.

Although neither of these examples will guarantee that we won't contract Covid-19, they do provide a reasonable standard of care that will increase the chances that we will be safe. As an educator for 25 plus years, I have come to recognize and understand the importance of standards. At the elementary level, we evaluate students using a rubric that applies exemplars of ME (Meets with Excellence), MP (Meets Proficiency), DP (Developing Proficiency), and WB (Well Below). If we apply the same type of exemplars to the two examples above, how would it grade out?

Situation number one, limiting the number participants to 10 or less, each individual “must” wear a mask. I have a roster of 22 students in a classroom that is about 24 x 20. I don't know if all students will be wearing a mask all the time, and it's hard to predict or to imagine that second graders will be able to keep their masks on for an extended period of time without pulling it down or taking it off because it gets hot or they are just fidgety.

So now let's look at what the exemplars might look like.

ME- Less than 10 people, everyone social distanced, all wearing masks 100% of the time, safety guidelines are visibly displayed, there are sanitizers and protocols in place, and everyone understands what they are supposed to do in any given situation.

MP- Up to 10 people, people social distanced, all are wearing masks majority of the time, safety guidelines are given orally, there are social distance guidelines in place, there are sanitizers and the expectation is that everyone knows what to do in any given situation.

DP- 10 people or a little more, people not socially distanced according to the CDC guidelines of 6 ft., most people come to school with a mask, they don't wear it the majority of the time, most of the campus has sanitizers, shields etc., most people know what the protocols are for collecting work, going to the restroom, what happens if people get sick, how to line up for lunch or emergencies and making sure we are following social distance guidelines.

WB- More than 10 people for a prolonged period of time, not socially distanced and in some cases it's half the recommended distance of 6ft spacing. Again, not sure if all participants will have a mask, not sure if we have

sanitizers, don't know what the protocols are in various situations because we haven't been trained properly and we weren't given a chance to run trial models to ensure that the protocols work.

The reality is that I have 22 students on my roster, some may opt for distance learning, however, let's say half the students still come for face-to-face learning. I still wouldn't be meeting the standard of 10 people or less in accordance to social distancing guidelines. I have sanitizers, and I wear a mask and a shield, but I don't know what the new protocols are or should be for teaching face-to-face during this pandemic. Everyday classroom routines need to be rethought, as well as all school procedures for things like lunch and students going to the restroom. Let me be clear, it's not for lack of trying on the school's part, but it's like chasing our tails as things change daily and the schools seem to have to try and figure things out for themselves. Case and point, my wife and I both teach at different schools from different districts and although there are some commonalities, there are many differences between what we do and what they are doing. Where's the standard for all involved? Why are there no statewide procedures or protocols given by the DOE, BOE, or the DOH so that everyone knows what to do and how to do it? In that regard, I think it's easy to see that we are well below in terms of being able to start the year as planned.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the August 4 start date for students. Students, parents, administrators, teachers and anyone else involved in the education of our children deserve a lot better than starting the school year when we are at best DP, in regards to being properly prepared to start the year. Again, if you were in our shoes, how confident would you feel to start the year safely? Think about it. I appreciate you taking the time to read my testimony and I hope you find it in your heart and conscience to do the right thing. Thank you for your time, patience, and understanding.

Sincerely,
Scott Muromoto
2nd Grade Teacher
Ma'ema'e Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Janice Heidt <jheidt@turbin.net> on behalf of Janice Heidt
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Board of Education Meeting on July 30, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

I have three sons; one son just graduated from Kalaheo High School in 2020, and two boys continuing in Kalaheo High School in the coming school year. I was very disappointed in how the school system handled the shutdown at the end of last year. My children were at home not doing any school work and not going to school from March 2020 to the end of the year. The quality of virtual teaching was severely lacking and the fact that no grades counted (they received an average of their prior grades) did not help. As every week passed in the lockdown I hoped that the teachers would be shown how to provide online classes, but that never happened. This was most evident when my son received a 2 on his AP Calculus exam. He has taken 5 AP exams and on all other exams he has received a 4 or 5. Now suddenly he learned nothing since March and received a 2 on his AP exam. My son is intelligent, receiving a 1475 on his SAT and a 34 on his ACT, so I relied on the school to teach him, but that did not happen. Clearly home schooling does not work. It is difficult for me to get my kids to stop playing video games to complete their chores at home, and now the school wants me to supervise their home school education?? My husband and I work all day so we cannot supervise the kids and make sure they are doing school work on the days that they are not in school. I expect that they will watch TV and play video games all day while we are at work.

I was hoping the school system would provide Webex video conferencing for every class so the kids could be virtually in class on the days that they are at home. They would go to school 2-3 days a week and on the 2-3 days at home they would attend school via video conference. Then at least they would be engaged in school all day while at home and continue to learn. With the current system they will be only in school half of the time, and will likely only learn half of the information. The current plan will only make the kids fall farther behind. Instead of 180 days of school they will have 90 days of school, and that is not acceptable. It will be another year with the kids falling behind in their studies. I am most concerned for my child in 11th grade. He was in Algebra II last year, but that was cut short, so I anticipate difficulty with the PSAT and ACT this year since Algebra is a big part of those college exams. Most parents cannot afford a tutor for their children, so this failure to provide an education will impact these high school children for the rest of their lives.

I understand everyone's fear of Covid 19. It is a virus that can kill people and we have watched it get out of control on the mainland and in many parts of the world. However, Hawaii has been very successful in managing and controlling the spread of the virus. Certainly we have all learned that wearing masks and washing hands (or using hand sanitizer) are the best ways to prevent the spread of the virus. Making sure the kids wear masks in school, and having hand sanitizer available, should get the kids back to school safely.

Regarding starting the school 2 weeks late, I believe that this is another unnecessary delay for the kids. I am sure the teachers can get training on how to clean the classrooms, and the new school protocols, within a couple of days. Do they really need 2 weeks? At the most it should be a 1 week delay.

However, if the school does decide to implement a webex video conferencing for the kids to attend the class virtually on the 2 days they are at home, then I could understand a 2 week delay. The teachers can be taught to use the webex in their classroom. This way there can be teaching 5 days a week.

Thank you for consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Janice Heidt

Testimony BOE

From: Travis T Masuda <travis.t.masuda@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Travis T Masuda
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

While I do believe that it is better to delay the start of students coming to school, I feel that it would be best to begin the school year through 100% distance learning. This virus is far too new to know all of its effects and consequences to school-aged students. While the current data states that children 0-10 years old are less likely to contract and spread the disease, please think about how many chances they have actually had to do that. Not being in school, kept safe at home, children have not even had the chance to spread the disease in a manner that can be studied, especially not in a region with COVID cases on the rise. Not to mention high school aged students contract and spread the virus as much as adults do.

A quick google search will show cases of COVID in children are on the rise in Florida, a state that has mostly opened up and is characterized as not following much of the social distancing or masks guidelines. The fact that these cases in children are on the rise without school even starting yet, is a bad sign of things to come. Yes, I and all teachers believe in-person school is the best method of education, however, these are not normal times. I would rather have my students fall a little behind than not being able to come to school permanently.

If the delay is granted, we should begin the conversation of starting school through distance learning only until we have a better understanding and handle on this pandemic. As much as I want to see my students back in class, I much more would like to see them healthy.

Thank you for your time,

Travis Masuda

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Testimony BOE

From: Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heather Gostage
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:04 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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. Students should not return to campus until it is safe. My children will be participating in 100% distance learning.

Right now, leaders in Hawaii are suggesting groups should be no larger than 10. Why is it okay for me to have 15 students in my classroom? 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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Testimony BOE

From: Heather Gostage <heather.gostage@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heather Gostage
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:04 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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. Students should not return to campus until it is safe. My children will be participating in 100% distance learning.

Right now, leaders in Hawaii are suggesting groups should be no larger than 10. Why is it okay for me to have 15 students in my classroom? 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

Testimony BOE

From: Heather G <okinawa334@gmail.com> on behalf of Heather G
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:05 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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. Students should not return to campus until it is safe. My children will be participating in 100% distance learning.

Right now, leaders in Hawaii are suggesting groups should be no larger than 10. Why is it okay for me to have 15 students in my classroom? Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Heather Gostage

"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

Testimony BOE

From: Jenifer Tsuji <jentsuji@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenifer Tsuji
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:08 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Chair Payne and members of the Board:

My name is Jenifer Tsuji and I am currently a music teacher at Keonepoko Elementary in Pāhoa on Hawai'i Island. I am writing to ask you to approve the proposal to delay the beginning of the school year to give us more time to prepare.

My school is Title 1 and high poverty (over 90% free/reduced lunch). Many of my students need to return to school as soon as possible to get needed stability socially, nutritionally, and academically. Having a safe place where they can learn and be fed is a huge priority.

But the 'safe place' and 'as soon as possible' are things that are still not guaranteed at this point. Many of our students are dependent on grandparents and elderly relatives for child care, some are in situations where their grandparents are their primary caretakers. Without more research, training, and preparation we cannot assure these families safety from the COVID-19 virus. Our numbers statewide—although still statistically low compared to the rest of the country—are increasing daily. We still do not really know how the virus affects people long term, nor do we fully understand how it is spread. While children seem to possibly be at lower risk, the data is not clear. Young children are still learning basic hygiene, and will possibly be putting each other, as well as teachers and their families, at risk.

Our students and their families need you to approve the delay, and even consider going to full distance learning until we know for sure how best to protect everyone in our communities. We as teachers will work hard to make distance learning a successful experience until we can be sure everyone will be safe. Our administration and other school staff have been hard at work preparing for every possible scenario, and we will do the same.

Please—listen to the guidance of the medical community, and to the testimony today. We want to teach. We miss our students so much. We do need to return safely as soon as possible, however it just isn't possible to return safely yet.

Mahalo,
Jenifer Tsuji
Keonepoko Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Mireille Ellsworth <ellsworthhsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Mireille Ellsworth
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY for July 30, 2020 Emergency Meeting
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

July 29, 2020

RE: Agenda items III. A. & C. SUPPORT w/ modifications

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, a teacher at Waiakea High School for the past 17 years. I strongly support DOE's recommendations to allow more time for schools to prepare for student instruction to begin. It is particularly challenging to design online classes for the elective courses I teach, Drama and Speech Communication. I am concerned that **not all students will have access to cameras** that enable them to film themselves or participate in synchronous online class meetings. Without this assurance, I find it hard to design my online classes and plan. I need this assurance as soon as possible in order to make efficient use of my time before instruction begins.

Furthermore, I am greatly concerned about the lack of a plan to **train substitute teachers**. Depending on the accommodations I am given under ADA, it is imperative that a substitute be able to teach my students virtually if I am forced to take leave. There needs to be a plan and time allotted (as well as fair compensation) for substitute teachers to be well-trained for quality continuity of my students' education.

I am writing this on my lunch break on my first day back on campus, and I am horrified by the number of school personnel socializing in the hallway without the proper six feet of social distance and some without masks that I am witnessing from the window of my classroom as I isolate myself to stay safe. Adult to adult transmission of the virus has likely begun among my colleagues, and I do not feel safe at all. **Masks MUST be required from the time everyone gets out of vehicles in the parking lot until they leave campus.**

It is comforting to read in Chair Payne's memo that instruction will begin online for at least two weeks, but I am VERY uneasy that the decision to commence in-person instruction will be at Superintendent Kishimoto's discretion. I have lost confidence that her decisions will protect our keiki, their families, and school personnel. Instead, I call for a **Reopening of Schools Task Force to bring all stakeholders into this decision** using expert scientific facts, not opinions. I feel Lt. Governor Josh Green would be an excellent leader for such a task force. After the ridiculous propaganda of the "ohana bubble," sadly, I have lost all faith in the judgment of our state's Department of Health officials.

I favor the **Four Phase plan** of the group Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools (attached); however, I feel the 12 person cap per classroom during Phase 3 may have to be lowered. Again, our state needs expert medical professionals to determine these things using the cutting edge research that continues to be released.

Networking with healthcare professionals, I have learned that the potential triage teachers and other school personnel are being asked to do when students are in our care is dangerous without the proper training. If I am being asked to do this, I cannot risk my health. One wrong move, and I could get infected, and with my underlying conditions, it could mean permanent medical conditions for the rest of my life, or worse, death. I did not survive breast cancer to die because of the reckless decisions of my employer. I am being asked to choose my livelihood or my life. I choose life.

I will continue working on what I can today and try to control my anxiety, but frankly, this is an unhealthy and terrifying beginning to this school year.

Thank you for listening to those of us on the front lines. Please, treat us with respect.

Mahalo,
Mireille Ellsworth,
Teacher,
Waiakea High School

Reference: www.hawaiiisafereturn.org

Testimony BOE

From: Caryn Fukuda <caryfuk@mail.regent.edu> on behalf of Caryn Fukuda
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Caryn Fukuda
Subject: testimony

Dear Members of the BOE:

My name is Caryn Fukuda and I am an English teacher at Mililani High School.

These are unprecedented times. We are all trying our best to cope with the pandemic and to keep teaching at the quality level. We are grateful if we are given the extra nine days to prepare for the future reopening of schools, especially with the lessons toward improving our online classroom.

As of Tuesday, July 28, 2020, we have 47 new covid cases which brings the total to 1,757 cases in Hawaii. I think that our numbers definitely show that we still need to phase in the reopening of schools at this time. In speaking with people who survived covid from other states, one lady who survived covid came out to social media via facebook to support the teachers in holding back the reopening of schools. I had the opportunity to speak honestly with her about her case. She is still weak and recovering but wanted to tell as many people as she could about the dangers of covid. She admits that she was careless at times when the numbers started to stabilize, she was not consistent with her mask use and started to socialize again. My classmate from Regent University online disappeared for three weeks and ended up dropping out of the university. She caught it from her aunt who was careless and also inconsistent with mask use and did not adhere to the social distancing warnings. My classmate was the lucky one, she came back after three weeks in the hospital but her aunt passed away in a coma in the same hospital.

I cannot imagine in the slightest what would happen if we release these students back into the schools. We don't even have an accurate number of students who are coming to the classroom in person, since parents are still unsure about the quality of education they will be receiving online. Most parents are apprehensive because of what they are equating with and remembering as to the quality of online education their child received when our schools suddenly closed in March. At that time, the teachers and administration were very unsure and ill-prepared to deliver appropriate online learning.

The teachers are now to approach a new form of teaching, to teach hybrid for some schools or 100% online. My school chose the hybrid method. It will be difficult to try to include both the students who are physically present as well as those who are at home. I think that what is better is that both students be together in real time whether at home or at school. What is best for the current situation; however, is to deliver all instruction 100% online.

My push for the safety of everyone is to do what other schools have chosen to do in preservation of everyone's health and safety. We need to keep the children at home with 100% online instruction with our teachers there to instruct and conduct school as normal.

With the phased in reopening of schools based on the timeline of the number of new covid cases present, we could safely reopen schools in the next few months.

In 2004, when I graduated from the University of Phoenix online with my Masters in Education, initially the DOE refused our degrees saying it was invalid because we earned it online. The two years which it took for my peers and I to earn this

degree were time-consuming, and difficult. It was a juggling act for most of us, who had to work simultaneously. But it was probably one of the best learning experiences that I have ever had. Our peers testified and eventually gave up. It was only the two of us left and we had to convince the DOE to have foresight and to accept our earnest diplomas from our online school. After much deliberation, we won! I am proud to say that we paved the way for other online schools to gain acceptance in Hawaii. We were the very first online Masters in Education class in the State of Hawaii.

I know that we can make this happen. We need to do a phased in reopening of schools. Evidence and inquiry into the safety of hybrid learning is the same as reopening the schools and allowing them to come to school face-to-face. We need to do 100% distance learning for now until the numbers of covid cases decline significantly.

Thank you

Caryn Fukuda

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda Nelson <nelson.amandalee@gmail.com> on behalf of Amanda Nelson
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

As a teacher and technology coordinator, I am in support of the HSTA's commitment to keeping teachers and students safer by postponing the start of the student school year to Monday, August 17. I believe as an educator that it is important for me to know that I can safely provide an education for all of my students. I also believe as a technology coordinator that facing the challenges that come with online learning is possible, but giving us more time as a school to prepare will help us better support our students with technology for the remainder of the year. I know that it is essential for teachers and students to have the materials prepared for them to be the most successful and having the additional planning time is essential for our health and safety. This time to prepare is also key for us to be able to provide our students with the quality of education that they deserve.

Mahalo,
Amanda Nelson

Testimony BOE

From: Sally Meditz <dmeditz@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Sally Meditz
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:31 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: SCHOOL

Can you shorten days and hours and still get Federal funding? Can you fire any teacher contracting covid 19 as they know the precautions to take and haven't?

Testimony BOE

From: Katherine Alarcio <kgalarcio@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine Alarcio
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:31 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 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.

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.

As teachers, we want to be back in school with our students. Back to "normal." But not at the cost of anyone's health and safety. Below is a four phase plan, with the end goal of students being back on campus, full-time.

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teacher
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

Phase 3: HYBRID LEARNING

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Learning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week

Phase 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

- Benchmarks will be decided upon by all stakeholders and based on science and health
- Benchmarks will be measurable
- Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed

Please hear what many people are saying. We want to return to school, but in a safe and secure manner. Implementing a phased reopening, with clear steps and benchmarks, will ensure the safety of everyone involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Katherine Alarcio
Pearl City Elementary School
Resource Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Leanne Dunn <leanne.m.dunn@gmail.com> on behalf of Leanne Dunn
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:35 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Educators,

As a first grade teacher at Makawao Elementary on the island of Maui I am deeply concerned about students and educators transitioning back to the classroom during this pandemic. I acknowledge there are difficult and unpredictable circumstances at this time out of our control and understanding. In writing this email I hope that I can help you realize the extent of how as educators we will be stretched this coming year.

During the shut down in March I attempted to teach through distance learning. I consider myself to be experienced in online learning as I earned my Bachelor's degree through hybrid learning and my Masters degree through online learning. Also I consider myself to be technologically competent except nothing prepared me for the world of distance teaching and learning. I have participated in courses, webinars and trainings since then to grow in my own abilities. There's more for me to grow in except I know I'm more prepared for this next school year than last March.

Of course that time is different than now as we prepare for the upcoming school year and we have more experiences teaching through different platforms. Distance learning, communicating with families and learning how to teach in this new environment takes more time than what education was even last spring. In addition to preparing to welcome students back to campus in this new climate I am also requesting that the board consider giving schools more time to learn how to teach in a distance learning format before 1) beginning distance learning 2) teaching students in any capacity or platform. At this time we aren't even aware of how many students and what students we have in our class for the upcoming year due to constant changes within our school. What we would have prepared for in the past during the opening of school is not even on our radar at this point.

I appreciate your consideration during this time and I am thankful for your hard work in representing all share holders during this time. Please feel free to contact me as needed.

Me ke aloha,
Leanne Dunn
808.280.8861

Testimony BOE

From: Luke McKenney <mckenne9@hotmail.com> on behalf of Luke McKenney
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Support for 4 August Opening

Luke McKenney, Parent

General Business Meeting

School Reopening

Support for 4 August Opening

Board of Education,

I have looked over some of the proposed reopening plans and largely support them. Our keiki have suffered enough and have been shouldered with at least \$3 trillion in federal debt and growing.

However, I recommend offering partial face-to-face services on Saturdays to those students who would be only offered two days a week services under the current plan. If the primary argument for limited services is the need to keep social distancing to six feet or more, expand the amount of time the limited space is available. Currently schools are empty two days a week. What a waste of limited resources given the crisis.

Sincerely,

Luke McKenney

Testimony BOE

From: melissa spectre <melspectre@hotmail.com> on behalf of melissa spectre
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re-opening of schools

Aloha,

I am the mother of a 9th grader and a 4th grader and I am not. I for table at this point sending my kids back to school. I understand the the teachers and other staff do not feel prepared to go back at this point and I support them. Please push back the re-opening until staff is properly trained and prepared.

Thank you,

Melissa Spectre

Haleiwa, HI

808-225-8000

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Ferguson <sferguson@wailae.edu> on behalf of Sarah Ferguson
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony regarding Action Item III.C

Good morning,

My name is Sarah Ferguson, and I am a first grade teacher Wai'ala'e Public Charter School. I would like to offer testimony to the Special Board of Education meeting which will take place on Thursday, July 30th, specifically regarding Action Items III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.3, and III.C.4: [Board expectations regarding: \(1\) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; \(2\) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; \(3\) mandating masks on public school campuses; and \(4\) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health.](#)

Regarding III.C.1, I **support** the allotment of additional training and professional development days prior to students returning to school. I feel this will allow teachers to properly establish their online classrooms and set their classes up for success with virtual learning. This planning time is critical if we are to offer high-quality education to our students who will be utilizing the 100% distance learning option.

Regarding III.C.2, I **support** beginning the school year in distance learning mode, as the number of cases is increasing significantly here in Hawaii and regulating mask use in classrooms will be challenging. Unless the number of cases goes down significantly, bringing students back to school in person without a contingency plan is dangerous.

Regarding III.C.3, I **support** mandating masks on public school campuses. This safety measure is important to keeping staff and students protected.

Regarding III.C.4, I **support** receiving detailed, written guidance from the Department of Health regarding procedures for dealing with COVID-19 in a public school setting. This guidance is critical before we return to in person school.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Sarah Ferguson
1st Grade Teacher
Wai'ala'e Public Charter School

Testimony BOE

From: northshoremama@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools opening

I support the delaying opening schools until it is safe.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Karyn Harada <karynharada@hotmail.com> on behalf of Karyn Harada
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Aug 17 th reopening

To whom it may concern:

Opening schools is vital to the emotional and educational health of our keiki but at what cost? I hope it is not done at the risk of losing your loved one or my loved one or anyone's loved one. We can prevent deaths. Please insist that The Department of Health establish strict guidelines for ALL schools to follow should an outbreak occur.

And if anyone can share an idea of how 100+ students wash up for lunch in a timely fashion, with only 5 boy stalls and 5 girl stalls in our building, I'm an open to it!!

Finally, if the Mayor says no more than 10 people gatherings are allowed, I think opening schools face to face is hypercritical. With distance learning, I will have 14 second graders. Please make the right and safe decisions for ALL DOE schools to follow. Teachers need your help!!! Everyone wants to please parents, teachers count, too!

Aloha-
K Harada

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Denise Mazurik <dmazurik808@gmail.com> on behalf of Denise Mazurik
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item III. C.

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

Dear Board Members:

I am writing in support of a [phased reopening](#) to the 2020-21 school year as suggested by the group Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools and according to benchmarks set out by HSTA, HGEA, and UPW in their joint testimony. If we say health and safety are our paramount concerns, an in-person return to schools must be dictated by health and safety measures being met, not by a particular date on the calendar. As I go to submit this I just learned we have hit our highest single day caseload yet with 109 new infections. We have seen this happen in other states, this is the exact wrong time to open schools, colloquially known as “germ factories” because of how efficiently they spread illness. My remarks are more specific to secondary education as I am a middle school teacher.

The two main arguments for rushing an in-person return to schools are (1) parents need childcare and (2) children need a quality education. Even when the hybrid plans roll out, students will only be on campus about two days a week. In-person school may mitigate the childcare issue, but it does not solve it. Solutions exist which can either keep parents with their children, such as, various kinds of employer offered sick and family leave, Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) leave, and Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) leave. Solutions also exist which can return parents to work full time, including continuing arrangements used during the summer months when children are not in school, and child care subsidies which have waived income limits in the face of Covid. If parents do not have a family member or friend who can step into the role of paid caregiver, the Hawaii non-profit People Attentive to Children (PATCH) can help connect them with a provider via their online database. I am sure there are plenty of college students and displaced tourism industry employees who would like to earn money as a childcare provider, particularly as extra unemployment amounts expire. PATCH could assist these folks to add their names to the available caregiver database (all providers must pass a background check). These providers can attend to the basic needs of children, help them log into their distance learning platforms, and assist in troubleshooting issues with the guidance of the HIDOE technology help desk. The teachers will be trained to handle all curriculum delivery and assessment and will actively communicate with parents and/or childcare providers. This model gets parents back to work full time, provides jobs for local caregivers, and sets the stage for quality distance learning.

There is also concern over the quality of education received via distance learning. The online and packet-based learning which characterized Quarter 4 of the 2019-20 school year was not distance learning, it was crisis learning. Distance learning delivered by trained teachers, employing best practices and using appropriate platforms and tools provides an excellent education, particularly for older children and adolescents. This is the very group of students a recent large-scale, peer-reviewed study determined [spread Coronavirus at least as easily as adults](#), if not more easily. In fact, the social distancing and universal masking protocols required for health and safety in the classroom actually remove any of the benefits of in-person schooling for this population of students (group work/collaboration, close instruction with the teacher, socializing with peers), making distance learning a higher quality option.

Let us utilize distance learning at least until the health and safety benchmarks outlined by HSTA, HGEA, and UPW have been met. Health and safety should come first. I fear for what will happen if we return in-person before health and safety measures are in place. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Denise Mazurik

Testimony BOE

From: Wailani Farm <wailani.farm@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Wailani Farm
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As an elementary teacher and a person who suffers from asthma, I don't feel that our schools are ready to safely open. To be quite honest, I'm not looking forward to face-to-face teaching this year with the stress of worrying about the virus due to the severity of my asthma. I carry two inhalers, a portable nebulizer and prednizone (steroids) for my asthma. I am expected to do a social distance of 6 feet everywhere else AND use a mask, but I'm hearing that this is not the case if we reopen the schools. Seriously???. Where's the equity in that?

In order to safely open, I think that we need clear guidelines as to all procedures for this pandemic. I recently heard that there was some kind of training over the summer. Apparently, I wasn't one of them. Teachers must be adequately and thoroughly trained in distance learning before schools open. Not all teachers know how to do online teaching. It's not something you can tell everyone to do and learn it on their own. Integrating technology and curriculum takes time.

There is a misconception in the public that teachers get paid over the summer for doing nothing. What people don't realize is that our pay is stretched out over the 12 months instead of getting all of our pay during the months when school is in session. People have asked me why we didn't train over the summer since we had the time. First of all, I wasn't aware of the training. Secondly, I am not employed over the summer.

I am requesting that you delay the opening of the school year until there are written guidelines and all are clear as to all procedures for this pandemic.

Mahalo,
W. Farm
Wailuku Elementary

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July 30, 2020

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

Action Item III. C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's (HIDOE) 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health (DOH).

We support all elements of Item III. C.

Since the beginning of the pandemic and the DOE's move to distance learning, HE`E has met weekly to discuss how students and families were coping with the transition. By listening to the HE`E stakeholders, it was clear that there were major disparities in the ability of individual students to engage with online learning; and also, with an individual teacher's ability to teach remotely. Fourth quarter concerns around digital access shifted to summer school opportunities to collect data, and soon, fears about fall re-opening were raised. We shared these issues weekly with the DOE in our meetings for months but there was never an opportunity to proactively and productively engage in these areas.

Schools may not be ready for students to arrive on August 4 because:

- It seems that the DOE and BOE did not prioritize a full distance systemic learning option from the outset, and did not use the fourth quarter or summer for robust training or professional development;
- In the tentative agreement to delay school openings by 9 days, there does not seem to be improvement or clarity regarding health and safety requirements;
- Nine additional days may not be adequate to refine school opening strategies, and school staff may still not be fully trained on health and safety measures and distance learning by August 17;
- Is there a specific rationale for not going virtual for the start of school?

There seems to be a lack of clarity and confusion regarding health and safety requirements. Having a standardized, directed, clear policy across all schools and a detailed, written, and publicly posted guidance from DOH may be helpful. The UH System guidelines are by far clearer, easier to understand, and standard across the system. UH has a systematic way of screening all students. Face coverings, handwashing, and social distancing are mandated throughout the system. (See Appendix 1) At HIDOE, a more comprehensive array of key elements of mitigating the risk of the spread of COVID-19, (screenings, face coverings, and transparent shields between desks, handwashing, avoiding crowded halls and stairs, and 6 feet social distancing) need to be required. The BOE and HIDOE should provide this kind of clarity in state level guidance before a full re-opening.

It might have been better had the DOE prioritized distance learning from the outset, utilizing CARES monies to ensure internet and device access, establish 24/7 technical support for all, and provide comprehensive professional development in distance learning for all teachers. HE'E Coalition and the US Congressional Delegation were asking specific questions about data in April to insure more clarity during the Virus.

While we know how difficult the decisions concerning DOE schools may be, we believe it might be better for student instruction for the 2020-2021 year begin in distance learning mode. This may allow for more time to plan for face-to-face learning.

Once we are more certain with the COVID-19 situation, we can do a gradual phasing in of in-person learning. We hear loud and clear that families and school staff are fearful of returning to schools. Only when everyone feels confident that it is safe to send students to in-person learning, should we provide that option. And, when we are ready for in-person education, the first priority should be given to our high-needs students.

For distance learning, we believe a systemic, unified approach is the best way to ensure quality equitable access to education across the state. All students need have access to internet connection and devices. We need *one* supported video conferencing platform, learning management, and student information system across the state so that there is consistency for delivering teaching and learning and communicating to families. We believe that two-way communication with schools and families is essential to student success, and particularly critical in distance learning. Finally, we need resources to be devoted to comprehensive training on these tools so that quality teaching and learning can occur.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

Appendix 1

The following table is a comparison of the UH system and HIDOE on four critical elements of COVID-19 risk mitigation.

	UH System ¹	HIDOE ²
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 are report any positive or suspected cases to the University Health Services.	Schools shall screen employees, students and visitors for overt signs of illness in a safe and respectful manner. Upon arrival, interview and inspect all individuals (from at least 6 feet away) using a symptom checklist.
Facial Coverings	All employees, students and visitors are expected to wear facial coverings when indoors (classrooms, labs, shops and common spaces such as hallways and elevators) and where physical distancing is not possible.	Face covering for adults and students must be worn when outside the classroom especially when physical distancing is difficult. In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. Classroom teachers make decisions in their classrooms throughout the school day based on the instructional methods they are using for curriculum delivery. This may create a need for putting on or taking off masks, therefore, in compliance with HSTA MOU SY 2020-2021 COVID-response, teachers will determine routines and rules related to wearing of face covering in their particular classrooms. ³
Hand Washing	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	Hand-washing or sanitizing stations must be available at the entrances of school, near or inside of classrooms and in all meeting areas (library, dining hall, offices). All students and staff should wash or sanitize their hands frequently, including upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing or sneezing, in between classes and before dismissal.

¹ <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2020/07/22/uh-manoa-covid-19-plan-for-fall/>

² <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/2020-07%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Handbook%20%28SY%202020-21%29%20Version%201.pdf>

³ <http://www.hsta.org/Portals/0/Documents/Negotiations%20Committee/HSTA%20agreement%20COVID-19%20July%2013%202020%20searchable.PDF>

Social and Physical Distancing	We must all practice safe physical distancing, maintaining a distance of at least six feet from each other.	Guidance indicating configuration of classrooms will be updated to reflect maintaining a distance of at least six (6) feet. Configuration at a distance of between three (3) and six (6) feet may be allowed with approved contract exceptions and additional precautions such as mandatory face coverings.
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* An example is the Daily Check-In APP they developed for student screening of symptoms. Every day, students, through an APP, will be asked one questions regarding whether or not they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. This information will be sent to the UH IT department, where it is processed and managed for the entire system. While it is more difficult for the centralized office to do this rather than let each campus figure it out on their own, UH decided that it was the best way to organize and manage students and the COVID-19 situation.

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: suzanne braun <wahinesuzanne@gmail.com> on behalf of suzanne braun
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Ed Members,

I've written you twice now about school reopening and it feels more urgent with our cases locally surging. How does it make sense for us to reopen now when cases are so much worse than when we closed in March?

I'm a school counselor at Mokapu Elementary on MCBH. Our classes split in half, are still more than can fit in the classrooms and still be only 3 ft apart. What do we do when we get new students, which we do all year long since our students are military? Will funds be provided to add more classes/teachers? Where will we put them? So many serious unanswered questions.

I'm high risk and do not have a huge bank of sick leave. What do I do when a student or staff get sick and we have to quarantine for weeks at a time? It's not fair to make us take leave without pay and exposure tens of thousands of kids, staff, and their families plus the community at large when there is a safe alternative. Virtual learning can work for one semester if done right. The DOE should have spent the last few months providing training and have a written plan for all scenarios. Kaala El already has a case and school hasn't even begun! If distance learning is implemented right and mandatory, unlike last year, it can work and keep everyone safe.

Pushing the start date off two weeks won't do anything to make our schools safe but at least it'll provide for some important training. Ppe is still not getting to our schools though.

Thank you again. Please support us all and keep us safe by starting first semester online.

Yours truly,
Suzanne Braun, MSCP
K-3 Counselor

Testimony BOE

From: Deni O'Shea <denioshea@gmail.com> on behalf of Deni O'Shea
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Written Testimony

Aloha,

I am a parent of two children, one a Sophomore and one a Sixth Grader, and their learning ability, education, health, and happiness will be significantly improved if the opening of schools is delayed. I am scared for their safety and that of many families if schools reopen during a period in which we have the highest COVID-19 numbers yet.

Sincerely,
Denise O'Shea



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My suggestion is that all public schools be delayed until September to await the outcome of students in mainland schools going back this month. By delaying, we can see if the students are impacted in serious ways and protect the safety of our children and families. I would appreciate if the Board of Education could bring this up in your meeting tomorrow at 1:00pm. Mahalo

Darnell Vierra <herculesvierra@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 11:17 AM

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Billings <ascholz_54@yahoo.com> on behalf of Amy Billings
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:19 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE meeting on July 30th

Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent of a child that is getting ready to enter into 4th Grade at Keoneula Elementary School in Ewa Beach. Along with many other parents in the state of Hawaii, I watched as the end of my child's 3rd Grade year was thrown into turmoil by the shutdown of schools throughout the state. As frustrating as it was to watch my child struggle to transition to a purely virtual environment, I understand that it was necessary at the time due to the uncertainty associated with COVID-19 and the desire to keep our children safe until more information was available. Four months later, we have substantially more information regarding the virus, specifically in how it affects children. So I was pleased to see the Hawaii BOE publish a plan to start transitioning our children back to in-person instruction a few weeks ago, especially as an over-whelming majority of parents (80%) voiced their desire to have children back in an in-person learning environment in an end-of-year survey that went out to parents. When I received the specific plan from Keoneula Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year, it was not what I had hoped. It indicated only 2 days a week of in-person instruction (I was hoping for 4 or 5) but I quickly came to terms with it being a transitional phase between the all-virtual environment we came from and the traditional in-person instruction we all know is necessary as an end state. This plan seemed very similar to most schools throughout the state and even though it was not exactly what I wanted, I could respect and deal with it.

As I prepare my child's school supplies for drop-off at the end of this week and prepare my child for her first day back to school next week, I am seeing newspaper articles that address a two week delay in the start of school. My husband has co-workers who have not heard from their children's school about a reopening plan. We are days away from the start of the next calendar year and it feels as if the "plan to reopen" is once again on shaky ground. I worry that based on these news articles and this last minute BOE meeting that everything I have prepared my child for with the start of school may unravel and I am once again left with attempting to find a shred of consistency in my child's education. We were incredibly blessed to have had a teacher last year who worked diligently and compassionately to ensure that my child along with the other students in her class participated in virtual learning, daily zoom community circle calls, and weekly to more frequent parent check-ins. It became clear to me through my conversations with other parents both here in the neighborhood and throughout the island that this was not the case in many classrooms. It appears as if my child's experience with virtual learning last year was not the norm. Many parents did not hear from their children's teachers, many parents were left to balance the needs of multiple school age children, and many parents were forced to choose between their job duties and the educational needs of their children. Without a clear cut curriculum, teachers were left to create their own websites, manage their online submissions, and figure out ways to teach kids who are developmentally not able to sit at a computer for hours on end. There were days that my daughter was in front of a computer for a longer work day than my husband who was working from home. She was exhausted and there were a number of days we were both in tears trying to manage the emotional upheaval we were enduring. One of the greatest assets to this process was my daughter's teacher who worked so hard to arrange a daily zoom community circle meeting with the children in her classroom. I'm not sure if her teacher is aware, but this daily interaction kept my daughter connected to any resemblance of normalcy and connection to her school and fellow classmates. I am by training a licensed clinical social worker who has provided clinical therapeutic services to children, teens, and adults struggling with trauma, grief, anxiety, and depression. One of the most significant tools I have learned over my years of practice is the vital importance of relational connections. It is the relational connection that has the power to soothe and help heal traumatized individuals, can lead to the repair of trust and self-belief, and can shatter the chains of shame and hurt. Isolation, on the other hand, is a powerful tool in destroying a person's sense of self-worth, can help spiral a person deep into the pains of depression and anxiety, and alters a person's sense of security and safety. Without relational connection we fail. My daughter's teacher's act to ensure some level of visual connection with her students helped to ensure the relational connection. For our daughter, it helped keep her connected to her sense of friendship and community. She was enrolled in Keoneula Elementary School in December 2019 after a move across the country causing her to lose connection with many of her friends. She was just at the point of coming home from school at Keoneula with huge smiles on her face telling me she was making friends, when the pandemic hit. These daily zoom calls were the only thing keeping her connected to her newly made friends.

I say all this as I am greatly worried that the decision to demand full time virtual learning will be coming if it isn't here already. I understand the fear and uncertainty that is here. Over my years in practice, I have worked hand in hand with teachers supporting my many school age clients. Some of my closest friends and family members are teachers or work in the school setting. Teachers are so much than "glorified baby-sitters" as the term is being thrown around. Whether it is in their job descriptions or not, teachers are our backbones. They are often the first ones to notice and report child abuse and neglect, they are a source of comfort to

our children and become valuable role models to our children, they are often the ones who catch developmental delays and emotional needs and fight hard for our children to have proper screenings and treatment or adaptations to allow these children a fair and full education. To take away a child's teacher and replace him/her with a computer screen and a video-recorded lesson plan is not the same. There is a reason why so many school districts around the country saw failing rates in distance learning. A computer cannot do what a teacher can do. A teacher's smile, comforting words, consistent structure and boundaries are just a few of the tools that cannot be reproduced by a computer screen.

I have been beyond frustrated at the response I have seen from the Hawaii State Teacher's Association. Despite the fact that they were included in the development of the reopening plans (<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/07/03/hawaii-news/states-public-schools-unveil-plans-for-reopening-amid-pandemic/>), they have come out strongly against reopening without having any justifiable reasoning or clear path forward to getting our children back into a quality education. Yet interestingly, many of the teachers I know first-hand both in state and on the mainland talk passionately about wanting to be back in the classroom environment with their students and hate the idea of distance learning. I am watching the fate of my child's education play out on the news daily. Despite the fact that 80% of parents want in-person instruction to resume, the vocal minority is given the largest speaking role which makes it sound like somehow the situation is reversed. Day after day I watch as the local news outlets add articles indicating how scared some teachers are to return, without giving any voice to the rest of us that are very comfortable with the procedures put in place by our school and the BOE. This plan was not thrown together overnight, quite the opposite is true. The plan I received was a 22 page document that outlined just about everything one could possibly imagine about the situation.

The plan developed by Keoneula sounds very similar to other schools across the state and is in alignment with the guidelines set forth by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/pediatricians-educators-and-superintendents-urge-a-safe-return-to-school-this-fall/>). Both of these groups of medical professionals indicate how critical it is to get our children back into school because COVID-19 is not the only risk out there in the world. We have to balance that risk with the multitude of other risks that are substantially increased by keeping our children at home and removing them from a social learning environment. Local health professionals here in Hawaii also agree that the risk of COVID-19 is substantially less for children than the risks associated with hindering their learning and developmental processes (<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/hawaii-health-officials-back-superintendents-plan-to-reopen-schools/>). Despite all this, the constant refrain from the HSTA is that the protocols aren't good enough (despite being in line with all health professional guidelines) and that the "bubbles" created by classrooms will just encourage transmission of the disease. This, again, is out of synch with reality when it has been proven throughout the world that transmission in children is significantly lower than in adults ([COVID-19 Risk in Schools: What You Should Know | KQED](#)). When the HSTA is asked what restrictions are "good enough" and when will be ready to return to school, the answer is the same: the BOE needs to figure it out. This circular logic makes me very concerned that "good enough" will be when there are zero COVID-19 cases and a vaccine. I'm petrified for the day that the vaccine first comes out despite being a pro-vaccine parent. I worry that in order for my child to receive a public school education, she will be forced to submit to a vaccine that has been rushed, created in panic, and had regular testing rules and regulations bent in order to rush this process. The path to a vaccine will not be an easy one as there will be many aspects to look at prior to every child on the island and the country being vaccinated and even then, what happens if the virus mutates. If it's like the flu vaccine, it will not cover all strains of the virus. What then? Do we pause our children's education for the next 10 years?



COVID-19 Risk in Schools: What You Should Know | KQED

KQED's Brian Watt speaks with Dr. Naomi Bardach, associate professor of pediatrics and health policy at UCSF, ab...

I need the Board of Education to also look outside the borders of Hawaii and understand how we stand in regards to the COVID-19 situation. Per capita, we have the lowest number of cases of any state in the country by far. The next closest state (Vermont) has double the per capita number that we do. The Board of Education needs to look at states like Connecticut (per capita 13 times as many cases) that are reopening with in-person instruction 5 days a week or Pennsylvania (per capita 8 times as many cases) that is opening with in-person instruction 4 days a week. How is it that we are faring so much better than most of the country yet it's still not good enough to open our schools? How are we seriously even having this conversation about crippling our children's education despite having the lowest transmission anywhere in the country? I hear the refrain time and again on the news to listen to science, make decisions based upon science, don't make decisions based upon politics and emotions. A small percentage of teachers and parents are uncomfortable and so we are considering setting the standard down to their level. Parents have the option of going all virtual if they aren't comfortable, so they have a valid option for their kids. Those of us that want at least some level of in-person instruction would conversely be left with no viable option.

The Board of Education needs to understand that going with what the HSTA wants (delaying school opening and going all virtual until some unknown time in the future) will have catastrophic effects on our communities. COVID-19 is not going away, we have to learn to live with it and take reasonable precautions that still allow us to function as a society. Parents have to be able to return to work or the kids won't have a house to return to. Not every job allows teleworking and even those that do cannot be expected to work a full time job and teach their kids at the same time. We already did that and proved that it does not work, why on earth would we even consider doing it again? I understand that choosing to stay the course and reopen schools as planned requires courage. The vocal minority will not stop fighting this. I fully expect that the HSTA will take the action to court and waste even more money that the state doesn't have. I also will not be surprised if the HSTA plans some kind of walk out, protest or other similar event to disrupt the education of our children. Yes, this is scary and yes, there are risks to opening school. However, the idea of not opening schools is also scary and also comes with significant risks. I have worked tirelessly with parents and their children to reverse the detrimental effects that traumas have on people both emotionally and physically. If we cannot find some sense of normalcy for our children particularly in their school environments, how do we combat the years of emotional and physical trauma this will cause? Please have the courage necessary to do what is right for our children and stay the course on your reopening plan.

Amy Billings

Ewa Beach, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Jeff Farah <jnfarah@gmail.com> on behalf of Jeff Farah
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Virtual Special Meeting Testimony

Name: Jeffrey Farah

Meeting: Virtual Special Meeting 30 July 2020

Agenda Item: Delayed opening of public schools

Position: Support with comment

Dear HI BOE,

My name is Jeffrey Farah, and I am a parent of two daughters attending HI public schools. My family has lived on Oahu for the past seven years, I have a daughter returning as a sophomore at Kaiser High School, and another daughter going into 7th Grade at Nui Valley Middle School.

While I support the decision to delay the opening of public schools, I oppose reducing the number of student hours below 1080 and 180 education days. Additionally, I strongly suggest starting school 100% virtually, until we can safely and effectively transition to a hybrid model, and eventually to full in-person education. My opinion is justified below in bullet format:

- On Monday the 27th, I attended Kaiser High School's (KHS) WebEx regarding their return to school plan. The WebEx was well staffed by the school's administration, and a large percentage of parents participated. However, throughout the 2+ hour event, what was clear was that Kaiser High School could not adequately articulate the DOE/DOH protocols for combatting COVID-19. Additionally, a great deal of specifics regarding distance learning, classroom cleaning protocols, and things that should have been school policy vice specific classroom policy were answered by the statement 'this will be promulgated by your individual teachers'. Judging by the frustration that I was feeling, and what appeared to be the frustration of other parents asking similar questions, was that the school (albeit a good school) was unprepared to start next week. I can only assume other schools are in a similar situation. With that believe, my opinion is that HI public schools are unprepared to start next week and we should delay the start of the school year as proposed. Of note, I have reviewed the COVID-19 protocols outlined on the HI DOE website. While it is my opinion that they are robust and well thought out, they do not answer all possible scenarios or likely situations. For example, if a student was quarantined due to being a close contact, how do they continue their educational experience? That is just one example.
- However, I do not concur with reducing the number of school hours or days. I grew up in the northeast, where cancelled school days due to snow was a routine occurrence. I consider how we will manage through the COVID-19 pandemic to be similar. Even with the best training of our public school leaders and educators, it is highly likely that we will have to periodically respond to some level of 'outbreak' in a classroom or school. Similar to snow days, we should pull from other non-educational days (e.g. breaks), or extend the school year accordingly, while holding the entire 1080 hours and 180 days sacred. Shortening the school year as compared to our local private and charter schools, and as compared to other state public and private schools, will ultimately disadvantage our students, and undo much of the progress that HI has made to improve their national DOE ranking. Of note, KHS is ranked nationally. It is a big deal to me as a parent, and part of the reason why I desire to continue to live and work in HI.
- Ideally, everyone would want our students back in school full-time. Understanding that we are in the middle of a pandemic, and many schools are attempting to adopt a hybrid model where only a portion of each students school week is on campus. However, if faculty, staff, and students do not all feel comfortable educating

our children using that model in the middle of a pandemic, then the next lower option should be 100% virtual. My strongest recommendation is to start off the fall semester using 100% virtual education. Both of my daughter's schools are attempting to apply only one day a week in person, which invokes a great deal of risk for very little gain. Under that model, the social interaction that we desire for our kids is nearly nonexistent as we will continue to enforce social distancing requirements, it doesn't realistically get both parents (assuming a two parent household) back to work, if desired, and if teachers don't feel safe, they will not be effective. The risk of in person learning has been the point of contention for several organizations, including the Teachers' Union. The reality is that the majority of education will have to occur in an on line setting until the pandemic is under control. Going to 100% on line now, then working through safety protocols to transition to the hybrid model, gets our kids learning while negotiations are taking place. Both of my daughters completed an on line class offered by HI DOE this summer with great success. Several other state school districts have adopted this model, and are likely to be much more successful than the ones that are trying to 'tough it out'.

Thank you for your consideration and hard work during these challenging times. If you have any questions about my written testimony, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone (860-227-5444).

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Farah

Testimony BOE

From: Tiffany Schnittger <tschnittger@gmail.com> on behalf of Tiffany Schnittger
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:22 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(A): Presentation on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Tiffany Schnittger and I teach 1st grade at Holomua Elementary School, with 20 students currently enrolled in my classroom. I have serious concerns regarding the reopening of Hawaii's DOE schools on August 4th as an educator and resident of Oahu

The schools are not ready, contrary to what is being stated by the Superintendent. I wonder if Ms. Kishimoto has actually walked through schools and spoken to the administrators and teachers directly. I wonder if she would stand in an indoor classroom for 6 hours a day and subject herself to the factors and risks she is asking us all to take. There are too many people in one class at a time with many possibilities for cross-contamination such as busing, after school care plus resource staff with SPED teachers and lunch supervision. How can we even think we can contain the spread of COVID-19 across the state?

Some people say that the kids are safe from the virus, which is false...They can catch the virus and be at risk for various factors that we do not yet fully understand. Most of all, they can spread the virus. Teachers often catch illness from their students and COVID-19 is no different. A friend of mine in NYC caught COVID-19 from her young 6 year old son. She is my age at 46, and she is a fitness instructor and extremely healthy. She was nearly hospitalized and only opted out of such treatment because the hospitals were so full. Luckily, she recovered as did her husband and their other teenaged child, but she thought she might die for a week there. Luckily she didn't but this is the risk we are asking of our teachers with less support from the health aids, contrary to what Kishimoto has stated.

Opening the schools too early before we work out the kinks will not only put families and our communities at higher risk but it will cause the schools to close right back up for cleaning and contact tracing. This would create more chaos and work, not to mention lasting damage and even needless deaths to individuals. It could also lead to problems in the healthcare systems here on Oahu and be devastating.

The DOE has an estimated 30-40% high-risk staff, just counting teachers. How is it okay to gamble with our lives? Again, I wonder if Ms. Kishimoto would volunteer to subject herself to the same exposure that teachers and other staff would have to endure. I also read that this risk and even the burden of other factors like childcare for teachers is leading to higher rates of Leave. How will this impact the learning of Hawaii's keiki? I personally know of dozens of parents and families who are either opting out of the face-to-face options and some are pulling their children out of our public school altogether, and choosing to homeschool. How will a mass withdrawal of students affect the school budgets? This loss of trust may never be regained, and what will the lasting impact be?

What I propose is 100% total distance learning for DOE school with help for safe childcare for families that need such an option so they may return to work. **With distance learning though, teachers need adequate training and time to prepare. This step should be done in an organized and equal manner to ensure the best possible education for all educators and their students.**

Prolonging the start date till August 17 is barely enough time. To start any sooner is incredibly impractical and lacking true support. This is the very least we can do to support our teachers and schools for success.

Thank you,
Tiffany Schnittger

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Tiffany Schnittger, M.Ed.
(808) 439-2238

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

Testimony BOE

From: Elizabeth Kaneshiro <etromba@gmail.com> on behalf of Elizabeth Kaneshiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

HSTA Testimony on Board of Education Emergency Meeting (July 30, 2020)

To the members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am an educator at Waipahu Elementary School in the Leeward District of Oahu, and I have been teaching for 22 years. Thank you for the work you have done thus far. Since my last testimony, I am still experiencing anxiety as we report for work today. Protocols of disease control (which is not exactly our line of duty, but becomes that when dealing with students) lurk in my mind as I consider scenarios and the possibilities of transmissions throughout the day. Some key points of why a delay in opening schools will be necessary in times of pandemics are as follows:

- Would it be possible and proactive to open in phases, as in the attached infographic that was created by a high school teacher in our district (see attached)?
- We are not trained medically. What would happen if there is an outbreak and how do we mitigate this effectively? Also, if a student has underlying conditions (which many of ours do, such as diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, asthma, etc.), how will we be able to help them, especially without training?
- What measures are there to test students and adults on campus upon entry? I was watching a Long Beach (California) Board of Education meeting yesterday, and they have COVID testing for entry and exit.
- Other states that have opened up school for the remainder of the previous school year had to subsequently close due to COVID19 transmissions. Even the most meticulously clean and fastidious countries such as South Korea and Japan had opened, only to close again due to breakouts.
- As effective as Dr. Park might feel about “ohana bubbles,” how will this work if students come in contact with other adults and children? I am specifically thinking about lunch and recess, when students are not required to wear masks.
- I think this bears repeating, but public schools are NOT childcare facilities.
- What is being done to monitor areas that have outbreaks in large clusters? Several have happened in our area of Waipahu, but are people being tested?
- Are you sending your own children to public schools when they open? If you are not (and/or opted for distance learning), why would you insist on having public schools open so soon when the virus is still raging and deaths still happening?

As I write, the news sources have reported that there were 109 positive cases of COVID-19 thus far. Many people (all of my colleagues included) find this quite alarming that we are told to open up schools, yet many questions and missing protocols remain.

My sincerest hope is that you will consider opening the schools only if it is safe to do so, no matter when that may be. The advancement of education will not matter if the teaching environment is unsafe and those in that environment fear for their lives. Employees should not be asked to sacrifice themselves and those they live with in order to appease the public or the government. We have lives, too. If there is a plan to gradually open schools and not to do so until it is absolutely safe to do so, then please let us err on the side of caution. Please do consider that these are human lives you are dealing with, not percentages or numbers.

Thank you so much for your time and your hard work for the State.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kaneshiro

Testimony BOE

From: Jill Jacobs <jillybean05@gmail.com> on behalf of Jill Jacobs
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on all three board items on the Emergency Meeting

Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Jill Jacobs I am a third grade teacher at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kona. I am writing today to speak to the all three Board Action Items that are being discussed in the Emergency Board Meeting being held on July 29. I am in support of all three of these items.

A. Board Action on the revision of the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

I support the delay of the students first day for many reasons. First as teachers we want to ensure that our schools and classrooms are always a safe place for all of our students. Without the delay of the return of students our schools and classrooms will not be safe places. School and teachers are not ready and 4 days to plan, and prepare with so many unknown and new situations is not enough. The four teacher days in a normal year are hardly enough time to plan. This year with having to have new ways to do everything as well as reconfigure the physical spaces in our classrooms, learn all the new school protocols, and try to figure out how to teacher in person and online at the same time, all while still doing to normal required beginning of the year meetings, information and training, four days is simply not enough time.

Another reason why the extreme time is so critical is that even though our school has had a team meeting at least once a week all summer trying to come up with a plan on how to open a school for nearly 1000 students we still have many unknowns. We do not even have a plan for recess yet. Let alone lunch, what to do when a student, staff or community member are sick. We need to have a plan for all of these before any child returns to campus. The extra time will give us time to plan out for as many situations as we can. It will allow schools to be proactive in fighting this virus and keep our community safe rather than reactive. It is not a matter of if cases start happening in schools but when cases start happening in schools and we need to have a plan for that.

B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180-day school year and 1080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

I also support the waiver of the 180 instructional days. Not only will this save money by not having school extend into the summer. I am going to be completely honest as teachers we are already extremely stressed and have a ton of anxiety about the start of the year. We will be working those days that will be waived for the students. If we extend the school year that will only add to our stress and reduce the number of days we will have to decompress and recover to be prepared for next school year. As a fifteen year vetren teacher I need the time over the summer and over the breaks to decompress. If the waiver is not approved I believe there could be many teachers who leave not only teaching in Hawaii but the professional as a whole.

C. Board Action On Board expectations regarding:

1. focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning

I support these for many reasons as well. As I already state we have had no training on the new protocol or safety issue for our school. We also do not have a fully flushed out plan on how to conduct day to day operations of the school. We need this time to plan and train all teachers and staff so that everyone is on the same page and everyone knows what to do to best keep our students, staff, and community safe and

healthy. We also need time to be trained in the new programs for distance learning. As teachers part of our pay we earn working our ten month contract is held so that we are paid over the summer. That is money that we have already earned. As someone who is terrible at budgeting I greatly appreciate that. With that stated I believe it is extremely unprofessional of the DOE to expect teachers to attend unpaid training over their summer break to be prepared for the massive amounts of changes coming this year. I know that HSTA asked for the two additional training days that we have through the years to this year be given up front for extra time to prepare teachers. This was a no go from the employers side of the negotiations from the start. While those two days would have been nice it still would not have been enough. These days focused on health, safety, and distance learning are critical to make this year happen. As I have already said it is not a matter of if but when CoronaVirus infects schools. We need to have plans for going full distance learning should Hawaii become a hotbed of cases as so many states on the mainland have done. Distance Learning failed in the fourth quarter and we know that. One of the many reasons was lack of time to prepare, as well as the fact that we told the students it was optional. I know that when I was a student if work was optional that was an automatic no thanks from me. Teachers need to be prepared and we need to have time to learn how to make it work.

2. Starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning

I know that the best way for my students to learn is to be in the classroom with me. However, I also know that if they are always coming to school afraid because they don't want to bring CoronaVirus home they can't learn either. We have to protect our students, their families, and our teachers and staff. If you look at the news you see daily about outbreaks in summer schools. While I was in Arizona over the summer I learned about three teachers who were teaching distance summer school in a shared space. These teachers were following all the protocols for health and safety. Yet all three teachers contracted CoronaVirus and now one of those teachers is dead. What is going to have a greater negative impact on a child's learning long term starting the year in distance learning or dealing with the fact that their teacher, friend, classmate, sibling or parent died because we forced them to go back to school and someone got CoronaVirus? Are you all prepared to make those calls and send those letters telling families that they have lost a community member because we could not delay in person learning? I know I am not. Two years ago we lost a first grade student in an accident, last year we had a parent die in a car crash, these were not things we as a school could prevent. The spread of CoronaVirus is. The ripple effect of those deaths on our campus was enormous. Now imagine the impact if we had 10 deaths that were preventable by delaying in person and stopping the spread and flattening our curve again. Please delay in person until it is safe for ALL who are involved. I know we need to reopen our economy but put students back in school so that parents who work in hotels, restaurants and other tourist industries isn't going to bring the business back to those industries. You will have a workforce but no work for them to do. Parents make it work every summer. They can make it work during the school year.

3. Mandating masks on public school campuses

Students can wear masks. My four year old niece can wear it so she can look at toys in Target. toddlers wore them the entire six hour flight back from Arizona our students can too. If the standard is that we have to wear them when we are out in public why are PUBLIC schools any different. We expect people to comply with other state, city, and county ordinances (speed limit, not littering, not using phones while driving, ect) that are for the health, safety, and well being of those around them. Why is the ordinance about wearing a mask any different?

4. detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

I am not a healthcare professional. I have medical training. Asking educators to make the decisions on health and safety in a worldwide health pandemic without guidance and support from healthcare professions is ludicrous. It would be like going into my sister's medical practice and trying to tell highly trained doctors how to do their job or asking them all to come and fill open positions at my school. We can not ask our administrators to do this without the support and guidance they need.

Thank you for your and for reading this. I hope that you will see the importance of supporting all of these action items and stand with all the public school unions and pass all of these items

Thank you
Jill Jacobs

Testimony BOE

From: M. Oka <mariaoka@gmail.com> on behalf of M. Oka
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please open schools virtually for the beginning of school

Chair Payne, and Members of the Board:

I am a high school math teacher at Radford High School and also the parent of two public school students, one 8th grader (Highlands Inter) and a 5th grader (Pearl Ridge Elem). I am writing to you today to ask that you postpone the start of the student school year, but also to ask that you urge the HIDOE to start the school year virtually.

The unions and HIDOE have come to an agreement to delay the start of school for students, which is much appreciated and needed for me as a teacher to properly plan and train for the upcoming school year and all that that entails. I have personally attended some training my school offered during the summer, plus other webinars I found on my own. These were helpful but I still feel woefully unprepared. My school's administration has been wonderful in all that they've been trying to plan and prepare, but they can only do so much with limited guidance from HIDOE and DOH. We definitely need more time and guidance to put plans in place. Please approve the delay of start for students so us teachers and administrators can properly prepare to be at our best for the students.

As both a teacher and parent though, I also ask that you urge the HIDOE to start the 2020-21 school year with distance/virtual learning at least through the first quarter. Today we have a record of 109 positive COVID cases! How are we considering an opening of schools now when we closed down back in March with less than 10 cases? I do not feel safe for myself but also my kids and my students. Other school districts have already announced plans to start virtually for the first 6 weeks or quarter or even semester. I believe this would be in the best interest for our state as well. I know that this would put a burden on working parents, but I also believe it's the safest option. I know we can't stay in lockdown forever, but if cases keep spiking in our state, we are just asking for a faster spread with students in schools. A recent study found that kids ages 10-19 spread the virus just as readily as adults. This is my age group of students and I fear COVID would spread quickly in the school setting. Maybe K-2 can be in person with 3-12 virtual? I mean, look at your own meetings that are virtual. Why are you not meeting if you are a group of less than 15 people? How is a classroom any different? With my current classes this school year (as of today), split in half by alpha, I have around 14-17 students that will be in my classroom at any given time. Our own Lt. Governor, a doctor, is currently saying we should not be gathering in groups of more than 10. This does not match up with our current face-to-face school plans. Again, I'm asking that you please urge the HIDOE to start schools with distance/virtual learning for at least the start of the school year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for calling this emergency meeting to discuss the student school calendar. I hope you will keep the best interest of our students and staff in mind when you meet to consider the reopening of schools.

Sincerely,
Maria Oka

Testimony BOE

From: Cai <cai_mir@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cai
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying the start date for students

Chairman Payne and Members of the Board,

Our school like all others is struggling to come up with logistics of keeping everyone safe on the campus. We need routines for every activity: coming into the school campus, drop-off/pick-up, waiting areas, food service and eating areas, using restrooms, recess, using the library, the health office, the counselor's office, the Special Education office. Office staff is protected by large screens and protective "glass". The whole idea of school has changed and this is what awaits our students. Please give us time to adequately plan.

Please consider that the normal 4 days at the beginning of the school year is not adequate time to prepare during a **normal** school year; most teachers work on their own time without pay every year to get their classrooms set up and prepare for receiving and instructing students. This year not only do I have the clean-up that I would have done at the end of the year last year (because there was inadequate time given for the closing up the year process) but now I also have to rearrange my whole concept of teaching: classroom design and environment, safety and health concerns, instructional strategies for in-class and distance learning, labeling and measuring, and, of course, lesson plans.

The fact that you want to start with distance learning for all learners beginning Aug 4 puts schools and families at a disadvantage. Families struggled during the 4th quarter as did students and teachers. Though some teachers did receive training over the summer most did not. As a special education teacher, I know what to do when students come to my classroom for instruction but now I have two students whose parents have chosen distance learning (which is their right) so I will need to be working with their distance learning teachers. I deserve to have time to learn how to provide services in this way to these students.

I propose the A/B schedule to start on Aug 17 with 2 weeks of half-days and with full-day lessons starting on Aug 31. (Aug 21 is Statehood Day.) I know that this will reduce the number of instructional minutes/days but preplanning is key to making all of the days count. If we don't have adequate preplanning we will be limping along playing catch-up all year. Treat us as professionals who know what we need.

Respectfully submitted
Catherine M Davis
Special Education
Kamali`i Elementary
Kihei, Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Maki Morinoue <maki@pogg.net> on behalf of Maki Morinoue
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: My testimony in support of DOE teachers, staff and children

Aloha

With our current administration publicly stating to the American people that the DOE should go against the warnings of the CDC I find it tremendously unnerving for all DOE Staff and parents to start school while the staff clearly is asking for more time to better prepare.

I feel it is unethical to not listen to the needs of the Principal, teachers, staff and parents during COVID19.

Below are the terms and reasonings I hope you evaluate and delay as our numbers continue to go up in Oahu, inter island quarantine being lifted and inter island visitors, tourists and returning residents continue to bring new cases to our islands. Tourists break quarantine laws as I personally see rental cars and tourists around our favorite hiking, beach spots and grocery stores.

All of these below are vital for schools before they can start safely with students.

A) Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Student's First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools.

B) Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar

C) Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: (2) on health, safety, and distance learning: (3) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode (4) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health.

Aloha

Maki

--

Maki Morinoue

Share your ALOHA

"Aloha Spirit" is the coordination of mind and heart within each person. It brings each person to the self. Each person must think and emote good feelings to others. In the contemplation and presence of the life force, "Aloha,"

Testimony BOE

From: Kiele Gonzalez <kiele.aloha@gmail.com> on behalf of Kiele Gonzalez
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Delay reopening but don't reduce school year

I apologize for the inconvenience, but I would like to amend my testimony from suggesting that face masks be required to face masks or face shields being required for the students. Face shields would allow students to still pick up important facial cues and expressions from their peers and their kumu while at least preventing their coughs and sneezes from shooting across the room, or coughs and sneezes from someone else getting into their eyes. It may also prevent keiki from touching their eyes and face.

Anywho, just some more mana'o.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Keiko Gonzalez

On Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 5:49 AM Kiele Akana-Gooch <kiele.aloha@gmail.com> wrote:
Aloha,

I am a parent of two DOE students. I support teachers' calls to delay the reopening of school to better prepare for the school year amidst the onslaught of changes brought on by COVID (and hopefully we can get our case count down by the time school opens).

But I do not support fewer days and hours of this school year. Students are already behind from having to distance learn on a dime at the end of last school year. If school starts later in the year, it can end later in the year. Kids would simply have a longer summer now but a shorter one next year.

Distance learning should be an option for all keiki whose families choose to keep them home.

And to prevent the further spread of the virus, as much as I want our keiki to be comfortable in school and learn important facial cues and body language, I would support face masks being required in the classroom, even for my own kindergarten child.

Mahalo for your dedication, hard work, and good thinking for the health and wellness of our keiki and our community.

Me ke aloha,
Keiko Gonzalez

Testimony BOE

From: Mrs. Ricer Sings <mrsricersings@gmail.com> on behalf of Mrs. Ricer Sings
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To the Hawai'i Board of Education,

Thank you for considering delaying the start of school for students this year. As a teacher, it means a lot to be provided the opportunity for a better and more-prepared start to the school year for students.

I hope that the new first day of school does not become simply another arbitrary date, and that this date can be flexible in the case that our current emergency situation worsens or evolves.

I know you are weary of hearing our testimony. We are weary from writing and speaking too, so I will end with a list of questions which still remain unanswered. I hope you take these into consideration when making big decisions regarding our schools and greater community:

How many positive case numbers are needed in an individual school in order to close it down?

How to cases among family members of students, faculty, and staff factor in these numbers?

How many new cases in the communities of each county or the state would cause the schools to shut down?
What about hospital capacity?

What happens in a school when one child tests positive? Who needs to quarantine? The class? The grade level? All teachers who have interacted with the student? What is the timeframe for this interaction? A day? Three days? A week?

What happens when there is a positive case in a teacher or staff who works with multiple classrooms and grade levels?

What happens immediately when a student, faculty, or staff member is found to have tested positive? Does the class immediately switch to distance learning? Are parents called to pick up their children?

If the family member of one of our school community tests positive, who needs to quarantine? The affected individual? The individual's class? The individual's colleagues?

If I get sick, who is responsible for the medical bills? Who is responsible for my rehabilitation? Who is responsible for my family's medical and rehabilitation costs? Who is responsible for long-term health effects caused by the virus?

Do we have dedicated contact tracers ready to contain new cases as immediately as possible?

Do we have extra social workers and grief counselors available for students who will lose parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, and teachers to Covid?

Do we have enough substitute teachers to cover classes if teachers feel ill? If they test positive?

If teachers and students are on self-quarantine, do they still attend virtual classes? Does a quarantined student still hold virtual classes with students who are in school (and being supervised)? If a student is directed to quarantine, do they still attend classes virtually?

What is the immediate reaction when a student exhibits Covid symptoms in school? Does the class resume for the day (and subsequent days until a test result comes back)?

What will you say to parents when their children die?

What will you tell my family if I die?

Sincerely,
Sara Ricer

Testimony BOE

From: Mermaid Surfer <mermaidsurfer@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mermaid Surfer
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 meeting

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jennifer Corpion and I'm an English teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate School. I am asking that you please consider all items on the agenda and push back the arrival of students until further notice while allowing teachers to both train and teach online without setting a date. There's no way we are ready to have students back here at school, as much as I love and miss seeing them and having them around. It's simply not safe for any of us right now.

I am presently sitting in my classroom, feeling a mixture of emotions right now. Planning for instruction is the last thing on my mind because I am filled with anxiety, fear and anger towards the people making these decisions to force us against our will or walk away from careers we love for their own personal agenda. My room was set up with exactly 15 desks. As I look at my rosters in Infinite Campus, I also see that I have 2 sections of my classes at 15 kids. It would ordinarily be a dream of mine to have a class of 15 over a class of 35 but this year is different. I can't access closets or cabinets full of extra supplies and equipment as that would infringe on the 6 feet boundary of a student. There's barely enough room for anyone to push out a chair let alone walk around if they have to sharpen a pencil or step outside to get water/use the restroom. Our drinking fountains are still accessible, our bathrooms are not sectioned off to accommodate social distancing and there's no markers or hand sanitizing stations set up on campus for students and staff anywhere.

Everything looks just as it does when we have all students in attendance minus our classrooms. There's no way our kids whose parents haven't been forcing them to practice social distancing are going to stay away from each other during passing times, recess, lunch and even during instructional time with a skeleton crew of security personnel and administrators who have their hands full of other tasks. The teachers and support staff members like EA's will be in classrooms working hands on with students. Who else is going to monitor them to ensure social distancing will apply?

I have not spent time in an enclosed space the size of my classroom with that many people since March. I live alone and have a very small bubble of people I've spent time with throughout this pandemic. I am also asthmatic. While driving through the communities that border my school (Kualoa, Kaaawa, Kahana, Punaluu, Hauula, Laie, Kahuku and North Shore), I have been seeing nothing but large ohana gatherings since April, even before the beaches were reopened for camping and sunbathing. Who is going to take care of me if I get sick? My immediate family members are on Maui and there's already talk about putting the interisland quarantine back in place. I am terrified.

While the choices of others are out of my control, in this case, we've all been under government control to maintain distance from people who we do not live with. In communities like the ones I've mentioned above, these rules and regulations have been thrown out the door for most of the families of the students we have at Kahuku. I totally get it- it's a total culture clash as local people LOVE to gather and would not turn away family, hanai family and close friends when getting together, pandemic and all. I respect it since I have also grown up

in Hawaii and understand our culture over here but now is not the time and I wish more people understood this around here.

How can teachers guarantee not being exposed to this virus if the families of our students refuse to follow social distancing guidelines? How is it fair for educators to have to compromise our health because someone wants to have a party over the weekend of 100 family and friends at Kahana Bay or Swanzys and then send their kids to school on Monday morning because they believe this virus is a hoax?

I am urging you, please hold off on returning students back to school until further notice. We are NOT ready to have them back at our local schools.

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Jennifer M. Corpion
MAT, Chaminade University
Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha

I am a Kindergarten teacher at a Leeward school on Oahu.

I would like to share my testimony anonymously. Please remove my name and email address from the publicly shared version of this testimony.

I am writing today to request the board's consideration of the following items:

- 1.) Please delay the start of school for students to:
 - 1.) Give teachers time for training on distance learning
 - 2.) Give teachers time to prep materials for students for distance learning - prepare manipulatives, work packets, books, etc. to send home to each student in order to make distance learning more effective.
 - 3.) Give the DOE and DOH time to problem-solve issues with distance learning such as:
 - a.) Create wifi 'hubs/hotspots' for students to use during the school day (as is being done in the UK)
 - b.) Determine alternatives (mail home packets, call-in options for lessons, etc.)
 - c.) Determine how high-risk students (SpEd, ELL, etc.) will be supported by support staff
 - d) Connectivity issues. If all teachers are required to report to campus vs. distance learning from home.. there will be many issues with the connection to google meets and other acceptable platforms.
- 2.) Please start school for students in distance learning, after the Aug 17 start date, until the number of cases on each island is at zero for four weeks. Oahu has had far more cases than any other island. Distance learning is more ideal & is the safest way to continue for our teachers, students and their families. Returning to 'face-to-face' classes is also not ideal at this time because students will not be able to share materials, play together, or socialize as is developmentally appropriate.
- 3.) Please give clear, written guidance from the Department of Health on procedures such as:
 - 1.) At what specific point(s) are students allowed to remove their masks during the day?
 - 2.) What will happen if a student, family member, or staff member tests positive for Covid?
 - 3.) How will students who receive additional services receive these services without further endangering the students or the teachers and staff by having students or adults move room to room?

Thank you for your consideration of these important matters.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Testimony BOE

From: Jenny Nishida <ainaolamart@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jenny Nishida
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:49 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Testimony

Hi again!

I'd like to add that it appears that our students' learning is never a priority in Hawaii. We delay school RE-opening because our teachers need more time to prepare or schools are just not ready to RE-open. We closed schools because there is a pandemic. We moved students to distance learning without asking whether it's effective or not. When does this end?

When do we/Hawaii ever put students learning first? Our keikis' learning proficiency in Math, Reading and Science are lagging behind other states and countries. What are we doing now and what have we done to help this situation? Hawaii public schools need to start focusing on students and make their education our highest priority. We need to focus on providing more opportunities to help the students learn. We need to assess the students and monitor their learning progress throughout the school years. We need to promote education in Hawaii by maintaining the highest standards. If everyone can work together towards these common goals, students will be able to thrive in adversities!

Mahalo,
Jenny Nishida
Parent of Two

> On Jul 28, 2020, at 9:35 PM, Jenny Nishida <Ainaolamart@yahoo.com> wrote:

>

> Aloha,

> I am strongly AGAINST DOE's proposal to reduce school year instructional days from 180 days to 171 days. Due to the abrupt school closure last school year, students have already lost a whole quarter of learning time. The reduction of additional instructional days which equivalent to 54 student hours this upcoming school year will put the students learning further behind and prove to be detrimental for their future.

> Most of our keikis are struggling to comprehend the things happening around them right now. Schooling and being around their friends/peers, teachers/mentors are what they need to stay mentally healthy and sound. They need to be in an environment where they can share their feelings and learn to understand the things around them. With safety measures in place, the schools and trained teachers can help our keikis understand this new world and better prepare them for the future by keeping them in school and enhance their ability to learn. Hawaii BOE, DOE and teachers should be looking for ways to make up lost learning time and not to take away more. We should look to extend the school year. If this is not doable, we can shorten the Fall or Winter breaks. We need to do whatever it takes to help our keikis learn and thrive!

>

> Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

>

> Jenny Nishida

> Parent of Two



HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813

July 29, 2020

Electronic testimony: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson
Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education
Hawaii Department of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Board of Education Special Meeting – Thursday, July 30, 2020, 1:00 p.m.

We, Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi (Kauai, Niihau) and House Representative James Kunane Tokioka (Wailua Homesteads, Hanamaulu, Līhu'e, Puhi, Old Kōloa Town, 'Ōma'o) hereby submit that the following concerns raised by our constituents be answered prior to reopening of public schools, currently scheduled for August 4, 2020, and question whether it is appropriate to reduce mandated school days and school hours based on submissions to this Board of Education ("BOE").

Kauai constituents were primarily concerned about the lack of information provided by the Department of Education ("DOE") relating to its established statewide teaching protocols, and health and safety policies and procedures that will minimally be followed once schools are reopened.

Some of the concerns are:

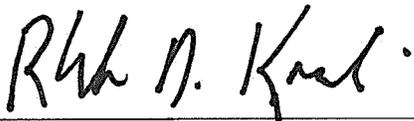
- Spacing in classroom - Even without all students in the classroom, is it possible to keep within the 6 foot by 3 foot guideline? What is being done to ensure there is proper ventilation of the classrooms?
- Who would provide oversight for recess/cafeteria supervision?
- Online learning training for teachers. Some teachers do not feel that they are prepared and trained to teach online. What would the priority standards be and how would teachers be able to grade report cards?
- Conducting appropriate pandemic cleaning and sanitizing without additional staffing.
- What is the plan to address absent staffing issues if teachers, custodians and support staff do not show up to work due to fears of the pandemic and insufficient reopening plans?
- Is it possible to delay the reopening of schools until minimum statewide safety criteria are developed and met while ensuring our students receive their legally required number of instructional hours and days?

Superintendent Christina Kishimoto cites HRS section 302A-251 and BOE Policy 500-20 as giving the BOE authority to reduce the minimum 180 school days and at least 1,080 school hours for the DOE to conduct teacher remote training. BOE Policy 500-20 applies only to School Community Council ("SCC") requests to modify HRS section 302A-251(d), and a general waiver may only be given to "similarly situated" schools. The record before the BOE does not indicate an appropriate use of BOE Policy 500-20 as it is void of any criteria and standards, including protocols, policies and procedures, indicating that the proposed waiver aligns with a clear academic and financial plan and there has been no demonstration that the proposed waiver will improve student learning and increase student achievement. Additionally, it is unclear as to whether all schools statewide have adopted a SCC, though it is clear that schools statewide are not similarly situated. See, BOE Policy 500-19, 500-20, 2412, and BOE School Community Council Waivers and Exceptions.

Therefore, absent any other law and/or BOE policy allowing the BOE to shorten the mandatory school days and school hours requirement, there should not be any waiver from the mandated 180 school days and 1,080 school hours pursuant to BOE Policy 500-20 unless BOE Policy 500-19 is complied with to ensure participation and input by parents, students, community members and school staff to ensure a transparent and inclusive process. See, HRS sections 302A-251(d) and 302A-251(e), BOE Policies 500-19, 500-20, 2412 and BOE School Community Council Waivers and Exceptions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and if there are any questions with regard to the foregoing, please do not hesitate to communicate with either of us.

Sincerely,



RONALD D. KOUCHI
Senate President
Senator, Senate District 8



JAMI SKUNANE TOKIOKA
Representative, House District 26

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Cynthia Rothdeutsch
Principal, Kamali'i Elementary School**

July 29, 2020

Relating to the Board of Education Special Meeting July 30, 2020

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

I am writing today to request that the Board accepts the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kishimoto, and the combined statement from HSTA, UPW, and HGEA as it stands. Both recommendations ask the board to use the Waiver process to adjust the School Year 2020 / 2021 calendar and allow nine days without students for training and professional development for school employees.

In Agenda item III, Action item C, the board recommends that schools begin the school year for students in distance learning mode for at least two weeks, followed by an additional two weeks of half-day sessions. I feel that this is contrary to the agreement between the DOE and the unions. I realize that this will allow the current school year calendar to stand, but it will not serve the purpose of the agreement. The agreement between these parties was crafted in order to give school employees needed time to properly prepare for the opening of school. Our school teams need time to adapt every practice that we do at school to adhere to health and safety guidelines in place due to COVID19. Our elementary teachers need to prepare to teach through a blended learning model and have to prepare for the possibility of full distance learning if our campuses need to close at some point due to the pandemic. Our staff has been preparing for a blended learning model for this school year. I do have a small distance learning program option at my school and have about 10% of our students enrolled with teachers that have volunteered to lead these classes. It is not realistic to expect our schools to shift to a distance learning mode and be prepared to begin on August 4, 2020. This will cause additional stress on our staff and will deprive us of needed time to plan and prepare.

I have observed a definite change in the morale of my staff since the announcement earlier this week of the proposed agreement providing the necessary time for us all to properly prepare for our students to arrive on our campus. We all desperately want to be with our students again, but we want to know that we have taken all necessary precautions to keep our students, families, community, and ourselves and our families safe. We also want to provide the best education possible to our students under the blended learning A/ B staggered schedule model. I

Testimony BOE

From: Leilani Sugue <lei.sugue@gmail.com> on behalf of Leilani Sugue
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I teach kindergarten on the island of Oahu. I am also a mother of a soon to be third grader and fifth grader. I do not feel comfortable with sending my own children to school physically this year. I am asking the board to reconsider opening the school year on August 4th. We need more time to prepare our classrooms and be trained on proper sanitation techniques that will keep our students and ourselves safe during this time. I would like to return to the classroom when it is safe to do so. I would like to return to school when our island sees zero cases for four weeks. I know that distance learning will come at a cost to our parents. Our cases are continuously rising and we are not ready to open this school year. Thank you for allowing me to testify and for the voices of all stakeholders in education to be heard.

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Ancheta <amy_ancheta@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Amy Ancheta
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening school Aug. 19

Good morning.

Thank you for your consideration of the later opening school date. This will allow teachers to connect with students online to set up virtual classrooms (i.e. Google Classroom) and also allow for much needed professional development time & virtual classroom set ups.

Sincerely,
Amy Ancheta

Testimony BOE

From: Molly Troop <molly.troop@gmail.com> on behalf of Molly Troop
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:53 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Year

As we continue to watch COVID play out in our community and our country, I do not believe that teachers have enough support within their classrooms to keep themselves, the kids, and the community safe. Someone said it best when they said Professional sports teams are reopening and have all the money to put every precaution in place, and yet they are having positive tests. How can we expect schools and teachers with little funding to be safe with their lack of funding and preparation.

Where did the sentiment at the beginning of lock down go? Everyone realized what a difficult job teachers had and some people stated "they should make a million dollars." teachers make no where near a million dollars and the ones I know are shelling more money than usual out of their pocket this year to modify their classrooms for COVID.

Teachers are not babysitters and I feel for the parents who do not know what to do with their kids during this time, I really do, but we can't put teachers lives (their families, and the community) on the line.

The DOE in Hawaii and throughout the country need to DO BETTER supporting their teachers and their community.

Take care,
Molly

Testimony BOE

From: Angela Sagisi <angesagisi@gmail.com> on behalf of Angela Sagisi
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Action item C2

The 2020-2021 school year needs to be 100% distance learning. The recent number of cases, 109, is due to small gatherings statewide. Trainings, masks, and social distancing is not enough. If we continue to have small gatherings (including face to face school sessions), expect for the Covid 19 cases to be in the hundreds, or worse. Something needs to give in order for our state to recover during this pandemic.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Renee Adams <adamsrk@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Renee Adams
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:58 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30 BOE general meeting

Name Renee K Adams

School worksite Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate

Aloha hou e nā lālā i aloha nui i ka ho‘onaauau i nā keiki ‘o Hawai‘i nei,

‘O Renee Adams ko‘u inoa, he kumu wau ma Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate ma ka mokupuni ‘o Pi‘ilani.

Today I am addressing these agenda items.

Action Items

- A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students’ First Day to ensure health and safety preparedness for schools
- B. Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar
- C. Board Action on Board expectations regarding: (1) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education’s 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; (2) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; (3) mandating masks on public school campuses; and (4) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health

Over the last two weeks, the Covid-19 case numbers and fatalities have increased due to widespread community transmission. Today, Wednesday, July 29, 2020, the number is 109, with 9 cases on Maui.

- At the 7/16/2020 Senate Special Committee on Covid-19 hearing.
<<http://olelo.granicus.com/player/clip/77674?>> Dr. Bruce Anderson said, (44:53) “The opening of our schools is very important in developmental progression and so forth... but in the hierarchy of things, starting up of schools is important but it has to be under appropriate conditions.”
- He goes on to say, (46:41) “What they are finding out is there are long-term effects associated with the disease with children, “ and that, (47:10) “I’d be willing to bet that we’re going to get cases showing up very quickly in the classroom.”

At this same hearing, Dr. Park says, (13:18) “the only way to completely obviate risks for our kids, our teachers, for anyone, is you stay home. And I think everyone understands that’s not an option. We can’t shelter in place forever. But I will tell you that is the only way you will never be infected.

- We are not asking to shelter in place forever.
- We are not asking that school remain closed.
- We **ARE** asking not to be forced back into face to face (f2f) settings yet because

- Distance Learning provides the only safe alternative
- Teachers should also be allowed to telework for their health and safety.
 - Dr. Kishimoto has stated, thousands of teachers have started preparing to teach online to return to school safely during our summer break. Through our summer break activities we have shown this is a viable way to offer engaging learning to our students.
 - This is how we have shown our commitment to the lives of our children and all the members of our school communities.
 - This is how we have shown our commitment to opening schools.
 - It addresses the need for teachers and students to be able to distance learn at any given time, a possibility many are predicting at this point in community spread of Covid-19.
- I disagree with Superintendent Kishimoto that training students for online classes should start face-to-face (f2f). If you teach someone to fish, should you start in the classroom and then send them out to the ocean by themselves? This tech orientation can be built into the online platform, and many older students (6-12) use Google Classroom, Google Meet and other tools. In fact, we can team teach these concepts across the grade levels and schools using technology, and have those learning resources available for new students as they enter.

Why are we in this quagmire? Governor, Department of Health, and leadership of the HIDOE have ignored the expertise of teachers. NOT ONCE have they consulted with teachers. We were given opportunities to attend voluntary faculty meetings, after which we voted to see if there was consensus for the one schedule proposed by the principal. Regardless of the result, the principal decided the plan for the school.

In fact, the DOE has demonstrated a blatant disregard for teachers by its actions, calling upon the incomplete data from parent surveys to support its actions. Dr. Kishimoto delivered a special update to the DOE on July 21st, in which she states, (0:29) “I can assure you that all schools are outfitted for reopening” and (0:41): “all schools have what they need to reopen schools safely.”

The fact is, she never once asked teachers any more than, “Do I have access? a computer?, “Whose is it?” In fact, this is why we are here today, as members of the public; we had no voice in our schools.

On what information does she base this completely unrealistic forecast? As long as we are required to physically be on campus, we are NOT ready to go back to school safely. I have images taken at summer school of unsupervised students with no masks and no social distancing, unsupervised before school. During class time, they were distanced and wearing masks, 9 per room.

- Kalama Intermediate’s Acting Principal imposed a new schedule on Monday that divides each class into three groups, so each student meets with a teacher once every six to eight school days. The Acting Principal’s rationale for this is that it would be too difficult to send in all the exemptions needed to not have 6 feet social distancing with the first Plan B that had two groups. Does this give you an idea of how confusing and inconsistent these plans have become in order to be compliant. Now, based on this new schedule, I will see a student f2f a total of three times in August, which negates any benefit of f2f scheduling without mitigating any of the real safety concerns. Middle and high school students will be in the very situation described by Dr. Park (14:29), having “[defeated the whole purpose of the measures.](#)”
- In the larger communities on Maui, the combination of masks and social distancing that leaders are requiring has broken down. Social media reveals many, many gatherings with no masks or social distancing, even among my family, friends and colleagues. On Maui today there were 9 new cases. By tomorrow it would not surprise me to see that number spike.
- Neighbor islands have limited medical facilities. On Maui, there is only Maui Memorial Hospital, which which has 11 ICU beds, and 13 ventilators.

Finally, I have heard DOE, DOH, and even BOE members talking about finding a balance. This is NOT about balancing options; this is NOT about finding compromise. Human lives can never be compromised to serve the economy - not even ONE life.

It was clearly stated that tourism is not being started because THEY are not ready to start safely, whether the issue is testing or anything else. Now leaders are saying they delayed tourism in order to allow the schools to start.

Do not add to the guilt of school communities by implying we are obligated to do this in order for the economy to restart.

Further, the DOE needs to examine where canned curriculum such as Acellus online courses are being offered, especially with no teacher. This flies in the face of teaching and learning; one size does not fit all; and teachers need to design learning and support that responds to student voice, supports social justice and the Hā Framework, and authentic outcomes.

You each hold the lives of all in the school communities and larger communities in your hands. You are responsible for anyone who is harmed by going back before it is safe, because it is preventable.

E ola nā keiki o Hawai‘i nei!

Mahalo, me ke aloha nui,

Renee Adams

Testimony BOE

From: Kevin Morita <moritakt8@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevin Morita
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

Aloha,

My name is Kevin Morita, and 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.

With the alarming increase of cases over these past weeks, please reconsider the opening of schools for in-person instruction on August 4th. Between July 23-25th we reported the largest spike of cases reaching 188, numbers we have not seen in our islands until now. Today, on July 29th, we have reached 109 reported cases in a single day. If we are struggling to control the cases as a community and as a state with schools closed, I cannot understand how opening schools will aid in our efforts to bring down the number of cases.

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. The following is a suggested 4-phase strategic plan with the end goal being to have children back in classrooms with teachers on a full time schedule:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.

- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact. Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

- Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.
- Benchmarks will be measurable.
- Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

As a recently tenured teacher, I have not put in as much time as some of my colleagues into this profession and community. And although I have only taught for 3 years, I have seen and felt the immense potential of our keiki and our learners. I want to continue working with them as I did before COVID-19, but I believe we cannot move forward without a thought out, holistic approach that considers all stakeholders and individuals involved. Any decision or choice will have its consequence, both positive and negative. Let us be sure to make the one that will keep the best health/well being of students, teachers, school workers, families, and communities in mind.

Mahalo for your time, patience, and consideration in this,

Kevin Morita
Kapolei Middle School
Choir Director

Testimony BOE

From: (Kalelani Ogata) <kaleko76@aol.com> on behalf of (Kalelani Ogata)
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Opening of schools

I am testifying on Opening of Schools:

My name is Kalelani Ogata. I am a preschool special education teacher at Lincoln Elementary School. I ask that you please delay the opening of schools to allow school personnel, faculty, staff, and administration to adequately prepare for the return of students and prepare for distance learning (train, plan, prep, etc). The DOE and Unions, including HSTA, is proposing starting students on August 17. Although I totally agree with delaying the opening of schools I do not feel 2 weeks is enough time. And on top of that kids will start will full day. If you decide to open schools for students on August 17 please make it half days until Labor Day and then after Labor Day do full days. This will allow teachers and schools to be ready to receive students but make adjustments (in curriculum, prep for distance learning, cleaning, procedures, etc) as needed on the half days.

My concerns with the current DOE/union proposal is that there is no way all of the distance learning and prep can occur in 2 weeks. I understand we all want to open schools but let's do it right. I actually feel that a phased approach to opening up, which will allow schools to be fluid and adjust with our COVID cases, would be most beneficial. "Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools" has a great phase plan that could be a starting point. See attached photo:



4 PHASE PLAN

2020-2021 REOPENING PROPOSAL

We are a grassroots group of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe the State of Hawaii school reopening plan has **SKIPPED TWO CRITICAL STEPS**. The following phased approach, following the advice of public health experts and scientists, will reduce community spread of COVID-19.

PHASE 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training for faculty and staff on the procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

PHASE 2: 100% ONLINE LEARNING

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask protocols, set-up of classroom and high traffic areas
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place

PHASE 3: HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

- Learning will take place in-person and online
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students with recommended social distancing
- 100% mask requirement (unless valid medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teachers, in person, at least once a week
- Note: Phase 3 is essentially the current state reopening plan

PHASE 4: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Resume 100% in-person instruction with online option still available
- Campus learning will retain many lessons learned from previous phases

Benchmarks will be clearly defined metrics based on disease trends that will initiate transitions between phases of reopening. These benchmarks will be determined by a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to reach a broad consensus based on public health and scientific expertise.

There will constantly be an ebb and flow as changes need to be made, curriculum reassessed, safety and procedures adjusted, teaching-teaching-teaching our students and their parents, since the little ones can't do it by themselves, how to successfully access and navigate online learning. All of this takes time. We need the time. There are so many questions with no answers. I get that we have to go with the flow but there has to be some foundation of protocols in place prior to opening. There isn't. There is so much being thrown on our plates with no support. Please delay the opening of schools and adopt a phase plan approach to opening. We need the time to do it right and safely. We need your support. We are the new frontline workers.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Kalelani Ogata

Testimony BOE

From: Chris Neppel <cwneppel@icloud.com> on behalf of Chris Neppel
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

We should be pushing the start date of school for students back NOT to August 17, but to a tentative 2nd quarter. We should do this for many reasons! One, we have more cases of Covid now, then when we went into lockdown and went to online learning in March. If the numbers and uncertainty had us go into lockdown then, then we should be doing the same thing now. No ones education or job is worth risking their health, or lives over. This includes not just our keiki, but everyone exposed to our kids, including teachers of all ages and health conditions, parents, and grandparents. If we reopen and attempt at this educational experience Covid numbers are certainly to go up. What then?! Shut the school down for x amount of days to clean, then reopen x amount of days later only to the same risks?! If and when that does happen, how will teachers adjust again to educational services? It's another logistical nightmare no one has the answer to. If we do reopen in August, no one has the answers to how to provide a quality education to students under these circumstances. The DOE has had months to figure something out, now, we are in a situation where they still don't have the answers to the overwhelming amount of questions from parents, teachers and staff about how to educate effectively and remain safe from a disease we still don't know enough about. Trying to go back under these circumstances is crazy! There is a clause in our contract that states that teachers are to let our principals know if we feel unsafe for our students and ourselves. Well, no one has to go back to work to feel the fear. Now that we are back in the classroom, spending more time measuring 6 feet for desks and chairs and moving furniture out of the room to make space for a educational experience that is far from safe or normal. This new unknown educational experience we are trying to create is like walking through a dark breezy cold forest at night with a match to light your way. Oh, and you've got 20 something children behind you in a line spread 6 feet apart with masks and face shields on trying to write and listen. This is unrealistic and unfair to the entire school community.

If we go strictly online, we will all be safe, teachers can create one curriculum experience online that although won't be face to face, but will be much safer, with no one at risk, and still an education. If we are all back in the classroom separated with masks, no group work possibilities, and using computers we mine as well be online.

Let's go online and reevaluate a month before the beginning of the 2nd quarter.

Mahalos,

Chris Neppel
Jefferson EI, grade 4

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Anjelica Ayers <aiayers@yahoo.com> on behalf of Anjelica Ayers
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am testifying for the BOE's meeting on the reopening of schools.

I implore the BOE to provide students and teachers with a safe place to work and learn. I am a teacher at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I am currently in my classroom, trying to space all my students' desks 6 ft apart. I have no space. I am attending a meeting at 1:30 today where my grade level is suppose to come up with a plan to teach in person students, distance learning students, and 100% distance learning students simultaneously. I am not properly trained in being a medical expert, police officer, online teacher, and in person teacher all at the same time. I do not believe that the state is capable of providing schools and teachers will adequate training in two weeks. I believe those trainings will be poorly designed and not effectively. **I testify that schools should be 100% distance learning.** It is the only safe option. It's irresponsible to allow adults and children to be shoved into poorly ventilated classrooms where social distancing is nearly impossible. It is irresponsible to expect students to learn in an environment not conducive to learning. There were 109 covid cases today. This isn't safe!

Anjelica Ayers

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Var <theteachercouple2@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Var
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:00 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

This is my 21st year of teaching in the HIDOE. I am a middle school teacher at Waiakea Intermediate School who loves her job and her students, but must speak up on behalf of our collective safety. Each day the COVID numbers rise. I see people post on social media lax practices and this community spread is terrifying. I am scared to open up my classroom to students given the current circumstances. It is my moral imperative to keep them (and myself) safe and right now, with limited training and supplies, that is not possible.

Please consider the following:

1- **Extending the opening of the school year.** The August 17 date is a start, but I would suggest after Labor Day even. Our PPE is not in, we do not have supplies, we don't even know how we will safely allow students to use the restroom or sharpen a pencil. We are gutting our rooms: bookshelves, file cabinets, just to make room for 6' distancing, which is a mathematical impossibility in many classrooms despite best efforts. Our administrators (and many teachers on their own time) have been working all summer and we are still completely ill prepared to open our doors a week from today. Right now we are so focused on taping markings on floors, figuring out who will wipe tables and chairs between classes, how to dismiss students so that they are 6 feet apart. Our PPE and cleaning supplies will not be in until September as I understand it. Clearly we need time to concentrate first on safety and the environment, THEN we can shift to lesson preparation.

2-**Begin the school year digitally and prepare for a phased reopening.** Many are worried that students are losing instruction if we begin digitally. But to be honest, this will actually occur **more** if we **don't** open our physical classrooms to kids. We are asking to line them up (6' apart) and ONE by ONE allow them to hand sanitize and wipe down their tables and chairs. Teachers must monitor every single student at the door as they do this. We are being told we will have 15 students an hour. I foresee this protocol taking at least 15 minutes minimum before a stitch of teaching has happened. Then attendance. You get the picture. Not only are we risking our health and safety by opening up the classrooms, we are also wasting learning time. If we could begin digitally, and then slowly progress with our A/B groups, we will better be equipped to handle the magnitude of changes and maximize learning in the process. This will also give us a chance to monitor the growing numbers of COVID cases daily. I cannot understand why we would consider closing bars around the state but opening schools. Something is amiss.

3- **Masks are mandatory.** We have been told they will be at our school, but if a student refuses to wear it, there is nothing we can really do. Studies have shown that mask wearing does offer protection. We need them to enter stores and even to get our hair cut. Why are we even considering otherwise at the school level?

I know that everyone has been working collectively in the best interest of teachers and students, but I sense this underlying push to open the schoolhouse doors and get "back to business" but to do so in current circumstances would be criminal. If the teachers don't feel safe or prepared, how are we supposed to create a safe and nurturing environment for our kids. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs suggests that until we are safe, we cannot Bloom academically. Please allow us to take a few steps back and make sure that when we do move forward, we are all here to do so safely.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Var

Testimony BOE

From: Bartholomew Patitucci <bartholomew_patitucci@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Bartholomew Patitucci
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Student Start Date

Today is the first day for teachers...After a two hour meeting going over basic policies that we could have read in 20 minutes by ourselves, teachers had a chance to ask questions...Administration didn't have the answers...Basic questions like, can students share computers? How do we sanitize each computer if we don't have the resources to do so? Students "shall" wear masks in classrooms but how is that possible when it is 90 degrees in my classroom most days...It is evident that teachers need more time to be properly trained, equipped and to prepare and adapt curriculum for student arrival.

Thank you,

Bart Patitucci
Baldwin High School
10th grade English

Testimony BOE

From: Amber Corrales <lokelani711@gmail.com> on behalf of Amber Corrales
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:01 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: A. Board Action on revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar: additional training and professional development days for teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year and delaying Students' First Day to ensure health and

My name is Amber Corrales, teacher at Kohala High School. I support not reopening schools until there are no new cases of COVID-19 for four weeks. We are leading the country in controlling COVID and it is getting worse as of today (109 new cases). It is only going to get worse when we open to tourism. We have 1/3 of our kids being raised by grandparents in North Kohala. We cannot lose our kids primary caregivers because there are not foster beds up here, which will effect our enrollment and devastate our community. Let's see what happens when tourism opens, then consider the schools.

I also support not opening schools to students until August 14th, 2020 **if we must, for one of the contrived reasons that the DOE is placing in front of us**, but I think it is dangerous. I would be open to this if you release teachers from liability by having parents sign a waiver, especially in light of the fact that the MOU has placed that liability squarely in the lap of the teachers in making the decisions regarding masks.

After sitting through one half of an administration day, we are going to need far more training that what will be completed by August 14, 2020.

I support waiving 180 days, especially since so many full days are lost to school events and we won't have them due to social distancing.

Thank you for your understanding.

Amber Corrales
Kohala High
Kapa'au, HI 96755

Testimony BOE

From: Joyce Miyamoto <jmiyamoto2@gmail.com> on behalf of Joyce Miyamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:01 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Infrastructure not ready to accommodate student learning.

I am writing to oppose the opening of school until after Labor Day weekend due to:

1. Facility (tables/chairs) does not have 6' distancing. Not sure when equipment will be available as today was the first day back at school.
2. Professional Development needs to occur to set up new Pacing Guides, how to conduct webex or zoom meetings. If we are not organized, the problem will manifest itself with increased student misbehavior.
3. Need more time between classes for custodians/teachers to clean tables, chairs, etc. & students sanitizing or washing hands in between. Need to adjust the schedule to accommodate the cleaning.
4. Primary caregiver for 95 year old mother who has severe dementia. Although she attends daycare, I am afraid of bringing the virus home & infecting the family and the daycare facility.
5. I am a high risk employee - I have severe allergies and am taking medication for it. I am allergic to dust, mold & mildew, cockroaches, rodents, cats, dogs, cleaning supplies (ammonia), certain antibiotics, nuts, shellfish & pork. My eyes water, and my throat is sore & bleeds periodically. Therefore, I need to make sure my classroom is immaculately clean. Need to adjust the schedule to accommodate the cleaning.

--

Joyce Miyamoto
Teacher
H.P. Baldwin High School

Testimony BOE

From: Steve Bortle <stevebortle@gmail.com> on behalf of Steve Bortle
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools reopening

Aloha,

I am a teacher at James Campbell High School. Numerous parents have told me that they are not sending their children to school this year and are opting for online/distance learning because they feel the DOE has not taken enough measures has a whole to ensure them that the schools will be safe for their children. Parents have expressed their frustrations and concern again and again since the reopening of businesses and community areas. They have told and I myself have witnessed that not everyone takes this pandemic series and will bring the virus and their lack of care attitude to school with them.

As a teacher I feel that we have not been prepared to teach online and or distant learning. I am a special education teacher and have been on campus teaching a few students on campus under extended school year or ESY. We were limited to 10 people in the classroom during the entire summer. However, when school starts there isn't a prescribed number limiting how many can be in my classroom. I am concerned because my school has elected to only have general education students 1 day a week but feels that we must offer my students 5 days a week because they are at risk educationally. Except that they are a higher risk spreading the virus because they lack the skills and self control to refrain from touching their face or even bearing the responsibility of wearing a mask in the classroom all day.

There needs to be more oversight and support for this pandemic and going back to school!

Sincerely,
Steve Bortle

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

July 29, 2020

PARENT TESTIMONY

Dear Board of Education, Chairpersons, and Superintendent Dr. Kishimoto,

My name is Salena Lee, I am a parent of three daughters. A 5th grader at Major Sheldon Wheeler Elementary, an 8th grader at Major Sheldon Wheeler Middle, and a 9th grader at Mililani High. Two of them also receive special education services through an Individual Education Plan (IEP). I have a grandson in 8th grade at Highlands Intermediate, and a grandson in 5th grade at Maili Elementary. I have also worked as an Adult Supervisor and a Paraprofessional Educator at Major Sheldon Wheeler Elementary for the past four years.

Regarding the opening of schools, I oppose all students returning to school on August 4, 2020. I have attended multiple virtual meetings alongside many parents, educators, various staff, teachers, etc. who continually voice not feeling safe and how they are uninformed and not ready.

What happened to “schools will not open till we have zero positive cases for 4 weeks”? Schools were shut down because of the risk for spreading covid-19 and the numbers were much lower. How is it safe to open schools when our numbers are continually the highest they have ever been? Today we have another record high of 109 new cases.

Opening schools when the pandemic is worse now than when schools shut down is irresponsible. My daughter missed out on her last quarter on Wheeler campus and had a drive by graduation. My niece graduated from Mililani High in a drive by celebration. How does this look to all the students who missed out on dances, proms, banquets, signing year books and the experience of a graduating ceremony? If the decision back then was to shut down because it wasn't safe, why is it safe now?

My daughters do not feel safe. We have been sheltering in place at home since the lockdown. My family is in the high risk category. How is Ohana bubbles going to work when we see so many families not following safety mandates? How are we sure the other students in my daughters' classes are isolating and practicing social distancing when not at school? I see first hand people I know personally not following safety guidelines, hanging out in groups and gathering all the time. A lot of people who we

think should know better but are not using common sense. If these people who I trust are not following the rules how are we supposed to trust other families we don't know to do so?

I have three daughters, in three different schools, in two different districts. Two of them have an IEP. All three schools chose three completely different models and have three different start and end times. How does this work when both parents need to work? If I did want my daughters to go back to school, it would be impossible. They can't stay at home alone and we will not be finding a sitter because that would put my daughters and the sitter at risk of exposure. We have not been hanging out with any extended family including my adult daughter, adult son, and my grandchildren. We are not taking any chances.

Our state is not ready to open schools. We are only days away from opening. Nothing has been finalized for my three daughter's school plans. I am opting for them to have 100% distance learning although only one school offered it outright. I contacted the other two schools to notify my intent of requesting 100% distance learning or I would be pulling them to homeschool. Only then did they disclose a plan for those opting to not send their kids to school. This is a lot to try to figure out with such short notice.

Please hear what the community is saying. For the record, I was never given a survey asking my thoughts on the opening of schools on August 4th. I did not receive one as a parent, or an employee. The only survey my daughters and I received was the one for 4th quarter. It had nothing to do with the new school year in the fall. 4th quarter was not graded. Families were to focus on our wellbeing and safety at that time. It was too stressful dealing with the lockdown and the enrichment learning was confusing for my daughters who have an IEP. We also were dealing with my father-in-law who was in the hospital the week before spring break and was moved to Hospice a few days after spring break started. My father-in-law passed away at the end of March. Our family was going through a lot and 4th quarter optional enrichment learning was not a priority. My daughters have anxiety and our family is grieving. I chose it would be best for them to be in school because that's how they learn best. This was during 4th quarter. In no way was it directed to be the way I wanted it for the fall. No one knew where the state would be right now.

Send out a survey to the community, parents, teachers, staff, and students. You will see that there are way more people opposed to students returning on August 4th than the media and Dr. Kishimoto is reporting.

I urge you to please reconsider children returning to school on August 4, 2020.

- For July 23, 55 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 24, 60 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 25, 73 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- Numbers courtesy of KHON2 News Facebook

That is an alarming 188 new cases over the course of only three days. Our islands have NEVER seen spikes like this up until now.

I am not confident in the concept of “bubbles.” We are talking about children who, by the time they arrive back to school, have not seen one another in nearly five months. They are NOT close contacts.

In order to facilitate a SAFE environment for children and their ohana as well as school faculty and staff and their ohana, we must proceed with caution by implementing the following strategies to perpetuate a secure space for teaching and learning:

- Benchmarks (not set dates) based on reliable science need to be met before moving from from one phase to the next
- Checklists need to be created to address critical safety issues
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safe
- Parents need training for online programs to help their children navigate the system
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (will NOT be the same as 4th quarter)

- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning, and virtual learning (with a real teacher)
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection
- PPE needs to be provided and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus
- Disinfecting bathrooms needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day
- All students deserve a real teacher if learning from home, not just a program
- School nurses should be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community needs to be launched

The following is a suggested 4-phase strategic plan with the end goal being to have children back in classrooms with teachers on a full time schedule:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Benchmarks will be decided upon by ALL stakeholders and based on science and health.

Benchmarks will be measurable.

Benchmarks will be defined to return to a previous phase as needed.

Mahalo for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Salena Lee
Mother, Grandmother,
Paraprofessional Educator

Testimony BOE

From: Colleen Wallis <ceewallis@gmail.com> on behalf of Colleen Wallis
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I have been a teacher for 45 years and was asked to help as a PTT at one of the local elementary schools in Kona. I adore my students and fellow teachers but I would feel much better after we have all been shown safety guidelines to protect everyone. The last thing we need is for the virus to hit our schools. Please delay the opening until EVERYONE has been trained and shown what to do,

Sincerely,

Colleen Miyose-Wallis

Testimony BOE

From: Joy Gerry <joygerry1@gmail.com> on behalf of Joy Gerry
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Thursday July 30, 2020 school reopening meeting.

Aloha,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to plead on behalf of parents and children that school must be reopened on Aug. 4, 2020. My situation is not unique, but I don't think the powers to be, truly understand the hardship that the decisions to keep our children out of school has caused them. I hear alot about concern for MY health and MY safety and the safety of MY child but decisions are made by people who don't know me, my child, or my situation. I am 67 years old and have a 7 yer old hanai son. I have had him since he was 6 weeks old. He has some disabilities and a defective gene that causes him to have some intellectual difficulty, behavior problems, and some anxiety being separated from me, hearing loss and several other weaknesses. He has one working lung and is deaf in his left ear. Despite all his challenges, he is at grade level at Kihei School. I have worked very hard with therapists, psychiatrists, Kaiser pediatricians, IMUA, Tutu and Me and Kihei School to give him a fair chance at life. It is very difficult at times, but this child is precious and deserves to have every advantage that he needs, to live a normal life. His one area of security and his greatest success in life has been Kihei School. I went to his last 2 teachers before school started and talked directly with them on my sons challenges and what they could do to help him and help themselves. Everyone has worked really hard to give CJ a positive school experience. Since March 13 when he and I left for Spring break for a trip to the mainland, his life has been turned upside down. He did not get to return to his class, his friends, his security, his education, or his success in mastering skills like eating in the cafeteria, getting back to class after recess, going to the library, PE skills, getting to the bus after school and getting off at the right bus stop. All that stopped.

Fast forward 5 months. As much as I tried to get him to complete the online learning from March to May 30, it did not come without a price. Doing it online was an extreme challenge because he would rather play games or search movies than do Lexia or Zearn. I would have to sit there for 2 hours to get him to do his work. He has ADHD so any distractions prolong the experience. Frustration is an understatement. Once his teacher stopped giving the assignments on May 30, I tried to continue with Lexia and Zearn. I bought him a workbook and made him a chart to complete additional skills. I had 2 occupational therapy visits online, not the recommended amount according to his 504 Plan. At times, his behavior has been completely out of control. His anxiety level is out of control. During the lockdown I would take him out and we would walk the beach for exerciase. He couldn't play in the sand and he didn't want to swim, but I would get us out of the house each day. Now, he refuses to leave the house and just wants to watch movies. His love of school and learning has now become a psychiatric anxiety problem. He does not want to go back to school at this point, but online learning is not an option. HE NEEDS TO BE IN SCHOOL. He doesn't have Covid. I don't have Covid. He needs a teacher who can show up in the classroom and teach him. I have looked into private schools on Maui since most of them are doing 5 days a week. Because of his 504 plan he is scheduled to go to Kihei El 5 days a week. I receive NO financial compensation for this child. I am not biologically related to this child. His mother left him with me when he was 6 weeks old and basically was not able to care for him. I suspect that she has the same genetic issue as him, but left untreated has caused her severe mental illness, making her lose custody of all 4 of her children. My child calls me Mom. He is mine and I will do whatever it takes to get through this covid issue.

My concern is the constant uncertainty of what schools want to do. It is very easy for everyone to fear a virus and refuse to go on with life. But, most people don't have that luxury. How would it be if the firemen, police officers, restaurant workers, truck drivers, mail personel, Walmart workers, Material suppliers, pharmacists amd

other health care providers and every other “essential worker” refused to work because of a virus. When did teachers become “non-essential” workers? Why is the public education system so much more prone to covid than the rest of the population? To speak to our educators, covid is definitely coming to a school near you!!!! I participated at a food bank from March to the present. We have had thousands in the community come through our doors. None of us came down with covid. I’m wondering why teachers are more vulnerable to covid than the rest of the population? What happens if you postpone school to Aug. 17? A few days before Aug. 17 are we going to come up with a new reason to postpone the start of school? By then the alternatives of private school are missed.

Hand sanitizer, masks, and thermometers can be part of the school supplies. Parent advocates can help the teachers by taking temperatures each morning. There are tons of solutions. But, why is the only solution for Hawaii Public Schools is to delay school, go virtual, and destroy a generation of kids? What rights do I have as a parent with a child with a 504 Plan? The 504 plan cannot be implemented if there is no school. How does my child get an education if schools refuse to open? What are the rights of citizens to get a public education? I thought it was a mandatory for students to attend school if they are not being home schooled. Education isn’t an option but mandated by law. I am wondering if public school has now become a political agenda. I am really concerned about the underlying reasons for our teachers, the DOE, the unions and the BOE to cancel school for 5 months and then delay it 1 week before it is to start.

I realize that these strong organizations that are pressuring the schools to delay opening are much more powerful than a 67 year old from Maui with a special needs child. I realize that their agenda’s become fighting points to persuade everyone to go along with them. It is really easy to try and convince the parents that our children are a priority and their health is the most important thing. Yes, their health is the most important thing. Not their health from a virus that will most likely not kill them, but their mental health, their physical health, their emotional health, their intellectual health. These are all at risk. So, when all the adults in the room are scared of a virus and using that virus to harm our children, someone needs to step up and be a hero. I’m asking the BOE to deny the teachers union and the DOE to delay school and start school on Aug. 4 as planned.

Mahalo,
Joy Gerry
8082984282

Testimony BOE

From: Jina Thompson <jinathom@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jina Thompson
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:15 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please consider 100% Distance Learning

July 29, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

Aloha, my name is Jina Thompson. I am both a teacher, and a wife and mother. I am from the island of Kauai, but born on Oahu in Kailua. I have lived on Kauai for almost 26 years. My husband of 21 years and I have 5 children; a son Blaise who is 23, and serves in the USCG in Honolulu, Hawaii, a daughter, Lilly who is 20 and serves with the youth at our church, two more daughters, Mia and Anna ages 16 and 11, and a son, Bear who is 4. I am also a newly rehired first grade teacher. My two middle daughters are planned to attend two public schools here, in which I am still debating what to do. I share all this personal information with you so that you know a little about who is writing to you and asking you for help.

I am very thankful that you heard the voices of so many, just last week, and have decided to meet again. Thank you.

I understand that the date of August 17 is being spoken of as a new start day for in person instruction. Although I am grateful for this progression, I disagree that we should have face to face instruction at this time, when cases are rising, and there are no consistent plans to keep everyone involved safe.

I am asking that you could please consider the days up until August 17 be utilized to prepare and train teachers on effective and engaging *distance instruction*, and that beginning August 17, we implement 100% distance education for at least the first quarter of this school year. This will allow teachers to provide quality instruction, and not be distracted by keeping students 6 feet apart, mask wearing, cleaning our own classrooms throughout the day, worrying about our health and those of our families, etc. This will also be the safest option for students, their families, and our island communities as a whole.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration,
Jina Thompson

Testimony BOE

From: Emily Brou <emily.brou@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Emily Brou
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Emily Brou, and I am a teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School. I am submitting testimony in regards to the school reopening plan and the postponement of opening school doors to Face-To-Face learning. I want to see my students back in my classroom more than anyone else, but due to COVID-19 that is not safe for them nor me. I miss the hugs I get from my middle schoolers every day, and I miss the feeling of knowing that I made their day a little brighter just from giving a hug. I can't hug them. I can't give them a high five. I can't smile at them. It's unfortunate and sad. Due to the increase in cases in our beautiful state, the thought of reopening schools gives me more and more anxiety as our case numbers continue to rise and stay high. Although our numbers are lower than many states on the mainland, we are not safe. This is an island and we don't have the infrastructure to withstand an increase of cases that will likely come from opening schools. As a state, we need to come up with a plan to teach our children safely. Having 15 students in my classroom is NOT the safe way to teach them. We need to reach our underprivileged students, absolutely, but sending them into an environment rich with COVID-19 is not the way. As a community, there needs to be other, better options for our children.

I am begging you to consider a phased reopening plan for our schools that takes into account trainings for teachers & staff, control of community spread, and contact tracing that is quick and precise. Right now, these things are not in place. Please see an idea of a phased reopening that I am pushing for. Thank you.

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of technology with training for parents and students
- Evaluate ventilation of indoor spaces and order supplies
- Training for substitute teachers
- Training on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and high traffic areas for Phase 2
- Training for faculty and staff on procedures pertaining to illness of staff and students

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-led classes
- School traffic flow design to minimize person-to-person contact
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online learning) teaching plan
- Student classes will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless documented medical reason)
- Cleaning schedule for classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with teachers, in person, at least once a week
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, science-based benchmarks need to be met

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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

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Testimony BOE

From: Tracy Penhall <tracypenhall@gmail.com> on behalf of Tracy Penhall
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:20 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Return to School

Aloha,

As a certified teacher and a parent of 2 elementary students, I am reaching out requesting that schools on Maui be allowed to begin as planned next week. With the minimal covid cases here on Maui, and the outer islands, our students and children should not be held hostage by the covid increase occurring on Oahu. Our Mayor has taken great steps to ensure our low population here on Maui stays safe and I respectfully remind you that city covid counts do not depict what is occurring here on Maui. Please do not put a blanket ruling for outer islands in regards to what is happening in your city.

Mahalo,

Tracy Penhall

Maui Parent, Resident and Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Momi Cummings <momicummings@gmail.com> on behalf of Momi Cummings
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Abraham Yi
Subject: Testimony - July 30th special meeting
Attachments: KSFA Testimony for Hawai'i State Board of Education Special Meeting July 30, 2020.pdf

Testimony for Hawai'i State Board of Education Special Meeting July 30, 2020

Aloha kākou e Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The leadership of the Kamehameha Schools Kapālama teachers' union, KSFA, an affiliate of IBEW local 1186 stands in solidarity with the HSTA, HGEA, and UPW. As advocates for our fellow educators, we have a duty to promote a safe and healthy school environment for teachers, staff, students, and all our families and communities. Therefore, we testify **in favor of Agenda Item III, Action Items A, B, and C.**

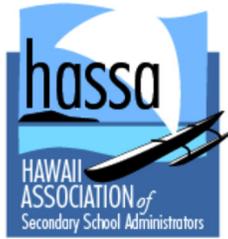
This Board has the opportunity to provide leadership that prioritizes the health and safety of all our school communities. We thank the Board for convening this special meeting to give due consideration to the overwhelming concerns voiced at last week's meeting. We petition this Board to employ the full extent of its decision-making power to protect the health and safety of the hardworking teachers and precious keiki and 'ohana impacted by these decisions.

Me ke aloha a me ka ha'aha'a,



Keoni Wilhelm, President

On behalf of Kamehameha Schools Faculty Association Executive Board - IBEW affiliate



July 25, 2020

Aloha Honorable Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

On behalf of the members of HASSA we thank you for holding a special meeting to considering modifications to the school calendar and delaying the start of school for students until it safe. Our organization supports this action.

We are proud to stand side by side with educators who have worked of the front lines of this pandemic, acting as the first responders to students and community, before school closings this past spring. Many teachers and staff volunteered thousands of hours during their summer vacation to help plan. Principals have tirelessly scrambled, working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, hunting for answers to solve this incredible puzzle.

Due to the complexity of this issue we additional need time when everyone on staff can be together. In our discussions we had to think about many scenarios including what happens when someone on campus become ill, or even worse. Over one third of our school principals are over the age of 55, and an undisclosed amount have underlying health conditions. Yet, we know Covid-19 can affect everyone.

Brooklyn Principal Dez-Ann Romain. She last reported to school on March 12th, three days before their school shut down, and was hospitalized less than a week later. Other administrators in the building also tested positive. Romain passed away on March 23rd. She was 36 years old, raised by a single mother in a low-income family, and was a rising star in education.

Thank you for you care and consideration in this difficult life and death situation to keep everyone safe. As a member of the state BOE for 10 years I know first-hand that whatever challenges the board has faced it has always listened and made the right decision in the end.

Mahalo,

Winston Y. Sakurai
HASSA President

Testimony BOE

From: Deanna Kackley <dkackley@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Deanna Kackley
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:35 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening protocols

Dear Board Members,

please approve the opening of schools on Mon, Aug 17th 2020 or later. The time we have should be used for operations, safety, and protocols. Please urge the State to invest in the purchase of resources PPE and practices which mitigate transmission. Please urge schools to invest time and training in these areas:

- State supplies all resources for daily upkeep and sanitation of persons in classes.
- provide dispenser stations at every entrance and two extra stations within each room across each campus, across the state.
- provide teachers and staff supplies on a continuous basis - 88 days, to start; sprays, sanitizers, wipes, masks, et.
- provide staff to train scenarios so as to address situations that teachers cannot think of
- publish the tripping switches
 - to send staff home
 - to send a student home
 - to close a classroom
 - to close the school
- mandate masks for all staff and students Middle School and high school
- press the DOH for same-day tests
- plan for transparency regarding daily numbers - build a website showing DOE sites and reports
-

with deep respect for this board and the work that you do, mahalo nui loa.

--

Deanna J.K. Kackley
162 Melani St., Hilo HI
808.756.0914

Testimony BOE

From: Winston Sakurai <wsakurai@hotmail.com> on behalf of Winston Sakurai
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Burke Burnett <burkeburnett@gmail.com> on behalf of Burke Burnett
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:39 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Meeting, 30 July 2020
Attachments: 4-Phase-Plan-for-Reopening-Hawaii-Schools.pdf

July 30, 2020

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board:

We are Hawai'i for a Safe Return to Schools (hawaiisafereturn.org), a grassroots group of over 5,900 community members, mostly parents and teachers of our keiki. We believe the current State of Hawaii school reopening plan is unsafe and will result in increased community spread of COVID-19, and therefore, we strongly urge the State of Hawaii to adopt a transparent, science-based phased approach to reopening. We have developed, and are proposing here, a Four-Phase Plan (attached) to reopen our campuses to students, which we strongly believe will better protect the health and lives in our community.

We stand in solidarity to request our state leadership to answer the following questions before campuses open to students in our public schools throughout the islands:

- What are the criteria by which schools will deal with any person on campus who tests positive for COVID-19?
- Has each school been evaluated for ample access to hand-washing sinks, soap, and time during breaks from class to follow the best practice, 20-second safe handwashing protocol? Has this need been calculated to accommodate the expected numbers of people on campus at any one time?
- Will bathrooms be monitored after each use throughout the day to maintain necessary sanitation?
- Will students who need a distance learning device (e.g. Chromebook) be issued one with camera capability for synchronous and asynchronous learning?
- Will parents receive training for online programs to help their child access online education?
- What steps will be taken, and by whom, to assess and improve ventilation systems in each classroom and indoor learning space?
- Are buses going to be safe in regards to social distancing requirements?
- Will sports and band still resume on August 19th?

We have the following feedback to share from members of our group regarding the memos being presented on July 30, 2020 from Superintendent Kishimoto and Board of Education Chairperson Payne:

Memo: July 30, 2020 from Superintendent Kishimoto
RE: Agenda Item A

Item 4.i: "Most substitutes and casual employees will not be reporting to work during the nine (9) days of training and professional development."

We believe that substitute teachers need to be trained as soon as possible to be able to work with students online for virtual learning, so they are ready to work. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that there must be a “back-up staffing plan,” and we believe HIDOE must provide training and incentives to ensure there is not a shortage, especially when outbreaks occur. It is only right that these substitute teachers be fairly compensated for time spent in training. In fact, with the risks they are taking to cover classes, we believe they deserve health care coverage during this perilous time.

Memo: July 30, 2020 from BOE Chairperson Payne
RE: Agenda Item C

Item III.2: “distance learning instructional mode [will last] for at least two weeks or until the Superintendent believes all schools are prepared, whichever is longer.”

and

Item III.4: “The Board expects the DOE to rely on detailed, written, publicly available guidance from the DOH when formulating its own guidance to schools and the Board urges the DOH to issue such guidance.”

We have lost confidence in the superintendent to make this decision independently, and so we are calling for an expert-led, multi-stakeholder process that uses scientifically sound benchmarks (such as R₀) to ensure the safest possible school environment before students return to campuses. We have also lost confidence in our State Department of Health after the release of their “school ohana bubble” fallacy, which is contrary to both science and common sense. It is unscientific to assume students cannot carry the virus and infect others. We feel that the DOH is misleading our community with this narrative because it will essentially mean that **any family member of a student or teacher is only as safe as the least safe family member of any other student within a bubble. We refer to this as the state asking all of us to play a game of “Six Degrees of COVID Bacon.”** The ohana bubble concept will not succeed in stopping COVID transmission in schools, and indeed is very likely to lead to community spread of horrific proportions. Communities need facts in order to be informed enough to make literally life or death decisions, and the DOE has not well served the public in educating us about the facts we need to know. To proceed with the current plan without accurately informing the public about the risks would constitute a serious dereliction of their public duty to protect the health and safety of Hawai'i citizens. State reopening plan thus far is essentially asking the public to give its uninformed consent to a highly risky reopening plan. The state must conduct a scientifically sound and robust community education campaign before the state asks the public to play a game of “Six Degrees of COVID Bacon”.

We are calling for the BOE to appoint and assemble a multistakeholder task force for a Safe Return to Campuses, composed of scientists, public health specialists, and community members and led by Lt. Governor Josh Green, to both educate the public and to determine transparent, externally-verifiable benchmarks that the DOE must use in transitioning between school reopening phases.

Teachers are appalled that they and other school staff are being expected to act, essentially, as front-line medical first responders to triage potential COVID-19 patients. Teachers have no medical training to carry this out, nor do they have the required PPE (personal protective equipment) to do so safely. This is simply outside the scope of a teacher's professional duties, and we consider it inhumane, unethical, and reckless. Furthermore, we have received expressions of support from medical professionals, including nurses and physicians, for our strong objections to this current plan.

Item III.3: “The Board expects everyone on public school campuses to wear a face mask (or a face shield if a medical condition prevents the extended use of a face mask)”

We believe the word “documented” must be added before “medical condition” to ensure there is a valid medical reason for non-compliance with what should otherwise be a mandatory mask policy.

We urge the BOE to instruct the DOE to adopt a phased approach to school reopening, which we believe is the only way to carry out a reopening in a way that minimizes and mitigates potential risks to the community that

would otherwise certainly arise. We offer our Four Phase Plan in the spirit of aloha and kokua for all members of our community in the State of Hawaii, and hope that our proposal can serve as the foundation for such an approach.

Mahalo for your attention to our concerns, which could not be of greater importance - they are literally matters of life or death.

Testimony BOE

From: Piper Selden <piperselden@gmail.com> on behalf of Piper Selden
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:49 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for 7/30/20

July 29, 2020

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

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

RE: Testimony for Emergency Meeting on 7/30

Dear Board Members,

My name is Piper Selden, and I am an English teacher at Waiakea HS on the Big Island of Hawaii. I would like you to reconsider the current plan to reopen schools and return students in just a few days. I do not believe it is safe, and I believe that opening schools too early would not only be reckless but will endanger the lives of students, faculty, and families in the State of Hawaii.

I would like to suggest a 4-Phase Approach as outlined by Hawai'i for Safe Return to Schools. I think this would be the best way to ensure that students and faculty and the community in general are protected from a possible super-spread situation. This is a pragmatic approach, especially when there seems to be little in the way of planning for certain "what if" scenarios. Here are my requests for your session:

1. **A Four Phased Approach** to reopen school, as laid out by the grassroots activism group "Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools. Starting with training, this phase will assist teachers, administration, and other faculty/community members as to what to do in the event of a positive case of COVID-19. Students, faculty, and community members on campus also should be taught best practices to mitigate the spread of the virus. This includes sanitation protocols, cleaning schedules, and training for substitute educators and EAs.
2. **Masks** should be worn at all times on campuses, unless there is a documented and submitted medical reason. Mask wearing and social distancing should be enforced.
3. Finally, I would like to submit a **short statement** that I drafted and gave to my husband. This may seem ridiculous to you or perhaps leaning too heavily on hyperbole. What I'm telling you, though, is that it is no. It's what I want people to know about me should I become ill or die. I'll leave the date of death open for someone to fill out in my stead.

Thank you,

--Piper Selden
English Department
Waiakea HS, Hilo, HI 96720

Obituary: Piper Selden,
“She loved what she did.”

Piper Selden, undisclosed age, passed away on [insert date here] due to complications arising from COVID-19 and a pre-existing condition of lupus. She died alone, isolated from a family who meant the world to her.

Piper self-quarantined after contracting the virus at her job as a teacher. During the State of Hawaii reopening of schools, she was exposed to approximately 360 unique and rotating students every two weeks. Piper’s dying request was not to spread the virus to her family, especially her immuno-compromised daughter, a nine-year survivor of childhood cancer.

Originally from the Pacific Northwest, Piper moved to Hawaii in 2003, where she graduated with advanced degrees in English composition and creative writing. She wrote, published, and taught at both the college and K-12 levels. Piper was an advocate for special needs and at-risk students, and served her community until her untimely death. Students remember her upbeat personality. “Leave a little sparkle wherever you go,” she would say. “Life is short. Wear the glitter.”

Piper was surrounded by books and stacks of writing journals, containing stories that will never be published. “I had so much writing I wanted to do,” Piper told her husband. She requested to be buried with paper and her favorite mechanical pencil, just in case there’s publishing on the other side.

Hailing from a long line of teachers, Piper asked that her own children not follow in her footsteps. “There’s no longer respect for the job we do,” she told her son. “Please find a profession that will pay your bills and not break your heart.”

Piper is survived by her adoring husband of 31 years, Todd, son Theo, daughter Lauren, cat (Luna), mother Ann (retired substitute teacher), sister Laurel (math teacher, Washington State), and sister Kim (science teacher, Oregon State).

A Virtual Celebration of Life gathering and Zoom bonfire will be held at the next full moon. Donations to HSTA teacher’s union has been requested by the family in lieu of flowers.

Piper Selden
Writer, Teacher, Liver of Life
Planet Earth and Beyond

Subscribe for my latest writing: www.piperselden.com
Books, Blog, and Donation-based Workshops for adults and youth. See website for details.

"We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect." --Anais Nin

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Piper Selden** <piperselden@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 2:15 PM
Subject: Testimony for 7/23/20
To: <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

My name is Piper Selden, and I am an English teacher at Waiakea HS on the Big Island of Hawaii. I would like you to reconsider the current plan to return students to school in just a few weeks. I do not believe it is safe, and I believe that doing so would not only be reckless but will endanger the lives of students, faculty, and families in the State of Hawaii.

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.

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 teachers will not feel safe at school and won't be.

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

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools, including a telework options for teachers who have autoimmune diseases and other high-risk conditions and/or must care for immune-compromised immediate family members;
2. Delaying the opening of schools (face-to-face) 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.)

At the very MINIMUM, students and teachers should be able to work remotely; 6' social distancing should be mandatory; and masks should be required for anyone on school campuses.

If these minimal requests are met, the lives (and deaths) of students and teachers will be on YOUR hands. Can you live with that?

Piper Selden

Writer, Teacher, Liver of Life

"We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect." --Anais Nin

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Honokaa / Kohala / Kealakehe / Kona Complex Area**

July 30, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

Once again it is with great apprehension and concern that we submit testimony to the BOE for consideration. It is our hope that our testimony will provide clarity for the four areas outlined in the recommendations for this July 30th meeting. There has not been any Principal consult or opportunity for input since the last meeting yet we move forward with uncertainty. As “good soldiers”, we continue to make the best plans possible, with some guidancebeit very far away from understanding school operations. Please understand these are not complaints but concerns from Principals who continue to work 7 days a week, under high pressure, neglecting their own families and health to produce the best possible opening for students.

As Complex Area Administrators, we appreciate the countless hours and dedication to supporting and providing clarity for all involved in education for our state. We would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following recommendations in hopes that it provides the clarity you seek.

It is our belief that Board Member Takeno discussed opening in distance only from August 4th because of his understanding of 180 days, this was introduced because it was the best option on the table at the time. We believe that Board Member Cox reiterated that Principals and teachers requested the time that was needed to get safety concerns as well as distance platforms up and running. In turn, the discussion led to the statement that the BOE actually has the power to change the 180 day calendar (per say) by granting additional waiver days. This act in essence modifies the year for meeting with families, professional development, distance learning purposes, etc. Should this “9 day Waiver” be granted to focus on the safe and planful opening, students would not start in any form until August 17th in which they would be trained on safety and distance learning.

Proposed motions for July 30, 2020 Meeting: (Blue ink denotes testimony.)

1. The Board expects any additional training and professional development days adopted as part of any changes to the school calendar to focus on health, safety, and distance learning to ensure schools can safely open and teachers and administrators are ready to provide instruction to students in distance learning mode; This is our understanding, to be able to get teachers trained, time is needed so students can benefit from this upon their start date in any modality on August 17th. Some schools will use this opportunity to provide support to parents in regards to distance learning by addressing challenges and tech support.

2. The Board expects schools to begin the school year for students in distance learning instructional mode for at least two weeks or until the Superintendent believes all schools are prepared, whichever is longer. Schools may determine that students who do not benefit from distance learning can be provided more intensive supports, including in-person supports, during this distance learning mode period; This recommendation suggests an August 4th start date. This is not a viable option as this option would require teacher training in much greater depth and detail than allowed for in the standard Opening of the Year 4 days (2 being Teacher initiated and 2 being Administrative initiated.) In addition, devices would need to be signed out and distributed along with digital device forms. We would hope that this request is heard with compassion, empathy, and understanding as many schools' Summer Hub devices did not get there till week 5 of a 6 week program - yet principals made it happen. It is a logistical challenge of being part of an island state that we understand and accept. We are in support of the BOE granting a waiver from the 180 days by granting 9 waiver days to allow us time to train and plan with our full staff.

3. The Board expects everyone on public school campuses to wear a face mask (or a face shield if a medical condition prevents the extended use of a face mask); and We find this to be a little confusing. It was our understanding that face mask / face coverings (not face shields) are the requirement while on campus, outdoors, except when participating in physical activities or eating. The wearing of face masks / face coverings is a Hawaii County Law. We have also been instructed that to replace a face mask / face covering in the aforementioned areas requires a doctor's note to wear a face shield in its place.

We do understand the MOU with HSTA that it is the Teachers purview to decide on whether face masks / face coverings are worn within the classroom.

We also heard Superintendent Kishimoto say that masks will be worn whenever students are closer than 6 feet but this is not stated in writing in the MOU with HSTA.

4. The Board expects the DOE to rely on detailed, written, publicly available guidance from the DOH when formulating its own guidance to schools and the Board urges the DOH to issue such guidance.”

As to testimony about a positive case and the “Ohana bubble concept” may only shut down that one class we beg you to think of the following variables:

What if...

- This child sat next to another grade level student on the bus?
- The bus driver did a route for a high school after the drop due to staggered time?
- The child went to the cafeteria for breakfast?
- The child went to the restroom?

Lastly, we urge you to think larger than what is left on the shoulders of Principals. We are asked for contingency plans and we absolutely try to deliver, many times being the person that has to do the coverage in any area lacking. What will be the State Level contingency plans for when substitute teachers do not show up and we are not able to double up students in classrooms? What will happen when the school has only two or three custodians and for whatever reason they are out? What then? Principals do a lot, but what will be the support in these conditions that are inevitable for this time of COVID?

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses once again. The time to plan, and time to train our employees will support our ability to provide the products and services that our students deserve. Once again, thank you for your tireless efforts in supporting education in Hawai'i.

Respectfully Submitted,
West Hawaii Complex Area Administrators

Scott Tamura, Principal, Waimea Elementary
Rachelle Matsumura, Principal, Honokaa High and Intermediate
Hannah Loyola, Principal, Kohala Elementary
Rory Souza, Principal, Honoka'a Elementary
Alan Brown, Principal Kohala Middle School
Kris Kosa-Correia, Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School
Diane Spencer, Principal, Konawaena Elementary
Michelle Barber, Principal, Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate
Tammy Yoshimura-Furrer, Principal, Ho'okena Elementary
Glenn Gray, Principal, Kealakehe High
Jim Denight, Principal, Kahakai E.S.
Teddy Burgess, Principal, Konawaena Middle School
Makala Paakaula, Po'okumu, Ke Kula 'O 'Ehunuikaimalino
Amy Stafford, Principal, Kohala High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Osa Tui <osa.tui@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Osa Tui
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 12:59 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

Mahalo for your previous decision to assuage thousands of educators across the state by sparing the shortage differentials from the chopping block. Your thoughtful discussion and ultimate decision are a testament to the difficult choices you have to make during these exceptional times.

Mahalo for listening to the voices from many positions across the school community who have pleaded to seemingly deaf ears that our system is just not ready for students on August 4th. I send my exceptional gratitude for your willingness to pause and evaluate the situation. Mahalo for the additional time to ensure that should we have to shut down, we will be prepared to switch to a remote learning and teaching model. Mahalo for the additional time to prepare for the arrival of students in the safest manner that can be provided. Mahalo for being a check and balance on the Department and not just a rubber stamp. Mahalo.

Osa Tui
McKinley High School
HSTA Vice President

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July 29, 2020

Aloha Honorable Board of Education members,
RE: COVID-19: Health and Safety, Postpone Physical Return to DOE campuses

As a concerned community member and parent to 3 children attending Waianae Coast public and public charter school I respectfully ask for the postponement of physical return to public school campuses. Back to school preparation for my 'ohana includes mask wearing practice. Messaging that proper mask use shows aloha their kumu and ho'a. In response my kindergartner asked "Mama, will I die from Corona? Is that why we have to wear masks?" cementing for me that now is not the time to return to school. The social, emotional and mental health toll we are exacting by gambling a "safe return" will be long lasting. How might our children look at school should a COVID-19 related death be traced to school engagement? How will they view learning? Teachers? Those that we are taught to trust? These are not the conversations nor the working/learning conditions by which we want to kickoff the school year 2020-2021. In the last week Dr. Park, Dr. Anderson, Dr. Lt Gov Josh Green and Dr. Miscovich echoed those same sentiments. Dr/Lt Gov Green stressed gatherings should be no more than 10 which would be near impossible for our already overcrowded public school classrooms.

At 109 cases we should be sounding the alarms while maintaining as much calm as possible. Asymptomatic spread is what is the scariest aspect of this virus. Safety protocol, measures to include temperature checks are moot. By the time physical symptoms present themselves, it may be too late and in the Waianae Coast, it would be catastrophic.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/06/09/who-comments-asymptomatic-spread-covid-19/>

The Waianae community experiences high rates of underlying health conditions, obesity (71%), asthma(34%), and diabetes(12% diabetes, 14% prediabetic). Per Center for Disease Control these conditions have been proven to increase the lethality of COVID-19. Sending teachers and students back to school prior to the availability of a vaccine guarantees one thing: a disproportionate amount of death in Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander communities along with devastating financial consequences. On average the cost of COVID-19 treatment WITH medical coverage is 30K. We already are wrestling with the harsh economic realities compounded by COVID-19, what more hospitalization? Loss of work if not already unemployed? Not to mention the ultimate loss: loss of life, especially if we know we can prevent it.

I am the proud daughter of a committed Waianae public school educator. I am writing for her. My family falls into the high risk category and like our community, they continue to prepare and are ready to provide the quality education for our community's keiki. I am asking that we allow them to do so in the safest way possible. To close I want to touch on the gross inequities that COVID-19 has magnified, 88% of Hawaii teachers are female charged with the social emotional and educational well being of our community's children. They are being asked to sacrifice in the

name of our children, our economy, their lives and safety of their own families. Prior to COVID-19 they were already wearing multiple hats, and we are asking them to take on a few more to become sanitation experts, paraprofessional health care workers, and getting K-12 age kids to maintain appropriate social distance in spaces not designed for it and teach. With all eyes upon us now, let's stop discussing pay incentives and offer salary commensurate with the nobility of the teaching profession. Returning to business pre-COVID was not working. Together, with aloha, let's listen with open mind and hearts and reimagine the educational landscape our community deserves..

Respectfully,
Angela T. Hoppe-Cruz

Testimony BOE

From: Desi McKenzie <desimckenzie@yahoo.com> on behalf of Desi McKenzie
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:00 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re Delaying the Opening of Hawaii Schools

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

As a parent, teacher, and parent of a teacher who returned today to school for training risking her life--it is inconceivable to me that you are expecting teachers and soon--students to risk their lives with their expected return to campus in the near future--when we are now seeing TRIPLE DIGITS of new cases of COVID-19 in Hawai'i!

Students are not able to come to school when not vaccinated for less life-threatening diseases yet you expect teachers and students to return to campus for in-person instruction in the middle of a pandemic--the worst our WORLD has ever seen?

This makes absolutely NO SENSE. If we are going to be making decisions as educated partners responsible for the education of our haumana--this is hardly role-modeling, let alone teaching them to make educated decisions--especially when there is no vaccine in sight for the foreseeable future.

Representative Amy Perruso, a teacher, who is my representative, wrote you all the most profound letter written we have seen thus far. **FIRST DO NO HARM.**

Their LIVES are in your hands.

Ask yourself as an individual, even if ONE Teacher or ONE Student passed from exposure to COVID-19--could you live with your decision to have them return to campus before a vaccine is available?

Apologize in advance for any grammatical errors, but this testimony was written in 5 hurried minutes as I must attend to my disabled daughter whose life will now be at risk with exposure to her sister--who is a teacher and the only respite provider I have during this pandemic.

PLEASE do what is PONO and preserve LIFE!

Mahalo!
Desi McKenzie

Testimony BOE

From: MS at Mohs <michellemohs@gmail.com> on behalf of MS at Mohs
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:02 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on start of school date

Dear BOE,

In addition to the four paid days before school is supposed to start on Aug 4th, teachers now want an additional 9 days for "safety" training. 9 full days despite essential stores basically figuring it out overnight during the height of the pandemic.

They are also asking for a special exception for students to simply lose these instructional days. So, in addition to students having lost basically all of 4th quarter and, thanks to HSTA, not covering any 4th quarter material, teachers now want students to lose 9 more days of instruction.

How are these teachers? How are thinking about the future and education of our keiki? How are they demanding full pay, working less, and compromising the education of our children, which is their right as a US citizen.

So, please go ahead and give the teachers the extra days to prepare if they feel they really need them. Nevermind that so many other jobs simply put in the extra overtime (unpaid) to make things safe and makes things work during this unprecedented pandemic. But please then **make sure that teachers teach during fall break and possibly spring break with no extra pay. If teachers want to delay the school year, then please have school during at least Fall Break.**

M. Moss

COMMENT on C. [Board Action on Board expectations regarding: \(1\) focusing additional training and professional development days included in the revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar on health, safety, and distance learning; \(2\) starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode; \(3\) mandating masks on public school campuses; and \(4\) detailed, written, publicly posted guidance from the Department of Health](#)

Aloha, my name is Dianne ***** and I am a parent of two children in the HIDOE system.

I want to address Action Item C (2) "starting student instruction for the 2020-2021 school year in distance learning mode," which is a great idea given the recent rising numbers in community spread of COVID-19.

I'm not sure if the Board is aware that parents are receiving conflicting information, no information, or misinformation directly from their childrens' schools regarding **Distance Learning**.

Inconsistencies include:

1. **Platforms** being used;
2. **Instructional delivery modes** adopted; and, even
3. **Availability** of the Distance Learning option

Regarding platforms: Parents are being told that their schools may be using one of these platforms:

- Acellus
- Plato
- Canvas
- Blackboard, etc.

What does that mean for the students' learning experience? My daughter's high school told us that they are using an existing platform called Plato, which is already in use for summer school remedial classes for students who have failed a course during the regular school year. My child has a GPA of 4.5 and takes AP courses. She does NOT need remedial classes—she needs her Foreign Language teacher, she needs her Math teacher, she needs her Science teacher—she needs an actual HIDOE certified teacher to teach.

Additionally, many parents do not even know the differences between **Distance Learning, Virtual learning, e-school** nor the difference between **Hybrid** and **Blended** options. There's so much confusion. Some parents are pulling their children out of the DOE system all-together because they don't know the difference between **Distance Learning** and **Homeschooling**. If they choose Homeschooling, schools that are already struggling are going to deal with additional **loss of funding** per student weighted formula to the tune of \$7,000 to \$13,000 per student according to Superintendent Kishimoto's figures.

On the top of **page 4 of the BOE executed Resolution** states that the range of instructional delivery modes include:

- 114 b. Distance learning, where the **teacher delivers instruction** virtually or online
- 115 through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction
- 116 through other remote mediums; and

The teacher must deliver the instruction in the Distance Learning mode. Please ensure that ALL students will have access to classes where a **HIDOE teacher** (not ASU's Canvas platform that doesn't require a local teacher to do more than just "check in" periodically) are able to teach our children directly.

It is incumbent on the Board and the DOE to ensure that taxpayer-funded education system provides for **equitable access to learning opportunities** and not let schools to slough off their responsibilities by forcing 180,000 students to use some canned program that they purchased at the last minute.

Further, please provide teachers with the proper **professional development on Distance Learning instructional delivery** for a safe and successful online return to learning. Thank you.

Small fraction of Comments from the Facebook group: Hawaii for a Safe Return to School

What teachers & parents are saying online re: Distance Learning (DL) option:

1. Do parents know that their children will not be receiving equal educational opportunities with this model?
2. Our poor administrators! Everyone is telling a different story. Nobody has the same information.
3. some elementary schools are offering 100% distance learning THROUGH a homeschool curriculum by paying the license fees for the parents.
4. Our school is not offering distance learning, only hybrid because they don't have the funds to offer distance learning. Other elementary schools on this island are offering a choice but my school (that we just moved to) is in a deficit so we're not given the funds to do so.
5. The school my child goes to is not offering distance learning for younger grades, when confronting her on this she then suggested to me that I try and do a GE.
6. Distance learning details are still coming out but it seems it is going to be independent study of assignments, little teacher interaction and no participation in any virtual classroom sessions the in-person kids have.
7. The school gave us two options 1) virtual instruction from teacher and 2) Acellus
8. My child's principal told me to switch to a school that offers to all grades. Wth?
9. it's a mess, I don't think they know what they are doing. I was told there would be no district exceptions and there probably won't be. They're just running us in circles as a distraction, because they don't care what we want or say. They're going to do what they want to do.
10. Are u in ewa area? My kids school said the same thing. On no distance learning and they didn't receive funds. I tried to call another school near me but not my district. And was told g.e wont be accepted because school is at mac limit. So I'm going to try to home school 5 of my children.
11. yes, Ewa area . The other schools that have the option of distant learning are using the Acellus program. They will not receive the same curriculum as

the students going to school / hybrid. Acellus offers a homeschool program for \$25 a month. I'm considering that route.

12. Some schools are appointing a teacher to manage this- meet with the student via WebEx, help when needed, make sure work is completed. Some schools are not and families are on their own, like homeschooling, but students are still enrolled in school and the school pays for the account.

13. The BOE resolution states:

“Distance learning, where the **teacher delivers instruction** virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote mediums.”

The teacher delivers instruction. They cannot just buy you some canned online program and call it a day. That's unethical and probably illegal.

14. BOE does nothing. I tried that. Neither does the complex superintendent. They just forwarded my email to the school principal which suggested GE, I even contacted a senator. He said homeschool.

Although said in the context of health guidance, now it has oozed to other areas due to lack of information and guidance:

BOE Chair, The Honorable Catherine Payne is correct that, “This lack of transparency [by the DOE] has caused problems, delayed the implementation of guidance, and led to a general erosion of public trust.”

Testimony BOE

From: Lilia Doubleday <liliadoubleday@gmail.com> on behalf of Lilia Doubleday
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Phased back to school

Subject: testimony BOE meeting July 30, 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

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing testimony related to all three items under discussion at the Special Meeting on July 30, 2020. I'm Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser and I'm a special education teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary School. You can't tell it by looking at me, but I have several comorbidities that put me at high risk should I get COVID-19. I am a diabetic, have asthma, and am in stage 3 of Chronic Kidney Disease. While I want to go back to work teaching my students, I want to do so safely.

The fact that the Board continues to meet virtually should be an indication that we are not ready to go back to in-person instruction. If you do not feel it is safe to meet in person, what makes you think it's safe to have students receive face-to-face instruction at this time? Over the last week we've had double digits of new cases across the islands. This makes me fear going back into the classroom to teach students because of the unknown and the possibilities that can occur.

As a special education teacher, I will have to complete assessments on my students to determine if there is a need for compensatory education as a result of the shutdown. Unfortunately, at this point, I do not know what assessments we are expected to use for this. When I asked my district resource teacher, her response was that the school should make that decision. My concern with this is that we may not be consistent from school to school in what we select. Additionally, it was my understanding that the state Special Education Section would be providing us with guidance on this. This guidance has not been provided yet.

The concept of an Ohana Bubble is good in theory. However, an Ohana Bubble only works if students don't come into contact with anyone else. In an elementary school, this is an impossibility. Students come to school by bus, parent, or walk to school. Once on campus, how are we going to police the children so that they go straight to their classroom and stay there? We have our educational assistants who get on campus at 7, but they have specific morning assignments and duties they must carry out during that time and additional monitoring of students is a near impossibility.

Questions have been asked that we have not received a response to yet. It is hard for us to plan and ensure that we are keeping our students safe, along with the entire school community. My principal was very proactive and purchased the necessary PPE for us at the school. We were given two cloth masks and special education teachers were given two face shields. We've received gloves and had soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers installed in all classrooms. However, I know of many other schools where the principal was unable to obtain these necessary PPE or they are on back order. This does not ensure the health and safety of a school community.

Here are some questions to ponder as you discuss this important issue.

1. What will happen if a teacher or a student contracts COVID-19?
2. If a teacher contracts COVID-19 while at work, who covers the medical expenses for this teacher? Would it be considered a part of workman's compensation?
3. Where is the written guidance we were supposed to be given by the Department of Health in relation to the safe reopening of schools?
4. What happened to the guideline of 14 days of no new cases before we open schools?
5. How can we make preschoolers and younger students adhere to the 6 foot social distancing when they are, by their very nature, social beings who must touch to learn?

6. How can I comfort a student who is upset from a six foot distance? I will have Kindergarten through second graders this year.
7. Are any of you willing to spend a day in a classroom with only a mask and social distancing in place?
8. Shouldn't face masks be a requirement? Especially since Honolulu's mayor now wants everyone to wear a mask at all times when they are out of their homes. If we need to wear face masks like this, shouldn't that be a requirement in the classroom? It should not be up to the individual teacher to decide if they are going to require the wearing of a mask in their class.

We need a strong message to come from you in relation to opening schools up to face-to-face instruction. That message should be that you care for your school community made up of teachers, custodians, administrators, educational assistants, cafeteria staff, office staff, and any one who works on the school campus. To ensure that the message is heard, please allow us the time needed to receive the training that Superintendent Kishimoto claims has been provided. I worked all summer and did not hear about this training or I would have participated in it.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

July 30, 2020

Re: Special BOE Meeting
Agenda Item III.A
Position: Support

Aloha Chair Payne, Superintendent Kishimoto and Board members,

I am testifying to express support for delayed reopening of schools and for a phased approach to reopening. I represent State House District 46, which includes Wahiawā, Whitmore Village and Launani Valley. Every school in my district is a Title I school, and I want to help the public understand the pressure under which principals and teachers at these schools are operating. These are all highly educated professionals, who understand the importance of using data vetted and analyzed by public health professionals to make public policy decisions in a pandemic. That is why I think they would support a phased approach to reopening grounded in such data.

And yet... the principals and teachers at these schools are ALSO operating with a very clear understanding of their responsibilities to our children, that they are often the only source of a nutritious meal for the children in their care, and the most important providers of equalizing opportunity. They understand, as well, that their schools' and their own performance is evaluated primarily on the basis of student outcomes measured in standardized test scores.

While teachers and administrators take data seriously, it's important that our limited resources focus on obtaining the right data in this moment, and standardized test scores should not be the measure of their work in pandemic conditions.

It is no secret that public schools in the most deeply impoverished districts have, in general, been the focus of close scrutiny and even labeled as 'failures' on the basis of their test scores. Educators are usually driven by ideals of helping their students achieve academic success. That is why I would expect that much of the conversation around objectives for this year will involve a great deal of stress on meeting the same learning objectives under very different conditions.

I'd like to ask that rather than emphasizing test scores, we focus on the whole child. I know that some schools in some complexes have invested in training around trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning, and I recognize that if the legislature did a better

job of funding public education, all teachers in all schools would have such training, because we know it is aligned with best practices. So I am not going to engage in the hypocrisy of asking you to do work that we all know would benefit our children but that the legislature failed to fund even for one complex. I am asking instead, just for the time being, just until we get safely on the other side of this pandemic, that we actually, consciously, try to do LESS of the normal test preparation and constant assessment.

I want the children in my district to learn. I know that deep learning is not possible under conditions of high stress. I am asking the leadership of the DOE to sincerely and authentically communicate to teachers and educational leaders in the public education system that our highest value is our children's happiness and well-being.

Mahalo,

Amy Perruso
Hawaii State House
District 46



The Senate

Office of Kaiali'i Kahele

July 24, 2020

Ms. Catherine Payne, Chairperson
and Board Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Re: Reopening of Department of Education Schools

Aloha e Chair Payne and Board Members,

I would like to express my alarm over the proposed reopening of our public schools on August 4, 2020. The fact that the Hawai'i State Teachers Association, Hawai'i Government Employees Association, and United Public Workers are urging for a delay in the opening of our Department of Education (DOE) schools is a reflection of its members' strong, valid concerns about the readiness of public school campuses to reopen safely. They need reassurances, as well as parents, that our schools can reopen with the adequate Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) mitigation measures and safety precautions in place.

The DOE plans are for teachers to return to school on July 29, 2020 with students returning on August 4, 2020. This short timeline is unacceptable, and I do not believe the DOE and the Department of Health (DOH) have done enough to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The DOE cannot simply depend on the DOH and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to implement contact tracing. It is the DOE's responsibility to clearly implement certain procedures and/or protocols to ensure the safety of its staff and students and before schools reopen, answers to these basic questions need to be clearly articulated by the DOE:

- What are the procedures to minimize the spread of COVID-19, especially in the classrooms, cafeteria and playground?
- What is the protocol when a student or staff exhibits signs of or is confirmed with COVID-19?

Ms. Catherine Payne, Chairperson
and Board Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education
July 24, 2020
Page 2

- What are the procedures for contact tracing in the classrooms?

Steps also need to be taken to ensure school buildings and facilities are safe for our students and staff to return. The following needs to be completed:

- Written guidance from the DOE and DOH on the reopening of school buildings.
- All faculty and staff need to be properly trained and provided with sufficient supplies, equipment, and protocols to ensure our facilities are kept clean and our faculty, staff and students are safe.

We need to plan for the likelihood of COVID-19 cases occurring in our public schools once they reopen, but with careful planning there can be strong, strict and caring mitigation efforts to minimize any potential spread of the virus in our schools. We need sound leadership that is willing to work collaboratively with all parties involved and instill the confidence of everyone involved, to move forward in this uncharted territory. In order to accomplish this, we need more time to implement a solid plan, and I strongly urge the Board of Education to delay the reopening of our DOE schools on August 4, 2020.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 808-586-6760 or senkkahele@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Me ka ha'aha'a,



Kai'i Kahele
Senate District 1 – Hilo

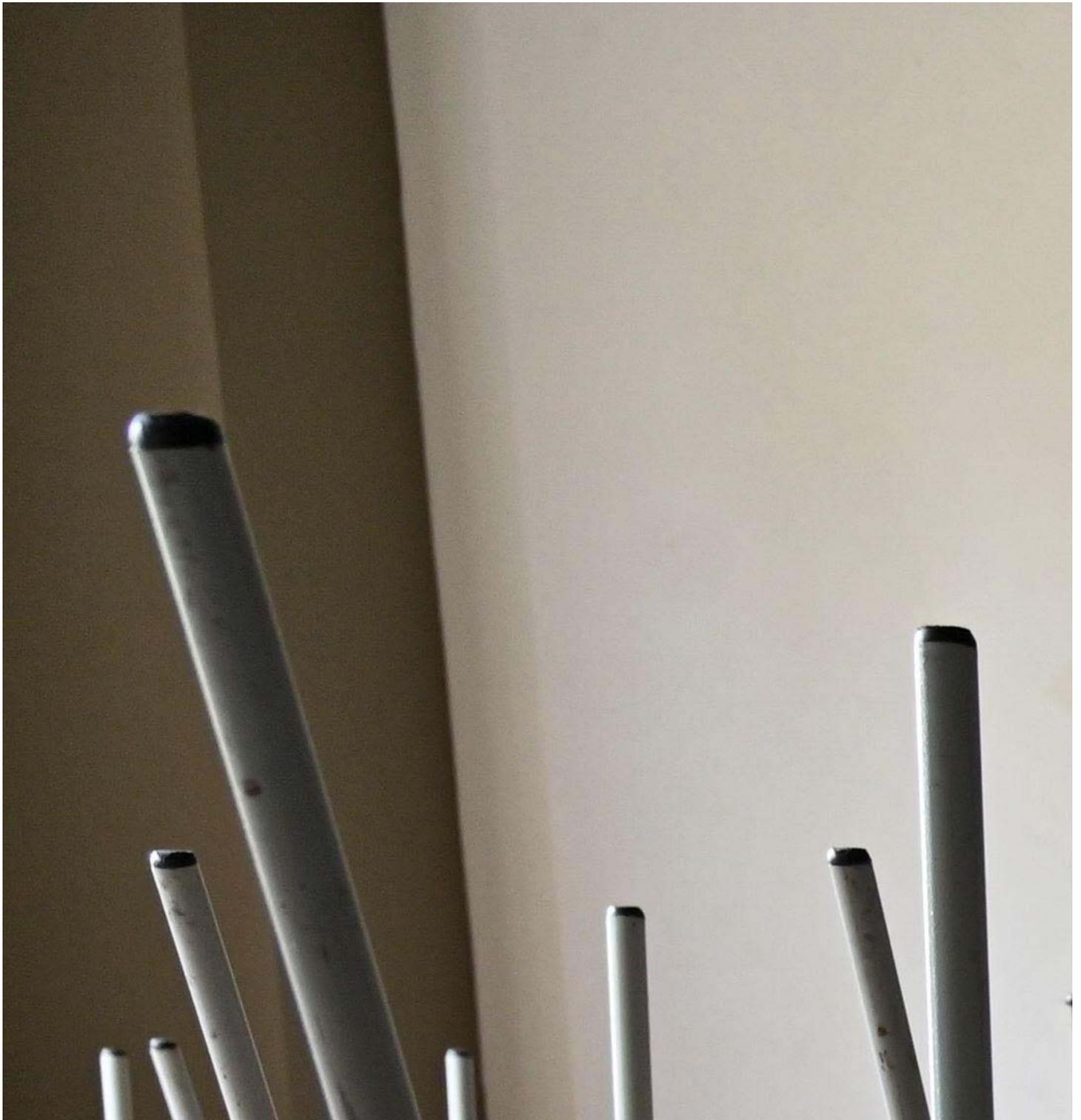
cc: Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, Department of Education

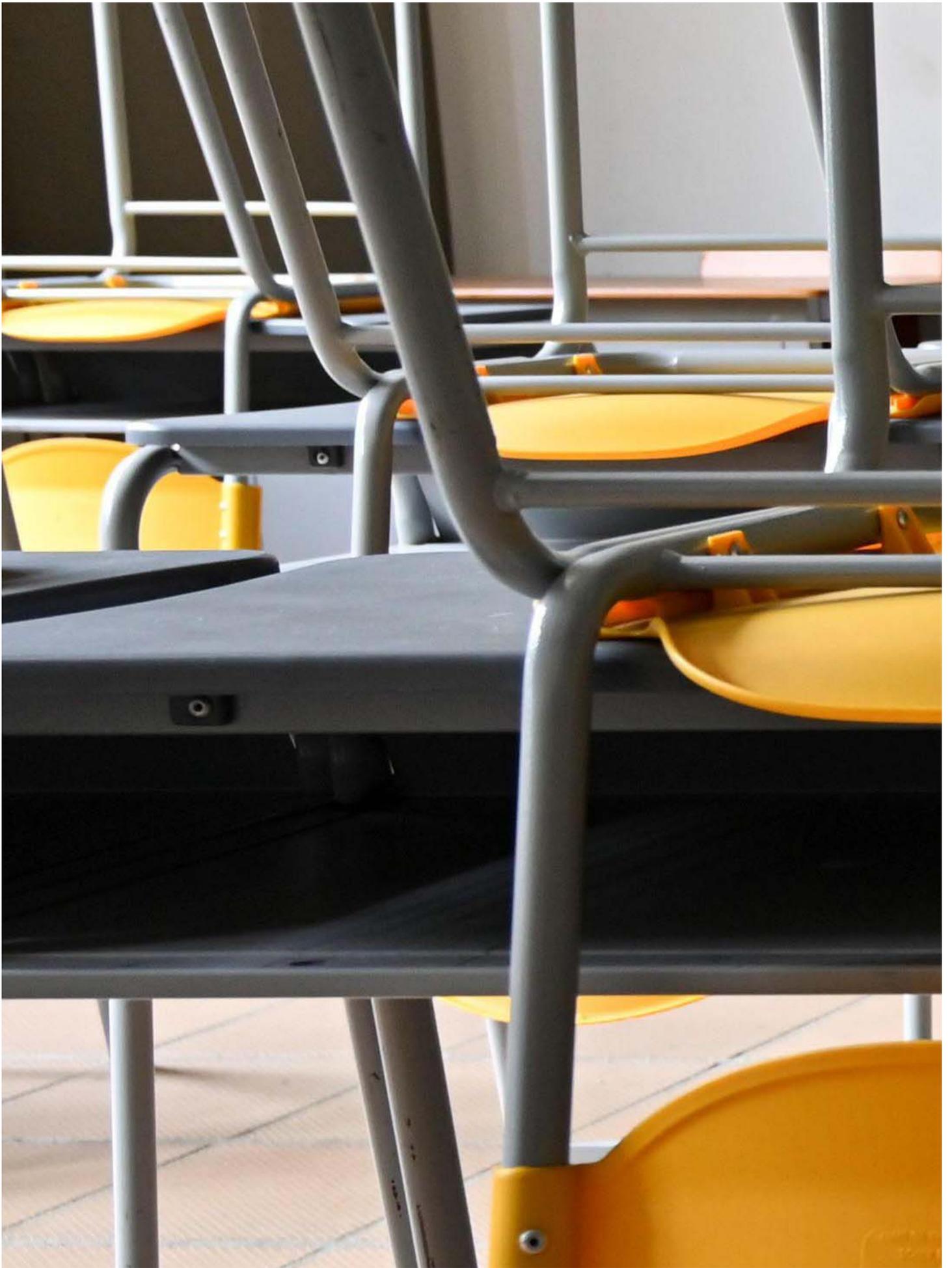
America's Schools Are a Moral and Medical Catastrophe

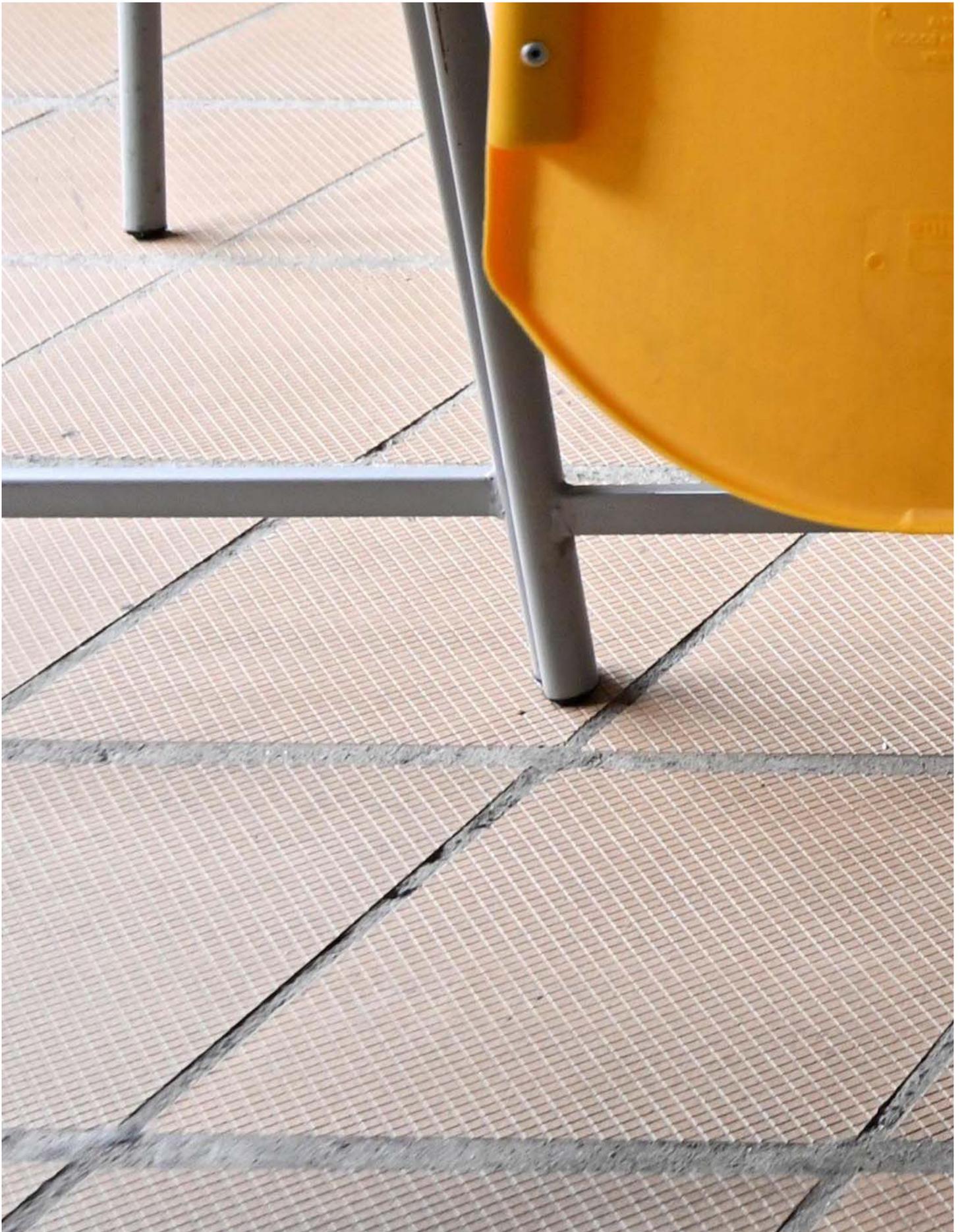
Valerie Harmon <lenscap@me.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Sir/Ms.,
I am sending you an article titled "America's Schools Are a Moral and Medical Catastrophe", written by Dr. Laurie Garrett. Many excellent points made here and I believe her analysis of COVI
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/24/americas-schools-are-a-moral-and-medical-catastrophe/>

Thank you,
Valerie Harmon
Art Teacher
HSTA Head Representative
Kalakaua Middle School









More to consider.

Jacob Cassens <mistercassens@gmail.com>
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jul 25, 2020 at 9:32 PM

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6930e1.htm>

You're potentially exposing innocent kids and teachers to something that has long lasting effects that we aren't even sure of yet.

And we all know the CDC back to school changes were a political maneuver and have no bearing on the reality on the ground.

73 cases today. How many the second week school's back in? That will be your fault if you don't insist on distance learning for the first semester at least.

And if you think teachers can't fight back, the union isn't our only bargaining tool. Who's going to teach at all if there's no one willing to teach? Have you looked at how many can use FMLA for pre-existing conditions? How many will just retire for their own health and safety if forced back into a classroom? Oh.. And how many sick days we will have saved up. I don't know that you have enough subs to cover us all.

Cough

Stop treating this like there's any choice besides keeping kids and teachers out of classrooms until we know how to fight those thing and have vaccines in place.

How many students' funerals have you been to? How many students' families have you gone to funerals for to support them? I've been to too many. It hurts to hurt for our kids, but we care about them like they are our own. It's like having your heart ripped out. Every time. I can't even fathom what their parents feel, or how the kids felt when their parents died. Everything I could do to help felt inadequate. Every time.

We just had a student from last year pass away a couple weeks ago, and we can't even mourn them properly. I have to go through the work I have left from last year so I can send something to their parents and tell them how sorry I am, and how wonderful their child was to have in class, and how much I appreciate that I got to get to know them, and most importantly that I wish I could do more. But I can't do more.

But you people have the chance to prevent a death. And if you don't, when one of these students and teachers dies, and when someone spits at you, you better take it. And you better feel sorry. Because when we go to the funeral, we will remember who decided that you all could have stopped it.

Who could have prevented it. And who didn't. And by not preventing it, you will have caused it because we warned you. The people warned you. And any amount of saying, "but experts told us it was okay" will not absolve you. Those deaths will be your fault.

To the Military rep, my father and brother both served, my dad didn't talk about it much, but my brother had trouble sleeping up until his death because of the lives he took, even though he knew it was them or him. The lives you're watching them condemn are innocent.

And we can do a damn good job of teaching these kids remotely. Not the best. But a damn good one. And this way we might get to have 180,000 students left alive at the end of the year instead of 179, 964. Less than ideal experience for 36 lives is an easy choice for me. Lives saved or lives taken. The choice is yours.

Testimony To the Hawaii State Board of Education
Submitted by Jim Shon
July 30, 2020

Chair Payne, Members of the Board
Recommend Delaying School Opening.

Public education policy appears to be unclear regarding the following basic questions:

1. How specific should Health and Safety requirements (vs. guidelines) be for all schools? Where do schools have choice and where do they not? Are there legal liability implications for individual school choice that may deviate from CDC and other scientific standards?
2. What is the role of Hawaii Occupational Safety laws protecting HODOE employees through the Department of Labor? See appendix A of this testimony. Specifically, whether the BOE and HODOE have been contacted by the DOL regarding emergency provisions to protect teachers:

“Emergency temporary standards may be adopted without conforming to chapter 91 and without hearings to take immediate effect upon giving a statewide public notice of the emergency temporary standard or upon any other date that may be specified in the notice. An emergency temporary standard may be adopted if the director determines: (A) That employees are exposed to grave danger from exposure to substances **or agents** determined to be toxic **or physically harmful** or from new hazards; and (B) That the emergency standard is necessary to protect employees from danger. The emergency temporary standard shall be effective until superseded by a standard adopted in accordance with the procedures set forth in chapter 91, but in any case shall be effective no longer than six months;”

3. How specific should school and class management requirements be for all schools for taking attendance, class times, daily times and weekly times of student engagement? Primarily time management and logistics related.
4. How specific should educational learning, grading and engagement requirements be for all schools? Choice or not?
5. How are teachers, students and parents going to access computer and Internet technical support if individual schools or teachers are selecting various private technical platforms NOT supported by in-house employees? At the UH, if a student or instructor is confronted by malware, or some technical glitch, the UH HELP line is on call where a tech support person can “take over” the computer and fix the problem. Is this part of

the plan for support of all students and teachers? Is there a significant cost for this essential support?

APPENDIX A.

Hawaii's Occupational Safety & Health safeguards for all employees:

From Hawaii's Law:

"Safe" and "safety" as applied to an employment or place of employment mean such freedom from danger to employees as the nature of the employment reasonably permits.

"Safety device" and "safeguard" shall be given a broad interpretation so as to include any practicable method of mitigating or preventing a specific danger.

"Serious violation" means a violation that carries with it a **substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a condition that exists, or from one or more practices, means, methods, operations, or processes that have been adopted or are in use, in a place of employment, unless the employer did not, and could not with the exercise of reasonable diligence, have known of the presence of the violation.**

(2) The department shall adopt, amend, or repeal occupational safety and health standards in the manner prescribed by rules adopted hereunder. **Emergency temporary** standards may be adopted without conforming to chapter 91 and without hearings to take immediate effect upon giving a statewide public notice of the emergency temporary standard or upon any other date that may be specified in the notice. An emergency temporary standard may be adopted if the director determines:

(A) That employees are exposed to grave danger from exposure to substances **or agents** determined to be toxic **or physically harmful** or from new hazards; and

(B) That the emergency standard is necessary to protect employees from danger.

The emergency temporary standard shall be effective until superseded by a standard adopted in accordance with the procedures set forth in chapter 91, but in any case shall be effective no longer than six months;

§12-50-10 Miscellaneous (a) Personal protective equipment. Standards in this part requiring the employer to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), including respirators and other types of PPE, because of hazards to employees impose a separate compliance duty with respect to each employee covered by the requirement. **The employer must provide PPE to each employee required to use the PPE, and each failure to provide PPE to an employee may be considered a separate violation.** (b) Training. Standards in this part requiring training on hazards and related matters, such as standards requiring that employees receive training or that the employer train employees, provide training to employees, or institute or implement a training program,

impose a separate compliance duty with respect to each employee covered by the requirement.

Joanne H. Kealoha
1023 Kapahulu Avenue, #18
Honolulu, HI 96816
(808) 864-1310

July 26, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SCHOOL REOPENING

Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for allowing the public to comment on plans by the State Department of Education to reopen public schools in August. **I strongly urge the Board to consider delaying the reopening of schools for at least another two weeks.**

I have two granddaughters who are students at a public elementary school, including an incoming kindergartner, and a daughter who is a teacher with the DOE.

Like many parents, grandparents, and community members, I am concerned about the schools reopening at the same time Hawaii is experiencing a huge uptick in COVID case numbers—the highest daily numbers since the pandemic began. From what I read and see in the news, teachers and staff do not feel comfortable going back into the classroom, especially since they do not feel prepared to keep students socially distanced and to otherwise maintain a safe environment for students.

But virtual education is not the answer. Our children need interaction with teachers and other students to support their education. While they need to keep socially distanced, children also need to be among other children their age and develop socialization skills.

The decision to reopen schools is fraught with serious concerns, especially for those of you who must make the decision. Your decision will need to consider so many factors—safety of children, teachers, and staff; substitutes in the event of teacher illness; parents who need their children in school to allow their own return to work; socialization needs of students of all ages.

What might help teachers and parents feel more comfortable about reopening schools will be to delay the reopening for at least two weeks to allow teachers and staff to familiarize themselves with recommended protocol and guidelines, discuss them thoroughly with each other to identify possible revisions and adjustments, and give teachers and staff the opportunity to run through what to do in various scenarios. This might allow teachers and staff to develop more confidence that they can manage their classrooms and keep the students (and themselves) safe.

If school reopening will need even a full month more for this preparatory work, the school year can be extended for another month at the end of the school year. Of course, this adjustment of the school calendar will need to be negotiated with the unions representing teachers, staff, and

Board of Education
July 26, 2020
Page Two

administrators, but the unions will very likely support this adjustment considering their expressed concerns about premature reopening.

Thank you for considering these concerns and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Joanne H. Kealoha

Aloha Governor Ige, Superintendent Kishimoto and Hawaii Board of Education:

I am Rhonda Comet, 8th grade Special Education Teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School. First and foremost I miss teaching and I miss my students. I will say though that in the best interest of them and myself I believe that COVID is more important as it will take lives and most certainly is fatal. We have had very recent scary spikes in the past couple of days. I find it irresponsible that we are not thinking of students, their families, teachers, teachers families, and those with comorbidities that could create an increase in those numbers as students are not responsible enough to distance themselves, wear masks, when in a group with friends. Our keiki may be strong enough, but their families are not. Our communities are not. None of us are ready and we must be responsible for our kupuna.

I have underlying conditions and my doctor is not happy about me returning to school. I am told if I do not go back on July 29th I will not have a job or be able to teach the school year. I'm just ask for more time to ensure the safety of all my co-workers, students, and their families. I do not want to die.

See the numbers!

- For July 23, 55 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 24, 60 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- For July 25, 73 new COVID-19 cases were reported.
- None reported for Sunday due to the Hurricane

We have never seen these numbers before and I am scared out of mind to think I will be clustering with all the families in my community through the possible spread of one child being strong enough to not have symptoms but be near me when I am unable to get them to keep their masks on or stay distanced. I am not confident in the protocols in place for our schools which are more relaxed than Costco, the airport, the grocery store.

Our own mayor is concerned. He is asking for more quarantining, not less. Also our Maui District Health Officer says that we should not be in groups of people. Schools are groups of people. Schools are not safe spaces at this time and we are not ready as

teachers. Students are going to see us scared and I don't think that's such a great start for them.

That being said, we need more time for the following items:

- Safety protocols in place that explain in detail how to handle a COVID case as we are not nurses and I do not want to take temperatures of students as I would not be six feet away from them to do so.

- Our heat abatements have sat unworking for over seven months and have now growing mold which will cause immune systems to be lowered for anyone in that room and need to be completely sanitized and working.

- Parents need training for online programs to help children navigate systems.

- Subs do not know how to use technology to deliver instructions when covering for teachers who may have gone into quarantine.

- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home-schooling, distance learning, and virtual learning (with teacher present)

- Teachers need time to transition their lesson plans into digital lessons which they are capable of doing, they just need prep time to make that happen.

- PPE needs to be mandated and provided for all on campus

- Disinfected classrooms often (not teacher responsibility unless we change the schedule to include cleaning times into the student learning time and transition times)

- Disinfect bathrooms throughout the day

- More than one school nurse at each campus to be trained to provide actual care and make critical decisions.

- Public health education

The following does not come from me, but at least it is a plan to consider. I am not ready as a teacher and I do not feel safe. I do think a plan of any kind would make all teachers feel better and safer, please at least consider the following:

4 Phase Plan (4PP)

Phase 1: TRAINING

- Training for Educators on the technology needed for online teaching
- Distribution of Technology with training for parents and students
- Start Ventilation evaluation of indoor spaces, order needed supplies
- Training for substitute teachers

Phase 2: NO CONTACT

- 100% online teacher-lead classes
- Training for school staff on sanitation, mask-wearing, setting up classrooms and other high traffic areas for Phase 3.
- School traffic flow design to minimize person to person contact.
- Classroom ventilation modifications put into place.
- To move to Phase 3, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 3: MINIMAL CONTACT

- Hybrid teaching plan
- Student class will be limited to no more than 12 students
- 100% Mask requirement (unless medical reason)
- Cleaning Schedule for the classroom, bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Students will meet with the teacher, in person, at least once a week.
- To move to Phase 4, agreed upon, scientific-based benchmarks need to be met.

Phase 4: NEW EDUCATION MODEL

- Return to school campuses
- 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.

Mahalo for your time and attention in this matter. We are beseeching you to consider your responsibility to hear our voices and help us with our fears. We love our community but we are letting you know that things are not safe in our classrooms and in our schools yet. Thank you for your time.

Rhonda Comet

Special Education Teacher



Testimony for Opening Schools Back Up

Kiele Maria <kielemaria@gmail.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 2:13 PM

Board of Education
PO BOX 2360
Honolulu, Hi 96804
boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Subject: Testimony for meeting
Agenda: Reopening of schools for 2020 – 2021 Year
Position: Support Reopening of Schools in August 2020

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kiele Muraco. I am a parent of a 3rd and 6th grader at Sunset Beach Elementary School on the North Shore of Oahu. As a concerned parent for my children's education I support the reopening of schools this August with the proper protocol for sanitization and social distancing. Classroom instruction is the best modality for learning. We cannot expect all kids will be able to complete or engage in online learning. Therefore, this will continue to breed a gap.

Issues with distant learning:

- Internet reliability, worse what about the children that are homeless and have no equipment at all?
- Not enough devices – there were times we had to choose which child was able to call into the classroom and who got to engage due to lack of equipment and classes being scheduled at the same time in the same home. There are also the issues of worksheets. Not all kids have printers.
- Children's questions – sometimes kids had to wait hours/day for a response. This would never happen in an in person environment. Questions keep kids engaged and on task.
- Miscommunication – Many mixed messages occur with online learning. Lessons were misinterpreted and we felt ill equipped in the last quarter of 2019-20. There was wiggle room last year due to the newness of the pandemic, but I feel that our children will be at a major disadvantage if we continue to only offer DL. Not to mention their grades when they are trying to move into college and need to apply. Online instruction cannot engage the mood and involvement children need to thrive.
- Child Care – For those of us who are still essential workers how are we going to have elementary kids follow a schedule and log in from home alone? Will BOE or the government be providing funds to cover childcare for those of us who are still reporting to our jobs daily? Who will be responsible for getting them to get their work done while we work? Is my 8-year-old going to be held responsible for not being able to sign in on his own, on time and not being tardy? There are too many unanswered issues with having children stay at home.
- Safety at home – some kids homes are unsafe. We have seen a rise of domestic and child abuse among the Covid Stay at Home Orders. We can not assume all children's homes are safe. Many of them rely on the safety and reassurance of going to school.
- Student Meals – many children and parents rely on not only school lunch but school breakfast to keep them healthy and their brains working. How are they going to eat? Is someone going to be able to feed them and drop off meals or pick them up? I am especially concerned for children in poorer areas who I see daily living in Hawaii's parks and on the beaches.

Ideal Solution from and Essential Working Parent:

Open up the schools 100% Monday – Friday and try to make the best social distancing practices. The reality is we need to learn to live and adapt to the virus and not avoid it. Online learning is entirely up in the air and an unreliable slew of problems that I feel both the schools and parents are not prepared to deal with. Please do not mess with the education of our children who are trying their best to succeed in life and let our kids safely return to school.

The article below is a peer reviewed science and evidence journal from around the world demonstrating that children are not driving the pandemic and they are less likely to become infected and seem less infectious.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0962-9>

I whole-heartedly appreciate your review and concern on this matter as we all want what is ultimately best for our keiki!

Aloha,

Kiele Muraco
[59-053 Hoalua St](#)
Haleiwa, Hi 96712

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Kiele Maria
kielemaria@gmail.com
(808) 227-6893

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180 day school year

karen latham <klatham.kl@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 6:51 AM

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

Board of Education, Hawaii

The school year should NOT be shortened, either in days or hours. As I listen to the union president on television or read statements in the paper, it appears that they are looking for ways to pay teachers for not teaching! The school calendar is already a mess—there are so many interruptions during the school year; relatively few consecutive teaching weeks without breaks, that instruction seems to be a low priority.

I am well aware that there are serious concerns for the safety of teachers, staff, and students in this difficult time. The last three months of school were a complete and total waste of student time in which planning should have been occurring. What were teachers, the union, and schools doing during that time?

If school is going to start with a face-to-face component, then start it as scheduled! At this point teachers need to make plans for meaningful educational experiences for students while they are in the classroom and during their “out of school” days. I am far more concerned that this year will not be a time of educational growth for my child. With a quarter of last year lost, how much more negligent will the school system be in not providing a meaningful educational experience for students? I hope to see responsible leaders and teachers who ensure that students and learning are at the forefront of the conversation.

Thank you,

Dr. Karen Latham

Laie, Hawaii



BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Extending opening

Steven Baker <steven.baker@mauihigh.org>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 9:55 AM

As an educator I would discourage any delay to the opening of the school year. The vast majority of education will be virtual and there is no reason to inhibit student learning.

These are educated teachers, why is there a need for further training. If they can't learn what to do in a day or two, something is wrong. We have been inundated with procedures and protocols for safety.

An additional two weeks may not seem very long but students have been out since March 14th and they need to get back into a routine.

I would encourage the board to deny this request and get students back to learning.

Thank You

Dr. Steven A Baker



BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - school reopening.

Skippy Espinda <kafakawa@gmail.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 11:36 AM

The conditions that closed school campuses remain the same. Instruction and education should continue to be delivered remotely as much as possible. On-campus instruction should be limited to only situations where no other means are available, like lack of supervision at home or special needs. Educators should also be able to teach the classroom remotely from home.

Schools should open August 4 starting with distribution of resources for remote learning as needed and grab-and-go meals. The less students are traveling on TheBus, the better. They are at the age where they are one of the better asymptomatic germ spreaders.

Start the school year August 4, but only those who cannot learn or teach remotely should be on campus.



consistent disappointment, DOE

Kristin Matsuda <kmatsuda@rbx.run>
To: "BOE.Hawaii" <BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 1:01 PM

Please read below. Please open schools Aug 4.

Forwarded message:

From: Kristin Matsuda <kmatsuda@rbx.run> Time:2020-07-28 12:57 To: doeinfo <doeinfo@k12.hi.us> consistent disappointment, DOE

Dear Superintendent Kishimoto:

Why do you believe ". . . if the Board [of Education] approves the two week delay, that our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students"? (Superintendent Kishimoto, Statement of 7/27/20, emphasis added.) The opening date for school has been on everyone's calendar for five months. The entire last quarter of last school year was spent (1) not having to attend school at all, (2) with no academic testing or assessments whatsoever, (3) no fourth-quarter report cards and (4) absolutely no end-of-year activities. The new SY work-week has already been conveniently shortened with "all-online" Mondays. It seems that every time the unions make a demand, you acquiesce to them. And every single time, the interests of the children - your students - take a back seat. What will change two weeks from now except the unions' list of demands, which will almost assuredly be longer and contain new and different items?

When one reads, "What's the rush?" to reopen schools and "[w]e been [sic] on vacation" to demand more prep time, how can any reasonable person trust or support DOE and HSTA about any decisions made at this point?

See

<https://www.thegardenisland.com/2020/07/22/hawaii-news/schools-reopening-face-opposition/>
and

https://www.thegardenisland.com/2020/07/17/hawaii-news/reopening-schools-discussion-ongoing/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus_outbreak

That I am profoundly disappointed you at DOE and HSTA now want to postpone school opening for two weeks is a gross understatement. As of 27 July 2020, of 1688 total coronavirus cases, there are 170 cases among persons age 0-19 all in the "blue" category and no - as in zero - hospitalizations or deaths (unchanged from last week); among persons age 20-39, which is many teachers, just 2.1% of that particular age group (down from 2.5% last week) were hospitalized; and among 40-59-year-olds, perhaps the age bracket of many DOE administrators(?), only 7.7% of that particular age group were hospitalized (down from 8.3% last week). Whichever way you extrapolate the data, we are still, always, talking about a very small minority of folks who are at risk of serious challenges from the coronavirus.

<https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/what-you-should-know/current-situation-in-hawaii/>

This is not about anyone's health and safety anymore, and to keep repeating it seems like an effort to convince oneself in the face of direct evidence to the contrary.

Kristin Matsuda

Lihu'e

808.320.8971



Return to schools

Malia Marquez <maliamarquez71@gmail.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 2:19 PM

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Malia Marquez. My child attends Hālau Kū Māna PCS. She has an IEP. She was born with a condition called Trachea Esophageal Fistula. This condition is accompanied by various side effects, asthma, severe acid reflux and a basic cold often turns into pneumonia and/or sinus infections. When she gets ill it takes quite a while for her to be well enough to return to school. Thankfully our school works diligently to always provide whatever I need in order to make sure she doesnt fall behind.

My daughters doctor and I had a telephone meeting to carefully decide the best route for her to take regarding education. We all agreed that staying home the first quarter made the most sense.

Im blessed that Hālau Kū Māna will work with my child for distance learning. My concern is the other children AND teachers.

The covid cases are rising. Due to the hurricane I dont think the counts are accurate. How can we protect our children and teachers without a full-proof plan.

I know getting them back to school is vital. We were able to shut schools down quickly with no cases when this started . I'm wondering why the rush to open with rising cases. I dont have an answer. I simply would like to be on record as a concerned parent and ex-educator to NOT rush the opening of schools. I believe many parents may keep their children home. If that should happen is there a plan for those kids?

Watching the news and seeing the uncertainty is not a good feeling for parents and teachers. I really dont know what the answer is, but I think a delay would be appropriate with the number of cases our islands are seeing.

Mahalo for your time on this critical matter.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Malia Marquez

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BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Ellery Galanto <egalanto@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 4:36 PM

To: BOE Hawaii <BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>, BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

BOE,

I don't get you guys, Board of Education. You hold your meetings over video conference, yet you expect teacher and students to be in the same room. Where's the common sense there?

Oh brother,

Ellery Galanto

E: egalanto@gmail.com

C: 808-255-4991

Sent from my iPhone



Reopening Schools

terukinak003@hawaii.rr.com <terukinak003@hawaii.rr.com>
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 7:30 PM

BOE Board Members,

Holding a VIRTUAL meeting should influence your decision on reopening schools. You keep yourselves safe, yet open schools for students, teachers, and staff. This seems contradictory!

As far as we are concerned, there is no "safe time" (as Ms. Payne stated) or "bubble" (as Superintendent Kishimoto and DOH continue to refer to) during a pandemic where students return home to their families.

If students' safety is Superintendent Kishimoto's priority, why aren't masks being mandated in classrooms for older students ? The rule should not be left up to the teacher . Sorry, we don't understand the logic.

As we see a rise in cases, a more sensible approach would be to open schools for younger students who need to attend due to lack of supervision or other circumstances and 100 percent distance learning (with guidance and substance) for older students with the exception of special needs students who need in person schooling.

Superintendent Kishimoto continues to refer back to the survey given to parents in May/June to back up the decision to reopen schools . However, the survey is relative to the time period. We ask you this: Would parents feel comfortable with their child/children in school if case numbers go up exponentially? Will she continue to mention the survey results?

We understand these are uncertain times. However, one child's life is one too many. One teacher's/staff's life is one too many . We are all at risk with this careless way of thinking . Mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, etc. will all be at risk by reopening for 180,000 students. There needs to be a more cautious way to start the school year!

Sincerely,

Concerned Parents

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony

Julie ko <julieko6866@gmail.com>
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 9:57 PM

Aloha BOE Members,

I am a second grade teacher and I would like to take this opportunity to express my concerns regarding reopening of school. We all understand the importance of educating our students but why do we have to do it by sacrificing safety. Distance Learning may not be the perfect solution but during a world-wide pandemic, we need to choose the second best option if it will save lives. It was mentioned by Chairperson Payne at a conference the importance of building a relationships with our students and that's why we need the in person schooling. However, I hope everyone realizes that classroom people are envisioning will be quite different. Teachers are building shower curtains around their desks and will do everything they can to stay far away from their students. It may seem uncaring but this is what we have to do to save our lives. I am so looking forward to being a grandmother one day but in a split second I may not be around. No one can guarantee me that I will survive COVID because we are dealing with percentages. What if I am that 1.4% of people that will die from the virus. Dr. Green and Dr. Anderson said, we need to treat everyone as if they are COVID positive and this is what teachers will do. I don't understand why we are willing to risk lives when we have the safest option in the world. Distance Learning will work if you give teachers time to plan. Many teachers took time during the summer to learn different learning platforms so that we can roll out Distance Learning effectively. When a firefighter goes into a burning fire is because they have NO choice. However, we are being sent into a burning classroom but we HAVE a choice. We can keep everyone safe at home and learn through distance learning. So please consider reopening schools by phasing in steps. There are many models that other states are using. That's what Gov. Ige did to reopen our state. It was a phased in approach and when criterias were met then move onto the next safe phase. We need to make decisions based on most current information. In just 14 days, we had over 500 positive cases. The community spread is very scary as stated by DOH. A Costco worker, Kaala Elem. School staff (teacher??), preschool student, summer fun leader, Foodland worker, and so on. The state is planning to roll back guidance and schools are still expecting to reopen face to face. This is gross negligence because we are doing this knowing how dangerous it can be. The phased in approach will evaluate current situations and make the next decision based on it. Even President Trump said the other day that the United States will get worse before it gets better. We will see the second wave hit us hard, along with colds and the flu. CDC said the other day that more asymptomatic people are spreading the virus too fast and that's why we can't contain it.

Please remember that it won't be business as usual. There will be no helping kids at their desk, no student participation because we can't hear what they are mumbling under their masks, no partner work, no using manipulative. Many teachers are going paperless so students will basically be in the classroom on computers. We don't want to touch the papers being brought back from many different homes. How can this help children with socialization? I hear this so much about children needing socialization at school. Honestly, it will make them more frustrated that they can't play or talk to their friends. They will wonder why my teacher is not coming by me and hiding behind a curtain all day. They will think that they did something wrong. I feel so bad that they will feel like that. It's not their fault. I can't imagine these kids wearing a mask all day in our hot classrooms. I'm sure you remember how hot the classrooms get during the summer. Many teachers will sacrifice and not use the air conditioner because CDC recommends us not to. It's not even safe to use fans because the droplets will circulate and infect all of us if a sick child sneezed in the classroom. Believe me, we will have lots of sneezes in the classroom due to allergies, colds, etc. How do we know it's not due to COVID? Dr. Anderson also said recently that, "we're beginning to see more cases among younger to middle-age adults." We shouldn't just pick a date arbitrarily and aim for it no matter what. We need to evaluate current status and then make smart, safe decisions. That model is called PHASED IN APPROACH.

Many parents are now more concerned with the uptick of cases, therefore choosing 100% Distance Learning. However, they do not know that the 100% Distance Learning is a software that is similar to homeschooling. I'm sure they would rather have an experience teacher on the other end instructing online rather than a program.

We should do Distance Learning for at least the first quarter. As Dr. Green said, children can always catch up on their learning but we can't bring back lives. Why risk it? I don't understand why we are gambling with our lives. I ask this respectfully, if you had a child who is a teacher would you feel secure that they will be in a classroom for 6 hours with 22 students. That would mean 22 different families, with 22 different jobs, and 22 places that they have visited and so on. There

is no so called bubble. Yes, it's 22 students because some schools do not have space to open up more classes. Please listen to the many voices as we speak as one. We know it's not easy but we don't want to have any regrets.

Thank you,
Julie L.



Testimony

Blue Light <bluelight74@gmail.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 10:15 PM

If you vote to postpone the opening of school, please also extend the end of the school year for as many days as are postponed.
Our keiki are in their prime for learning, and it is critical we do not lose any additional days of potential learning. Teachers had 5 months to get ready for opening, why only now that we're about to start school is it that they're saying they need training?
Put all teachers on an hourly scale for actual hours worked TEACHING, and we'll see how many of them really want to have more days off.

Please don't punish our keiki any further. They already lost half a year of critical learning.

Mahalo,
Concerned parent

Sent from my iPhone

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RE: Keep our schools/teachers/administrators/workers safe

Joann Inouye <joinouye@gmail.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 10:24 PM

Superintendent Kishimoto just sent a message to HODOE staff that ends:

"My expectation is that if the board approves the two-week delay, that our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students."

Reading this got me very very upset. Why are we opening the schools this year? For what purpose? Is it political too??

OUR SCHOOLS ARE NOT DAY CARE so that parents can go to work. I know that you all agree with this statement. Our teachers have been taken cheap and this is a major slap in the face. It is a known fact that there are parents out there that send their kids to school when they're sick just so that they can go to work. It happens all the time and teachers can vouch for this.

BUBBLES are not limited to a classroom, group or school. If kids are asymptomatic, they will carry the virus for days before it's detected. Their siblings, parents, grandparents, other caregivers, friends, and on and on will be exposed. Many families have children in different schools. Once you open the schools you will open a pandoras box.

I am 69 years old. I have five grandchildren, all in public schools. They are near and dear to my heart. I cannot forgive you if you even consider opening the schools at the expense of our keiki. Their education is important - but not as important as keeping them safe and healthy. I would rather they miss a whole year of school and be healthy and safe.

Imagine children eating lunch in the classroom - no masks on. One sneeze, one cough - what is the teacher expected to do. One kid tests positive - the rest of the class gets tested - not once but three times (like the care homes right). And their families get tested and retested. And anyone else they came in contact with gets tested. Just imagine what we have to look forward to.

Imagine highschoolers - at the end of the school day, they exit their campus in mass. I have seen 50 kids crossing the street at the same time, shoulder to shoulder. And nobody is going to stop that from happening. Let alone how long will they social distance from each other - lucky if that lasts a week. Once sports is allowed to kick in, it's only going to make matters more risky. It's only a matter of time where our large campuses end up in big trouble.

Kids are resilient. They can catch up on their education - it may take a while but I know they will be fine even after a year's break. Everyone will be able to breathe better.

Please, please, please seriously consider the consequences of your decisions.

Mahalo,
Jo Ann Inouye
[95-1130 Wekiu Street](#)
[Mililani, HI 96789](#)
[Ph. 623-5654](#)



Extending of school reopening date

Carrie Mak-Chang <mak.chang@gmail.com>
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 10:48 PM

Hi,

I am a parent of a middle school and an elementary school child. I have heard about the extending of school reopening date from August 4 to August 17. I would like to voice my opinion.

I understand that the teachers and staff want a safe environment for themselves and the children. I want a safe environment for my children too. Everyone in the world has to cope and adapt to the new way of living due to COV-19. Announcements were made that school will reopen on August 4, 2020 as scheduled but with blended learning. All the parents have to make adjustments to accommodate this new blended learning not to mention that it might not be a possibility to accomplish for a lot of working parents. With school just a week away, an announcement was made on the news that school reopening might extend to August 17 instead. It is very unfair and frustrating to the parents and the children. Parents need to work with employers and others to accommodate the new extension. Children are going to miss out on two more weeks of learning. Schools were closed from mid-March due to COV-19, we had distance learning for the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. Why schools and teachers didn't start to plan together for the safe return of our children when Hawaii started to reopen in June of this year?

Our children need to learn. I am the parent of my children, not an educator. I need an educator to educate my children. If the decision is to extend school reopening to August 17, can you please consider giving the children distance learning for those two weeks rather than nothing for those two weeks at all?

Another concern of mine is how is the school or the government going to help support parents with this blended learning. I am sure a majority of working parents are unable to accommodate this new blended learning. Please address this concern.

Sincerely,

Carrie Mak-Chang



reopening of schools

Jeanne Omaye <jomaye@hawaii.rr.com>
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 11:04 AM

I am writing because I am very concerned about the reopening of schools. The number of daily cases of COVID 19 reflect the need to take action to stop the spread of this disease. Reopening schools would endanger our students, their teachers, the school staff and administration as well as the people in the homes of these students. Because of the nature of our culture many students live with grandparents, people who are at a higher risk of contracting COVID 19 and not recovering. I am a retired elementary public school teacher with 33 years in the classroom full-time and 9.5 years as a Title 1 part-time teacher. With all this experience I know there is no way that these students can physically distance the whole time they are in school. I also doubt that they will keep their masks on at all necessary times and will practice safe methods such as washing their hands for 20 seconds, not touching their faces, etc. Even with going through what we have so far and with reminders I can see that sanitary procedures will not always be practiced. Skills can be taught; behaviors and attitudes take much effort to work on and to change. Now is the time to focus on the task of stopping this pandemic. Education, the economy cannot flourish in a sick society. Students can learn at home; they have done it before during the stay at home order. Students can also catch up on what they need to. It may take more effort but they can in a healthy, safe environment. After teaching for over 40 years I have faith that students can learn better and teachers can teach more effectively when the focus is on education and not on constant reminders to practice sanitary measures. Please consider reopening our schools when the time is right - when the pandemic is gone, when a vaccine is developed and used, when students, teachers, staff and administration can proceed with education positively and effectively.

Jeanne Omaye



July 30 agenda: Item IIIA

Carrie Shoda-Sutherland <carrie.shoda@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 11:54 AM

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Aloha members of the Board of Education:

My name is Carrie Shoda-Sutherland, and I am the parent of three students currently enrolled in Hawaii public schools, and I am the spouse of a public school teacher.

I am writing to ask that you delay the start of the school calendar for students, and allow our school administration and teachers to prepare for the students' return as well as the eventuality of return to full distance during the school year.

I have the luxury of working in an office environment that has created the flexibility for me to work safely, efficiently, and effectively from home. Most, if not all, of you also have this privilege. Teachers deserve the same.

What HSTA and the schools are asking in delaying the return of students is the MINIMUM that you should be offering. The minimum.

To be honest, the DOE should have been much, much more strategically and operationally planful in all these months.

- There should already have been decisions and accommodations made for high risk teachers to teach distance from home
- There should have been a much more cost-efficient and effective distance option at the statewide level, rather than pushing it on each school to solve on their own.
- There should have been paid trainings made available to teachers during the summer, rather than have teachers volunteer their own time to compensate for the lack of information and guidance from DOE.

It is their failing that puts us all - the entire community - in this predicament.

Have you all taken the time to understand the distance learning option that most schools have needed to choose without any additional staff resources?

- Acellus is basically an online platform for homeschooling. It is not virtual classroom instruction. It is not necessarily aligned to what the other students are learning in the face to face model.
- At my daughter's elementary school, we were told that a staff person will only check the system for grading purposes. We will not receive any instructions, reminders, or direction from the school.
- Families who choose this route will need to stay in for at least a semester, if not the entire year.
- If schools shut down again, I believe the students in the full distance model will remain as a separate track, as there will not be a way for them to flow back into their 'normal' classrooms.
- Is this the option and guidance you intended DOE to give to families?

I'd also like to add that there should be censure of the Superintendent's recent messaging about the return to school; both the facebook video as well as the message about delaying students' return.

Her messages have been inflammatory in his passive aggressiveness, and I find them offensive. Is that the respect she has for the workforce that lifts her department? Does it do anyone any good to try to pit the community against teachers? What kind of leadership is it inspiring and if you do nothing, what kind of trust are you instilling in our valued teachers?

I am 100% supportive of the teacher's union. They are rightfully fighting for the safety, health, and lives of their members, our students and families, and the broader community that will be affected if and when we start to see cases in our schools.

Please do your kuleana to the teachers, students, and community. The respect you show our teachers - or the lack thereof - will have a cascading ripple effect on our future teacher workforce needs and will model your values to our students and families.

Mahalo,

Carrie Shoda-Sutherland
Parent

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