



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Agenda Item V.B.**

1 message

**Adrienne Robillard** <adrienne.robillard@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:15 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for your time and dedication.

I am writing with concerns about the planned furloughs. DOE teachers and staff are working extra hours and using their talents to deliver instruction and services to students during this unprecedented time. More perhaps than ever before, students need regular routines and schedules, which includes reliable and steady contact with teachers across all disciplines, from PE to Hawaiian Studies, English to Math, Social Sciences to Science, Health, and more. Plus, Hawaii needs to retain its educators. DOE teachers and principals and support staff need their jobs and a reliable income. They need recognition for going above and beyond every day, at a time when going to work is ultra stressful and feels like one is risking one's own health and the health of one's family simply by being in education.

Is there any alternative to cut \$ from the budget that doesn't involve furloughing? A furlough will only discourage the educators we have here in Hawaii and may cause many to look for less stressful, higher paying occupations elsewhere. And furloughs will rob our keiki of much needed instructional time and teachers of prep time. The school year has already been cut back due to a late start. Every minute is a necessity at this point, and every day of teaching is more valuable than ever for our keiki's future.

Mahalo,

Adrienne Robillard

Parent of 2 DOE students

Early College Instructor at Kailua High School and Castle High School



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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Caroline Flynn** <carolineflynn20@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:16 PM

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**Testimony: I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

- I am an elementary teacher already working many extra hours for free in order to make my lessons engaging and beneficial for students. If furloughs happen in my life I will be forced to take an extra job that will take away any extra time I had for planning the lessons my students deserve.
- I am currently the only person earning in my household due to the pandemic, my wage doesn't cover all of my families basic bills, and as a result, we are now in arrears, if furloughs happen we will plummet into a dire financial situation, one that we will probably not recover from anytime soon and this may very well lead to losing our home.
- At this stage, I am already considering moving away from Hawaii as the state clearly does not value my expertise as a 15-year veteran teacher and they have even less regard for the keiki growing up in the state of Hawaii. It is truly shameful for the state to take funds from our keiki and teachers; keiki who cannot fight for their rights who trust the adults in charge to make the right decisions and teachers who are already burnt out from working countless extra hours just to make the education of our keiki a number one priority even in the midst of a pandemic!

I urge you to reconsider furloughs for teachers in our state, this is not the way to solve the problem, open your eyes and pick one of the other options that make sense and does not affect the most vulnerable people in our state.

Thank you,

Caroline Flynn  
First Grade Teacher  
Kamalii Elementary School, Maui



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony--We the people cannot afford furloughs at our schools**

1 message

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**Leona Kassel** <leonakassel@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:17 PM

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am writing as a community member, educator, and parent who is outraged by the proposed budget cuts and furloughs that would have devastating impacts upon a generation of students. The testimony that I am submitting is regarding general business meeting discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

In this moment of multidimensional crisis, I urge you to prioritize Hawai`i's young people by unequivocally rejecting furloughs and cuts to our public schools. Our children deserve access to incredible educational opportunities and will need more support, not less, to weather the many challenges that we currently face as a community. The importance of a flourishing public school system is essential to rebuilding a Hawai`i that I want my family to call home. I would like to live in a Hawai`i where all students, regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status, have access to wholistic and dynamic educational opportunities. All of our children deserve to cultivate their talents, to develop the skills that contribute to resilience in the face of overlapping adversities currently breaking on our shores.

Choose the students of Hawai`i. Insist that those who can afford to contribute a little more to our public schools be taxed at fair rates by ending tax breaks for the top one percent, corporations, and property owners. We cannot be morally complicit in the simultaneous defunding of public schools juxtaposed with a further enriching of America's millionaires and billionaires. It is a moral travesty that we allow underfunded public schools to lie neglected in the shadows of multi-million dollar luxury homes. Asking our students and teachers to carry these economic burdens further perpetuates systemic oppression with ripple effects felt throughout our communities. Considering that many of our teachers are barely middle class, how can we ask them to take a pay cut? How can we ask our students to miss more school and experience the repercussions of budget cuts to their learning opportunities? It is past time to insist that the wealthiest among us contribute more to our public school system.

Our students are counting on leadership with integrity at this critical moment in history and I urge you to protect our public schools from cuts and furloughs. We the people need you to ensure that our children have access to the exceptional learning opportunities they deserve.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony--We the people cannot afford furloughs at our schools

Sincerely,  
Leona Kassel



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Heidi Soriano** <heidi.soriano@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:17 PM

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

My husband and I are both public school teachers here in the state of Hawaii, and we ask that you please do what you can to prevent the proposed furloughs from occurring. If implemented, they will be absolutely devastating to our family.

We entered this profession about 7 years ago with optimism and hopes to make a difference in the lives of Hawaii's keiki. We both graduated from the University of Oregon with honors and science degrees. I obtained my Masters of Education in Teaching and have reclassified to the highest class, through hours of professional development, which I have paid for out of my own pocket. We have always gone above and beyond for our jobs, staying hours past our contracted time to prepare meaningful lessons for our students, sacrificing time with each other, and personally paying for materials and supplies to provide effective and memorable experiences for our students. We consider ourselves quality, highly-qualified teachers and do our best to be the best educators we can be for our students. We truly believe they deserve that from us, but we know in our hearts that we have never been properly compensated for our efforts.

It has never been easy to make it as teachers here financially. While I truly love my job and see the difference I make in the lives of my students, my own quality of life has gone down significantly. My husband works for a nonprofit after school and on weekends and I work multiple days a week after my contracted hours as a tutor in order to supplement our meager pay. I can honestly say that every year I have worked for the Department of Education, I have had thoughts of leaving due to the unrealistic workload, insulting pay and lack of support, recognition and appreciation. It has always been clear to me that Hawaii does not value education, and I have more than once regretted my decision to become a teacher here as a result. It is a yearly conversation whether or not we can afford to live here and we often discuss relocating to an area that values teachers and pays them a living wage. The only thing that makes me stay is the students, whom I form incredible bonds with each year. The growth I see in them, both personally and academically, has been what has made it all worth it up until now. They are the shining light in all of this, and yet, they will ultimately suffer the most from these pay cuts. Teacher morale will be at an all-time low and teachers will likely not be able to provide the same experiences they have in the past due to decreased planning days. Many, including my husband and I, will have to work more hours at our second or third jobs, which will take away even more from our teaching jobs.

With this pandemic, things have only gotten worse. We have been given the often impossible task of creating digital curriculum from scratch, teaching our students through a screen and doing our best to make the situation as positive an experience as possible for our students and their families. I have not had a good night's rest in months- staying up all hours of the night creating materials, slideshows, and videos, grading and answering messages from families, and trying to be as best of a mother as possible to my almost one year old son, who has suffered through all of this. He often sits confused hours after the school day ends, wondering why his mother is always on the computer working instead of playing with him, which to a one-year-old must be the most important thing on the planet. It hurts my heart to know how this pandemic will affect him, and yet, I am expected to care for everyone else's children before my own, and often at the expense of my own.

Needless to say, things had already been bad before this, but when the plans to furlough us came out, it was pretty much a mental tipping point for me and my husband. After all we have done for our students and schools, this is how we are to be repaid? To say we felt demoralized is an understatement. A person can only take so much before they reach their breaking point and realize this situation is not sustainable. I know I don't deserve a pay cut and my family does not deserve one either. We have done our part and should be recognized for that sacrifice instead of punished.

After all is said and done, I am hoping that this situation sheds a light on what teachers have been going through, even before the pandemic hit. We do so much for so little. Teaching has the potential to be the most amazing job on the planet, if only teachers were given the support they need to make it happen. We go into this job with such high hopes for changing the world and making a difference- all we ask is to be treated fairly and to be given the respect we deserve to make that happen. Furloughs and pay cuts are the last thing we need right now. I ask that you help refocus the conversation towards ways to improve Hawaii's public education system instead of making it worse. Teachers have the heart and work ethic to do amazing things for our keiki if given the opportunity to be partners in all of this instead of victims of a poorly planned decision.

Mahalo,  
Heidi Soriano  
Holomua Elementary School

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

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**Shelly Preza** <shellypreza@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:18 PM

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Shelly Preza, and I am from the island of Lānaʻi, where I now live and work. I attended Lānaʻi High and Elementary School (the only school available on island) through middle school, and my mother was a Kindergarten teacher there for 20 years. Now, much of my work includes offering educational opportunities through the Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center, a non-profit organization.

I watched my mother work tirelessly for decades to give the youth of Lānaʻi a chance to learn as much as possible. She would spend countless hours outside of school preparing and offering additional help to those who need it. After returning home to Lānaʻi after graduating from Harvard, I hope to supplement what is offered at the school because our students deserve our support and our best efforts.

As a citizen and taxpayer, I was incredibly disappointed when I heard about the upcoming furloughs. Teachers provide the foundation for next generation's leaders. I have always believed that in order to give our students the best educational opportunities, especially during this trying year, we should be hiring the best teachers and paying them well. We need to be paying our teachers more, not less. They are so valuable to our society and to our children, and these furloughs indicate that State leaders feel opposite.

I believe that the legislature has other options for balancing the budget. I urge this board to explore these other options. For the sake of our students, our teachers, and our communities, please do not allow these furloughs to happen.

Sincerely,

Shelly Preza



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**teacher furlough 2021**

1 message

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**Jean Esaki** <jean.esaki@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:18 PM

I believe the last place to cut funding is in the welfare of the education of our children. Cut administration, middle management in any form of the government, but do not take away from the children and adolescents who have lost SO much emotionally and academically this year. Physical pandemic precautions are a challenge in itself; how can more of the portal for students' mental fitness be shortchanged them any more?

It is not so much for the financial difficulties that I am advocating for. Daily we have been watching the children suffocating behind the computer buttons they are striving to obediently fall in line with.

It is so sad that money management cannot see sacrifices made by our leaders.

Sincerely,  
Jean Esaki

World Languages  
Kapaa High School

"Cultivating understanding and appreciation of cultures to empower successful communication and participation as informed citizens in a global society"

"Inishie no michi wo kikite mo tonaete mo waga okonae ni sezuba kai nashi."  
Even if the ways of the ancient are heard and repeated, it has no value if not practiced..

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**Cannot Furlough Grading Day**

1 message

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**Xanthe Smith** <xanthe@goldenangel.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:20 PM

I object to having Grading Day, of all days, to be furloughed unless we do away with grading. Please know: Grading in the current format takes much more time than one day. I spent 4 full days developing, compiling and inputting 246 narrative progress reports at the end of Quarter 1. How can you make a furlough day on a day of work that we have to do anyway? Furlough days have to be days without students that teachers don't work. Grading Day is not one of those.

Regarding furloughs, I am a part time teacher and I have already lost the income of my other two part time jobs that were in tourism and the courts. But I am not eligible for unemployment, because thankfully I still have my teaching job so I make just over the maximum income to be eligible. If I were furloughed some days, this would not be true on certain weeks. Would I be able to apply for unemployment those weeks? I will try. My husband is the BUS Driver for our school and has lost hours due to the pandemic and schools shifting to online education. His unemployment benefits are about to run out. We are more dependent than ever now on my dwindling income. HELP! I am have to leave teaching because I can earn more in other fields that do not require in-person face to face work.

Xanthe Smith,  
[xanthe@goldenangel.org](mailto:xanthe@goldenangel.org)

<https://www.volcanoschool.net/>



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Danielle Moss** <dross30@hawaii.edu>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:21 PM

Aloha members of the Board of Education,

As we all know, this pandemic has hit everyone in the state with unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances. We are all feeling the rippling effects in the wake of this pandemic. My heart goes out to my students and their families, who have felt some of the greatest effects of this pandemic.

I hope that as a state we could appreciate teachers for their unwavering dedication and passion that drove them to and from work every day to provide our keiki with the highest quality of education possible, even through a global pandemic. As a Special Education Teacher, I have been teaching students in-person for the first semester because I know that their education is going to be their greatest asset for their future. It pains me that the state is already wanting to decrease the funding for our most vulnerable and deserving students. Many teachers have made similar decisions to put the students of Hawaii above themselves, by showing up to school daily and teaching throughout the pandemic. Please show all teachers that their work and dedication is seen and show the keiki that the government values and protects their educational rights. Teachers have shown resilience and perseverance through the entirety of this pandemic and have been dedicated to ensuring that our keiki have bright futures ahead of them.

I urge you to reconsider your decision of furloughing teachers. This decision is not the solution to what the pandemic has caused. You are directly and negatively impacting the students of Hawaii and showing the teachers of Hawaii that their work and dedication is under appreciated and taken for granted. Please represent Hawaii well by making education a priority. You are decreasing the amount of instructional days for students and compromising their academic achievement. Let's value education by respecting and upholding the commitments that you have made with teachers for the entirety of the year. Teachers deserve the respect of upholding their contractual rights.

By imposing furloughs on schools without exploring all other options, you are showing Hawaii that education is not a top priority. Please realize the long-term effects that your decisions have on the future well-being of Hawaii, since students are our future.

I am very sad to hear that Special Education is going to take one of the largest funding cuts because that greatly disadvantages Hawaii's most vulnerable learners. These students need and deserve support and protection to receive a free and *appropriate* education. Special Education is severely understaffed in Hawaii as is and these decisions are going to continue to drive people away from the profession, leaving students without access to a quality education.

On a personal note, please realize the devastation that the proposed pay cuts have on Hawaii's economy. By decreasing teacher's pay, you are creating harsh living conditions for teachers. The pay cuts are not realistic because by decreasing teacher's pay, you are directly putting teachers below the standard of living. I am currently scraping by as is with all the expenses that come with living in Hawaii and having a higher educational degree. I am scared of the proposed furloughs because it is going to have a direct impact on my family's well being.

Please fight against these furloughs and protect the right to a free and appropriate education for all students.

Please put our keiki first and invest in our future.

Thank you for your consideration and dedication to Hawaii's public schools.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**re: Testimony**

1 message

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**Tanya Mau** <tanyakmau@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:22 PM

Meeting: December 17, 2020  
Agenda Item: Department of Education furloughs  
Position: Comment

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

My name is Tanya Mau, and I am currently a State Office Resource Teacher with the Hawaii Teacher Induction Center, supporting and mentoring our beginning teachers and mentors around the state. With the proposed furloughs, I am concerned that we will have many beginning teachers leaving the profession. This year has been a challenging year to be a teacher at any level, with the number of times teachers have had to pivot. Yes, teachers are resilient, but beginning teachers started this year in an unconventional way and had to learn tech tools, curriculum, how to reach out to families, and how to service their students in both face to face and distance learning models, while balancing their own social emotional health and now they are worried about whether their positions will be cut.

This year, I have supported educators through designing distance learning modules and have facilitated spaces for learning for beginning teachers and mentors to collaborate and network around strategies for English Learners. They have struggled with reaching and providing feedback to these most vulnerable learners, and I worry about the loss of instructional time. There are already inequities in access to education and support for English Learners. The issues have only exacerbated during this school year, and they will continue to do so with more instructional days lost. As a teacher leader for the past ten years, I have been there to champion against the inequities for English Learners, from the school level, complex area level, state level, and while a member of the Superintendent's EL Task Force. There is already a shortage of highly qualified EL teachers servicing English Learners, and we need to continue to retain and support these teachers.

I am passionate about the work that I do, but this is my 20th year in public education and the second time I am facing furloughs. Personally, as a single mother of two children who also attend public schools, I am concerned about my own family's ability to continue to live in Hawaii if we are to face furloughs once again. I took a paycut when I first moved from the mainland to come back home to teach and have slowly been trying to make my way up the steps over the years. And even after twenty years, if I cannot afford to live and raise my children here, I am not sure what other choice I might have but to leave once again.

Please consider engaging in dialogue with state leaders about other options besides furloughs to balance the state budget. I will continue to advocate for educators, students, and families.

Sincerely,  
Tanya Mau  
Hawaii DOE Teacher

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - re: Testimony

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*Tanya*



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Bridgette Beatty** <bridgandcharly@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:22 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

### TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION RELATING TO TEACHER FURLOUGHS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2020

To Members of the Board of Education:

My name is Bridgette Beatty. I am currently a middle school mathematics teacher at Lana'i High and Elementary School in Maui District Canoe Complex on Lana'i. I am submitting testimony in support of maintaining the current pay and not implementing furloughs.

A mere ten months ago, I was writing testimony to request funding for pay differentials for teachers to show that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. Today, I am writing testimony to request teachers are not financially further cut by furloughs. The Department of Education is currently in need of teachers and will continue to need teachers. Implementing these furloughs and reducing pay will cause a larger teacher shortage than the state of Hawai'i is already facing as more teachers will leave and it will be more difficult to fill vacant teaching positions.

It is of extreme importance to maintain the pay of teachers. I have been teaching in Hawai'i for 10 years, starting on the tail end of the last furloughs that were implemented. Hawai'i education has not yet recovered from that economic choice. To be clear, I am actively looking at options to get me out of the teaching profession. I know I am not alone. I have worked an outside business for the majority of my time employed as an educator simply to put enough food on the table for my family. Teaching during this pandemic has been even more taxing, stressful and exhausting.

There is nothing left in the energy reserves to do anything beyond getting through a day of teaching and preparing for the next. That said, I am relying on outside income to put food on my table for my family, and I have no means to continue that extra income should I choose to remain in education. I chose to be a teacher, and enjoy it, but it honestly is more stressful and dissatisfying than ever. The pay being tens of thousands of dollars below the cost of living here makes it even less appealing to stay in education, and that is before these furloughs are put in place, not to mention the pay differentials for special education, Hawaiian immersion and hard to staff schools being lost.

There are other avenues of making up the shortfall of state revenue caused by the pandemic. Several, in fact, which are an option for Governor Ige. Furthermore, the federal dollars are not yet decided as Congress does not go back into session until January. At the very least enforcing furloughs now is premature.

Our keiki deserve better. These financial cuts affect more than personal income for teachers, they also will affect our classrooms. Class sizes will increase. School supplies will decrease. More and more students and communities rely on the schools to fix all the problems—mental health,

hunger, abuse, bullying, emotional support, etc. With schools being held more and more responsible for the health of the community, how efficient can they be with their resources further limited and qualified personnel struggling or leaving?

It is not possible to claim to value education while at the same time limiting and outright axing its resources. The furloughs and further proposed pay cuts to the teachers are insulting. You cannot expect improved student outcomes while worsening teacher outcomes.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Bridgette Beatty, Maui Canoe District, Lana'i



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Jo Ramos** <ramosjo55@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:26 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

BOE,

I was very surprised and concerned to receive the email yesterday from the DOE that noted furlough dates for all DOE employees. The governor said that we would have 2 days per month or one day per pay period. But that's not what I'm seeing in this recent email. The dates listed are all over the place and some months show 3 or 4 days in one month! I understand that this will help parents and students to not miss school or work, and teachers can continue to be on task with their students.

But this will be quite difficult for me, for though I am a 12-month employee and the only person working. My husband who is unwell and receiving a small social security check and my rent will be going up next month. I also read in the frequently asked questions that if we don't make enough money to pay for our medical premiums, that could be affected too. So, on top of everything else I could possibly find myself without medical, barely enough for rent, utilities, food and everything else just to survive.

I was also looking forward to retirement in a year or so with 28 years of service with the state. If the state would consider giving a two year service incentive I will definitely retire otherwise, I may need to stick around longer. I am praying that the unions can all sit with the governor and all respective persons to work this issue out respectfully and come to a better solution that will help everyone.

Mahalo,

Jo-Greta M. Ramos  
Office Assistant III  
Kaimuki Middle School  
Ph: (808) 733-4800



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Teacher Furloughs

1 message

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**Sarah Ferguson** <sferguson@waialae.edu>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:28 PM

Good afternoon,

I am writing regarding the proposed furloughs for teachers--Discussion item A. I am **opposed** to this measure as a teacher and as a community member.

Teachers have proven time and time again that they are devoted to their profession, modifying our methods of instruction, learning new technology, and continuing to teach as essential workers during this pandemic. To furlough them is an absolute slap in the face to all their hard work and dedication over the past ten months. I am working 60 hours a week and getting paid for 40 hours. Now, the state is suggesting that this pay be cut even more--in a state with a staggeringly high cost of living! This is unacceptable.

As a community member, I urge you to do what's best for our keiki. They have already missed out on so much face to face instruction and are struggling both emotionally and academically. Taking away their instructional time would be sending the message that their education is not important.

I understand that balancing the budget is incredibly difficult and an important task. Please don't balance it on the backs of hard-working teachers, who already make WAY less than we're worth, considering we are educating the future of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,  
Sarah Ferguson

**Sarah Ferguson** | Teacher  
Wai'ala'e Elementary Public Charter School  
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96816  
<http://www.waialae.edu>



*"A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for."*  
-John A. Shedd



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Fwd: No to furloughs**

1 message

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**Kanani Higbee** <kanani.higbee@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:29 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha kākou,

I am Kanani Higbee, Educational Assistant III of Lahainaluna High school for 10 years. Please I ask that you reconsider these furloughs and department cuts to our education!!!

This will hit my household hard. I already qualify for Medquest, food and cash assistance from the State because my wages are far too low for the cost of living here in Lahaina, where home sales average a whopping \$1.8 million!!! I am a full time single parent after my husband passed. And I have myself and my daughter I am putting through college. I was planning to be a teacher, by finishing my degree, but I will likely work somewhere else because it doesn't pay to be a teacher in Hawaii. Teachers are treated so poorly!!!

Furthermore I live in a rural area and we hardly have staff to fill our Highschool as it is. Because we had trouble filling teacher and substitute teacher positions, we had to lower the qualifications for substitute teacher to only a Highschool diploma and no longer a college bachelor degree. It's going to be even harder to fill positions. I know many teachers who have left our schools because of Covid19. And more teachers and educational assistants plan to not stay. They can't afford to live on Maui. They are moving to other states because no other state is cutting education. Education is a priority for other states, unlike Hawaii.

We already suffered furloughs during the recession. This is becoming a regular thing. It's just not right and I do not stand for this. No one should stand for this.

I have one senior and a freshman in highschool. I feel bad that they have to furlough again. And that will be for my daughter's entire Highschool education ! What a failure the state is to do this to our children and future generation who will be funding our social security fund. It teaches poor values. I am Native Hawaiian and this goes against my values. Also, it's shameful that Hawaiian Immersion and Special Education will be cut. Those are hard to fill and now we will be short workers.

So many teachers and educational assistants plan to leave Hawaii. And no one wants to work here to replace this mass migration of teachers. I asked my teacher friends in California and Georgia and they laughed because they can't see anyone moving here to work in education when the pay is so low. Everyone does their research and knows how expensive it is to live in Hawaii.

We are having many teachers positions cut. And I feel bad for all these dedicated teachers. They are already selling their stuff at garage sales and moving to other states.

With Aloha,  
Kanani Higbee

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Leona Watson** <lpwright@hawaii.edu>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:29 PM

Aloha,

My husband and I are both Kumu and the cuts in our pay will drastically affect our finances. We already lost one of the three jobs that we need to survive the cost of living in Hawai'i due to COVID. Now with the cuts to our primary source of income we may need to continue to put our faith and prayers in allowing us to survive in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time,

Leona Watson



MES 'Ohana PTO • Friends of Maunawili Elementary School  
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
1465 Ulupii Street, Kailua HI 96734  
MESOhanaPTO@gmail.com

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December 16, 2020

Dear Chair Payne and Respected Board Members,

The Maunawili Elementary School Parent-Teacher-Organization (MES 'Ohana PTO) is writing out of concern for students and teachers in light of recent furlough announcements. We ask that you support the education of our students as well as the livelihood of our teachers and oppose the planned furlough days.

By enacting these furloughs, the state is sending a message to our children that their education and their future is secondary to immediacy. When the state chooses to not value education, there will be interminable long term effects: the impact of furloughing our educators will be experienced by teachers, students, and the people of Hawai'i. We are deeply concerned about further widening the achievement gap among students, who are the future of Hawai'i. This will likely lead to budget shortfalls and increased costs for social services in years to come. We worry that our wonderful educators will be forced to leave the profession, either due to the inability to care for their own families, or the frustrations involved with teaching for the HIDOE. If our talent exits our public schools, our students will not receive the education and foundation to achieve what they so desperately deserve.

Our teachers dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the students at Maunawili Elementary. We are incredibly fortunate that our students have such wonderful influences in their lives and education. It is tragic to consider negatively impacting an educator's livelihood, especially during these unprecedented times. Teachers have been tasked with some of the most difficult duties of their teaching careers throughout this pandemic. Despite the immensity of their workloads, they have risen to the challenge and have exceeded expectations. They deserve a round of applause with a standing ovation, not a pay cut. In addition to the added stress of teaching during a health crisis, many could now be forced to deal with the stress of affording daily necessities.

The education of our children is constantly being made insignificant when choices to cut school budgets and forced furloughs are passed. Our haumana depend on us to make decisions that will allow them to grow and become the decision makers of tomorrow. We are failing them by taking away their educational time especially when they have already been asked to give up so much. Our teachers and students do not deserve the burden the state is imposing on them.

We ask that you acknowledge, reassess, and reconsider the gravity of the educational furloughs. Our teachers and our keiki deserve better.

Respectfully,

MES 'Ohana PTO



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**J Yagin** <jyagin@waialae.edu>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:30 PM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you and Governor Ige to not go through with the proposed furloughs. Our keiki have already missed so much school because of this pandemic. To approve a furlough would set them more behind and would greatly impact your teachers who you deemed essential workers. It is already hard to find teachers to fill in open positions and to pass a furlough would make it even harder. Please think about our Hawaii's keiki and make the right choice. Thank you so much for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Yagin

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**Jennifer Yagin** | Teacher  
Wai'alaie Elementary Public Charter School  
[1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816](http://www.waialae.edu)  
(808) 733-4880 ext. 258  
<http://www.waialae.edu>



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*FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 forbid you to disclose any information about students, which may be contained in this e-mail, to any other party, either outside your organization or outside of the purpose for this disclosure without first obtaining the written consent of the student.*



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Renee Bautista** <reneecbautista@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:38 PM

Aloha,

I am a 4-year public school teacher at Kohala Middle School on Hawaii Island. I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

The furloughs will affect our public school students who have gone through so much already during the pandemic. Our administrator has talked to our staff about budget cuts affecting our SpEd dept, which in turn affects our most vulnerable students! We have already struggled to support these students academically, socially and emotionally, while trying to keep them and our personnel safe. Now we will take away essential supports to those who need it the most.

In our Hawaii public school system, we also support our families. I have consoled and supported numerous parents and grandparents who have broken down crying on the phone and in conferences, as they feel the weight of supporting their family members and helping children with their education. Cutting school funding will hurt these families.

I will personally be affected by the furloughs and budget. I am a SpEd Teacher, a mother of two boys, and my family depends on my income. My significant other also has had a cut in hours and my family depends on my income for a majority of our household bills.

Please support our students, our most vulnerable population group. Find creative funding ways to help our public schools.

Mahalo,  
Renee Bautista  
Kohala Middle School  
Big Island of Hawaii



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**patricia joaquin** <trisha\_joaquin@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:38 PM

Testimony regarding teacher furloughs

Aloha,

I am a special education teacher as well as a parent. Because I am a district teacher, I do not receive the hard to staff or specifically education differentials even though I support and work in hard to staff schools and often work directly with special education students. Not receiving the differential and now having my pay drastically cut is not only financially devastating for myself and my family, it is offensive. I have put in 10+ hour days during this pandemic to support teachers and students. I have put my own children's needs on the side to ensure larger groups of students receive what they need. I am against these furloughs and the consequences they carry. Teachers have been deemed as essential and this pandemic should have brought up light the important roles they play not only in our keiki's education but in their lives as a whole.

Thank you,

Patricia Lukzen

North Hawaii Special Education Resouce Teacher and Parent of three public education students

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony in Opposition to Upcoming HIDOE Furloughs

1 message

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**Sarah Milianta** <s.milianta@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:53 PM

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Sarah Milianta-Laffin and I teach at Ilima Intermediate School. I'm writing in strong opposition to the recently announced furlough plan for HIDOE employees. I had planned to write much more, but this testimony is already 17 minutes late and I skipped my lunch to write it.

I didn't get to write testimony yesterday because I was working my second job. It's already impossible for teachers to afford life in Hawaii, and these furloughs will make the quality of life worse for my family. As a 15 year teacher (4th in HIDOE), I make less money than I did as a first year teacher in Texas 15 years ago. My salary does not even pay our family's monthly rent in Kapolei, and now it's being cut further.

I didn't get to write this testimony the day before yesterday because as the Electives Department Head, I was writing recommendation letters to other schools for teachers who are being rifted from my school in May. I'm desperately trying to get good teachers hired at other schools, even though they will be missed at Ilima by staff and students. My pay is getting cut, and I'm losing strong co-workers and friends. I wrongly thought that it wasn't possible to be more demoralized by this absurd school year.

We're already losing 13 teachers to budget cuts. My elective STEM classes are 35+ students per period this year because we had to cut 8th grade Art in July 2020 to be able to afford PPE on campus. We're losing 3 more elective teachers through rifting this year, so I'm expecting 40+ students per class next year. That's not fair to staff or students.

And on top of everything, the state calls us "essential workers" but tells us we're not essential enough to earn a living wage. The state needs to decide what really matters, and right now, the message these furloughs send is that students and teachers don't. You can't furlough teachers and at the same time claim that Hawaii is a state that values free and excellent public education.

Hoping for Change,

Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin  
Kapolei, Hawaii



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony: Figure out some other way**

1 message

**Tiffany Edwards Hunt** <newswoman@me.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 2:01 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board of Education and the Hawaii State Legislature and anyone else deciding the fate of us teachers: I'm writing to you as a 7th-grade teacher here on Hawaii Island, and also as a parent of two school-aged children. I am, quite honestly, appalled that we have this suggestion of furloughs equating to a 9 percent pay cut for teachers. First of all, have any of you sat in on one of these virtual classes that we have been holding? We are doing everything we can to ensure that our children learn as much as possible this school year. I personally have spent my fall break, my afternoons, and my weekends trying to help students who are struggling in this current learning environment and trying to cope with this pandemic. To suggest that we now be furloughed is just adding insult to injury.

I suggest that, before you decide to balance the DOE budget on the backs of the teachers who have the boots on the ground, why don't you look at all the consulting contracts and all the spending that occurs at the administrative level? There are way too many millions of dollars being spent on these consultants. For what, honestly? I mean, a lot of what these consultants have been paid to do is moot now. Times have definitely changed! Cutting out consultants and frivolous administrative spending would be a great start for cost savings.

We need to be thinking about the long-term impacts of a decision like this, cutting the days we teachers have to work with children and moving us teachers further toward the poverty line. Weren't we just making headlines, detailing how critical the shortage of teachers is and how we need to increase teacher pay in order to ensure we have quality teachers for our children? My, how quickly the rhetoric has shifted. Let's get back to the mentality that our children and their quality education matter. Find some other way to balance out the budget that doesn't jeopardize the future of Hawaii's children.

Mahalo.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Glen Eastman** <gdeastman@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:28 PM

**I am testifying on behalf of V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

I am shocked that furloughs are being considered for our Hawai'i teachers, which will be devastating for both teachers and keiki across the state. I have never had to work as hard as I have this year and this is a slap in the face to all of us that have tried to adapt and go above and beyond to risk our lives in the middle of a global pandemic and educate our keiki.

My wife hasn't been able to work since March because she was temporarily laid off due to covid. I had a second job at a resort at nights to help pay our bills and that job is now gone. Now we have a baby and with those added bills these possible furloughs will hurt us even deeper. I had to sign them onto my health benefits which is taking even more money out of my take home pay, a lot of my colleagues are also on single income right now.

You are asking us as teachers to do more and more for less and less and the long term fallout for students in Hawai'i will be devastating. A lot of my colleagues will not be continuing, either retiring or choosing to move out of state or find other careers. The pay gap between Hawai'i teachers and their mainland counterparts is already far enough apart, more pay cuts makes teaching here even less attractive.

I'm especially shocked that cuts are being considered with Special Education. Taking this out on our most vulnerable keiki is appalling. You would think that the governor and BOE would want to avoid potentially another Felix case, but cutting resources to make it even more difficult to meet the needs of our Special Education students through furloughs and budget seems to say otherwise.

Please no furloughs

Glen Eastman  
Special Education teacher  
Pomaika'i Elementary School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**Kathryn Fisher** <kthryn\_fisher@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:37 PM

I have been a teacher in Hawaii for 22 years. I've loved every minute of it. However, the treatment we've received now and in 2009 is very disappointing. During every economic downturn we are expected to make up the shortfall. Teachers are NOT appreciated by the state. During this pandemic we have put in more work than at any other time. Now we are asked to take a pay cut and school budget cut. It's not just teachers who are disrespected, students are considered dispensable. You claim education is important but your actions don't demonstrate that. Students are further behind and unable to compete in a global economy.

Aloha, Katie Fisher



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY, testifying on a general business meeting discussion item**

1 message

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**Alexandra Mangan** <amangan@kamaile.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:20 PM

**V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

Aloha and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

My name is **Alexandra Mangan**. I am a teacher at **Kamaile Academy PCS** in **Leeward District** on **O'ahu**. I am submitting testimony in support of the continued economic progress of the state of Hawaii, which does not include furloughing teachers.

Please let me know the location of Governor Ige's plan, or share a copy of this plan with me. I have tried to find it, but cannot seem to locate it. I have heard him use the word 'plan', our union president use the word 'plan', Hawaii News Now use the word 'plan', and so I would like to view this 'plan' prior to being told I need to furlough.

I would like to see where this money will go, and for what duration, since it is being taken away from the education of the children and youth in Hawaii. I would also like to know who is in charge of making the decision as to when we will stop the furlough, because in his speech, Governor Ige did not mention when the furlough would end, nor did he indicate clear guidelines for its cessation. I am hopeful that there will be more than one person in charge of determining the education of children and youth here for an indefinite period of time. Breaking our contracts has nullified the trust placed in Governor Ige, and so I am hopeful that the committee making this decision has a track record of dealing with honesty, transparency, and with a similar level of ethics (whatever that may look like in 2020) that I am expected to demonstrate, model, and teach my students every day.

Last year we were also asked to write testimony regarding the need for providing appropriate education for the children and youth in the State of Hawaii, specifically regarding teacher's salaries and the differentials. It was determined that the situation here was so dire, and that there was such a significant shortage of qualified teachers, that it was agreed that our salaries should be raised in order to account for the cost of living here in order to retain qualified teachers. This 'plan', therefore, does not make sense riding on the coattails of that admission and decision.

There is a significant shortage of qualified teaching staff, related service providers, EAs, and substitute teachers in the Leeward district. I have had to personally contend with and/or rectify situations caused by unqualified teachers, on my own time. Plans are sometimes passed by administrators who are unaware of Special Education best practices and/or Law. I have had to advocate for my students to receive their legally protected related service minutes with no ramifications to the service provider companies (i.e. EBS, for example), if there is a shortage of staff that cannot fill a position. Currently I am continuing to advocate for these services, while at the same time having conversations with service providers working for these companies as their time is being cut even further. Some of these service providers are in charge of servicing the entire Leeward district. That does not add up. This is basic math. If I am expected to teach students who receive Special Education services a third grade math strand involving comparing numbers, than the people in elected positions must be able to demonstrate this as well. If I am expected to teach strands pertaining to Cause and Effect, than elected officials must be able to demonstrate an understanding of this as well.

Rather than paying lawyers on retainer for the school districts for when lawsuits begin increasing in this state due to the ramifications that these salary cuts will have on providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education to students, why not invest that money in the students who will one day be the decision makers in this state. The voters. The doctors. The teachers. The governors. It is not their fault that the current administration seems to have a lack of training with regards to handling crisis situations. What is the 'plan' for creating economic growth given that the state (and global) climate has changed? What is the plan to stimulate new occupations that are relevant to

the change in our global reality moving forward? Where is the 'plan' outlining sustainable food production, energy production, and delivery of education in this state? Please share the plan.

I am happy to furlough if there is written a plan that addresses these things. I do NOT consent to furloughing on the whims of a fear based reaction in which no plan is in place to outline the duration of said furlough. I do NOT consent to the tax paying teaching staff in the state of Hawaii cleaning up the mess caused by the crash of a service industry that is aware that there are ebbs and flows latent within that occupation.

An example of 'cause and effect': When I was in high school, I was aware that those in the hospitality industry earned significantly more money than teachers. I also knew that it wasn't as stable, and I chose to pick an occupation that gives back to the community, and in which I earn less, understanding that there is a level of stability which does not exist in the hospitality industry. I made my choice, and those working in hospitality made their choice as well. It is not teachers' responsibility to pay for those who did not plan for the 'lows' which are inherent within that industry. It is up to teachers to support those families affected by it, but not through monetary compensation. Teachers support their communities every day in ways that are outside the realm of the occupation. I did not receive any increase in salary from the hospitality sector when the profits were high, and actually had to write testimony in order that teachers were provided a livable wage last year.

And so it makes sense that a plan should be created by those elected that addresses the future of this state given the current economic climate. This is an opportunity for expanded business ideas that are relevant. How long can the state sustain itself without a plan, and with the draining of the salaries of the still working middle class? Where will the tax base come from?

Extremely concerned and disheartened by the current administration and its choice to take funding away from the education of the children and youth of this state. The ramifications of this decision will haunt our future. Please explain to me why I am modeling a level of ethics with my students that the current administration is choosing not to demonstrate for all of us at this time? A contract

is a contract. Funds set for a school year are set for the school year; for the education of its children and youth--not for a bail out.

I am eagerly awaiting this plan, as it may set my mind at ease regarding a number of my concerns once I am able to review it.

A last note regarding giving verbal testimony: teachers are teaching during the school day on Thursday. It is disheartening that the meeting to discuss furloughs was scheduled when the majority of teachers are unable to deliver testimony. It is, however, notably calculated.

Mahalo for your time.

Alexandra Mangan

Special Education Teacher

Kamaile Academy PCS.

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Have a wonderful day!

Alexandra Mangan  
Resource Room Teacher  
Grades 3-4  
Kamaile Academy PCS  
Wai'anae, HI  
[amangan@kamaile.org](mailto:amangan@kamaile.org)

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony regarding furloughs (Discussion Item V.B.)

1 message

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**Monica Collias** <monicacollias@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:22 PM

Aloha Members of the Board,

My name is Monica Collias and I am a sixth-year teacher at 'Iao Intermediate on Maui. I am writing you today regarding *Discussion Item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.* As I am sure you know, this decision by the governor is going to greatly impact the teachers and keiki of Hawai'i. I am not immune to this, so I wanted to share how these furloughs will affect me personally. I am speaking as an individual.

I grew up in Kihei, on the south side of Maui. As a second grader, I watched my kumu picket my elementary for better pay and conditions. As a junior in high school, I experienced Furlough Fridays alongside my peers and my teachers. In spite of everything I watched my teachers go through throughout my 12 years as a student, I came back to Maui after graduating from college to become a teacher myself.

I came to teach on Maui because of the kumu who inspired me. I wanted to work with our kids because I knew I could reach them and relate to them in a way that someone who did not go through our public education system could not. And for the past six years, I have been able to do just that. But with the upcoming furloughs, I am not sure I will be able to continue teaching here.

I was already struggling financially before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. I was considering getting a second job to supplement my expenses (I have a car payment, rent, and student loans that, without the furloughs, take up 85% of my total income alone). With the increased unemployment rate on the island, there are no second jobs available to me, or any of us state workers. And with knowing that a significant number of teachers require second jobs in normal times just to get by, the state has decided to cut our pay when there are none? It feels callous, shortsighted, and wrong.

But as I have previously made clear, I am used to the mistreatment of our kumu. I watched it happen multiple times, I have heard the stories from my now-coworkers, and I know what it took to even get to the pay we are at right now. But despite all of that, I naively thought that things were starting to improve for us. I thought that finally, just maybe, we would be able to get ahead instead of always playing catch up. But it seems like I was wrong.

I cannot work for a system where teachers — so-called essential workers, the ones who care for our keiki — are constantly being knocked down, stepped on, and forgotten. It does not feel respectful or supportive of my former kumu to continue to allow this type of abuse. I simply cannot do it.

I never plan on leaving the islands. Maui is my home. As much as I love teaching, if being able to stay here means having to find another career path that fairly compensates me, I will. I cannot and will not sacrifice my well-being for my career, something that is currently being asked of teachers to do.

Please let the disrespect end here. We owe it to our kumu, our keiki, and ourselves.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this.  
Sincerely,  
Monica Collias



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Holly Sumida** <hsumida56@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:33 PM

Aloha,

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

There is a teacher shortage in Hawai'i and furloughs will only cause more teachers to retire early and less interest in teaching as a career in the near future. I know that teachers have worked much longer hours due to this pandemic, and as a result we are getting a drastic pay cut. They work tirelessly to get everything they can for their students. Whether its spending a portion of their pay to get supplies for their students, or whether it may be taking extra time to copy packets for both online and face to face students...they are being asked to do more for Hawai'i's keiki and this pay cut will only make things worse for them. Thank you for your attention.

Mahalo,  
Holly Sumida

# Testimony

Inbox



**Lauren Taketa** <Imtaketa@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 10:43 PM (12 hours ago)

to TESTIMONY.BOE

Hi my name is Lauren Abe and I am writing to testify on the general business meeting discussion item [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

I am writing to you today and I know that you have had to make some challenging decisions. It has been a year of difficult decision making and I hope that this email finds you well. The decision to furlough teachers pay will create a need for me to look outside of my teaching job to make up for the loss in pay. It has been a challenging year thus far shifting with the changes and new ways of teaching online. Looking for work in addition to my teaching job will add more to my plate and I would be disappointed to see it affect my performance as a teacher. It will also mean less days that we will get to spend with our students. This has been also a huge year of change and flexibility for our students and in such a time as this. Right now they need us more than ever. I really hope you will take into consideration the impact this will have on Hawaii's schools, teachers and students. Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Take care and stay safe,  
Lauren Abe



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony**

1 message

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**Kim Dempsey** <kim.r.dempsey@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:54 PM

Aloha

I am writing to submit testing for the December 17th BOE meeting.

With the realization that our state's economy has suffered as a result of the economy, much thought must be given before adding "insult to injury" in an effort to recover.

As with any income reduction, furloughs will have a financial impact on teachers. This impact comes at a time that teachers have been spending countless additional hours revamping their practice to accommodate virtual learning while personally feeling the emotional effects of the pandemic and taking on the secondary trauma we experience from so many of our students and their ohana. The furlough also adds additional "insult to injury" when it is cutting away at salaries that are well below that national norm (especially when cost of living is factored in).

The potential loss of quality teachers, including tenured teachers, will prove to have a negative, long term impact on our schools, affecting our keiki. This loss is further complicated by the pandemic and any effort to recruit quality educators to a school system with low teacher compensation. The potential loss of teachers will be amplified by the position eliminations also resulting in budget cuts.

Looking at my school, a school that has a high population of low income, high risk, vulnerable students, the announced cuts will be devastating. In a time that the resiliency of students is being tested, it will be further tested with the teacher (staff and general education) and EA cuts.

As a state, we need to place value on one of our most valuable residents, our keiki. Budget cuts, position eliminations and furloughs do not illustrate a value on our keiki and our educational system.

With gratitude,  
Kim Dempsey  
6th Grade Teacher  
Kealakehe Intermediate School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Robin Wong** <robinwongkauai@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:03 PM

Special Meeting Dec 17/Teacher Furloughs

For the third time this year I am submitting testimony to the Board of Education on behalf of fellow teachers and myself. It seems to me truly unbelievable, better yet *unconscionable*, that I would have to fight for our contracted hours and pay during this unique time in history when teachers are being asked to go above and beyond - literally risking our own health and the health of loved ones - to support our struggling students and keep schools open during this deadly pandemic.

First, we have a contract. We have a previously negotiated and mutually agreed upon contract. In what just and equitable society does a contract mean nothing, only to be discarded at the whim of state government when they need to balance their budget? My testimony could stop there but sadly it won't.

This same whimsy and short-sighted power that endeavors to breach a legal contract is also proposing to further demean an already weakened educational system by imposing a furlough. With all the budget balancing options available and alternatives to consider, why exacerbate our crisis level teacher shortage where we are ranked number one in teacher turnover? The trickle of teachers leaving - my school's had a steady stream leave already this year - will become a flood with tourist teachers going back to the mainland and many veteran teachers opting for retirement. Quality recruitment will be inconceivable if pay is cut further.

And what days are HIDOE proposing we furlough? Contracted planning and collaboration days. Taking away allotted prep time not only hurts teachers, but it impacts student achievement. Now more than ever, students need both meaningful lessons and academic rigor. Teachers need time to strategically lesson plan for both online and in person learners, with many students falling behind and needing one on one support. The workload has dramatically increased and yet the state wants us to cut our hours, which is ridiculously and laughably impossible.

I understand there are financial shortfalls and I recognize that tough decisions will need to be made. I hope you recognize that furloughing teachers promises disastrously long term effects for our keiki, making it a terrible idea and one that should be reconsidered.

Robin Wong  
Kauai High School  
Freshman English  
Mobile 917-449-6311



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Claire Kawagishi** <claire.kawagishi@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:04 PM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item V.B presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs and retraction of Special Education salary cuts.

As a single mother of 3 school age children, I was so grateful for the pay increase for Special Education Teachers this past January. However, as the Covid -19 crisis hit, the stress of having to work from home and to coordinate the schooling of my twin girls (currently 8th grade) and son (currently 6th grade) impacted me greatly. The impact was severe enough for me to declare bankruptcy since I soon lost my usual summer employment. With the crisis continuing I just found out that I would not be hired for my usual seasonal work as a High School Swim Coach either. The total loss in income is approximately \$9000. Just as my immediate family's financial situation seemed to be under control despite the income loss, my aging parents' need for financial help increased. My 84 year old father lost his income as a consultant. I am doing all that I can to help with their mortgage (applied for housing relief-but no results yet). To add even more stress to this difficult situation, my twin girls were recently diagnosed with depression and one was hospitalized for 5 days due to suicidal ideation. Please keep the normalcy as much as possible for the sake of the students, teachers, and our community. Please allow us to keep our salaries. No furloughs - no cuts in pay.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding,

Claire Kawagishi-Ala Wai School Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Kelsey Rasmuson** <kelsey.rasmuson@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:55 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

This school year, I returned to Hawaii after working as a teacher in Arizona for several years where I needed not only a second job, but a third job to survive. I was ecstatic to return to work for HODOE where I was treated as a professional and cared for as a teacher. Now, my trust in the security and strength of Hawaii's education system has been toppled. Not only is my pay about to be cut, but I have also been informed that one teacher in my grade level will be cut next school year as well as several other positions on my campus. Most likely, as a first year probationary teacher once again, I will lose my job. I returned to Hawaii this summer full of hope and faith in the public school system. Currently, I am feeling devalued, and unimportant in the community. Do not disgrace the teaching profession and the future of our keiki by implementing furloughs. These budget cuts relay the message to teachers and students alike, "you do not matter that much. Your work is not that important. You are replaceable." Thank you for listening to my testimony.

I would prefer to remain anonymous if this testimony is read aloud.



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## Testimony

1 message

**Rene Suckoll** <rsuckoll@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

I am a 12 month employee that has been with the DOE for 24 years. For most of the 23 years I was a Unit 3 member and moved to Unit 4 within the last five years. I decided to finally take a promotion to get ahead, only to find out due to contract rules I could only promote 3 steps in pay increase, although I moved 8 steps in job levels. I have gone without pay raises and step movements for many of those years and even endured furloughs during the 2009-2010 years. I've stayed the course with hope and trust that the employer and union would take care of their employees/members.

Now with more furloughs and possible layoffs on the table during a worldwide pandemic, it worries me that staying the course may not have been the best option. I know many people lost their jobs during this time, but they were also able to collect unemployment with additional bonuses in amounts that they wouldn't have normally made if they were working. I did not lose my job, however, I had to continue to work in a tiny office that doesn't allow much for social distancing and work with the public on a daily. I did this day in and day out for the same salary, with no extra pay, no restaurant cards, no bonuses. And I hoped and prayed everyday, that I would not contract the virus while working and bring it home to my family.

Also during this time, I waited patiently for our contracts to be funded. It was well deserved and much needed as the cost of monthly bills continued to rise. To face another furlough, especially during this pandemic could be detrimental. It could mean choosing between paying a bill or buying groceries. With my children home distance learning, the utilities and grocery bills have increased and the need to have internet access at home has become more of a necessity, rather than a luxury. It could also mean that my child in college may not be able to continue because I wouldn't be able to continue paying the tuition. Facing furloughs again is not something I can take lightly. It could mean that I would need to find a second job to make ends meet, which during this time could be nearly impossible.

The furloughs are unfair. Unfair that certain essential employees would not face furloughs. Unfair that 10 month employees would be furloughed only 6 days while the 12 month employees would be furloughed for 10 days. Why should the 12 month employees be burdened with a bigger financial responsibility? Are we getting our retro pay that we are due from when our contracts went into effect in July? Are our raises that are due in January being funded? Are we being furloughed on the new salary amounts that we are supposed to see in January?

Furloughs are also unfair for our students who will be missing out more days of school that they really can't afford to miss. Our students and families are already struggling with this and have been for the past 8-9 months. Our office will be greatly impacted with 10 less days to get work done and being tasked to somehow squeeze the work into the shortened work weeks. Offices and schools will also be greatly impacted when employees start leaving. I already know of a few employees who have said they will leave the DOE.

Still trying to be hopeful...

Rene



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Wendy Nickl** <wendyfivec@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:02 AM

Aloha,

I am a 34 year public school teacher at Kohala Middle School on Hawaii Island. I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

The furloughs will affect our public school students who have gone through so much already during the pandemic. Our administrator has talked to our staff about budget cuts affecting our SpEd dept, which in turn affects our most vulnerable students! We have already struggled to support these students academically, socially and emotionally, while trying to keep them and our personnel safe. Now we will take away essential supports to those who need it the most.

In our Hawaii public school system, we also support our families. I have consoled and supported numerous parents and grandparents who have broken down crying on the phone and in conferences, as they feel the weight of supporting their family members and helping children with their education. Cutting school funding will hurt these families.

I will personally be affected by the furloughs and budget. My son will be coming home from his university and attending school online, so we can save money on his rooming fees. My husband is retired and my family depends on my income for a majority of our household bills.

Please support our students, our most vulnerable population group. Find creative funding ways to help our public schools.

Mahalo,

Wendy Nickl

Kohala Middle School

Big Island of Hawaii



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furlough concerns

1 message

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**Shanielle Tuinei** <shanielle.mm@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:13 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a DOE Unit 03-12 month employee I am outraged at these furloughs. I am an OAIII and we work the most but get paid the least. We don't have paid breaks or intermissions like our other unit 03-10 month employees. Now we have 4 more extra days then they do? If we have to be on furlough then the playing grounds should be fair. During this pandemic I was very grateful to have a job but it was painstaking to have to come to work each day while others who normally wouldn't qualify for unemployment, receive benefits and more! We don't make enough to live comfortably but we make too much according to the State and don't qualify for any benefits. We the working middle class people deserved those extra \$600+ a month and those restaurant cards. It is very hard living paycheck to paycheck and now with less paid days it will be a tremendous struggle. I am thankful that I have a husband who is employed, so I can't imagine all of our single parents who are in the same job position as I am. These "10 furlough days" may not mean alot to our State but it will have a devastating effect on our DOE employees. Please reconsider this decision and work for the people not against us!



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**pmitsis3@aol.com** <pmitsis3@aol.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:15 AM

Reply-To: pmitsis3@aol.com

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

To Who it may concern,

Regarding the furloughs:

Consider the past years' rent, utilities, taxes, and food costs that increased then add a pandemic. Consider the 9% which takes away purchasing power and economic stability for a select few state workers. In the light of this, try considering spreading 9% across all state agencies and employees to reduce the duress upon your and your childrens' teachers.

Your marginalization for the cost of doing business on the few will both fail in the short term and the long term. You see this as a business decision: therefore, don't ask educators who have been limited partners in your business and historically have been marginalized to shoulder the burden with sub-pay to take another hit. Educators are the bedrock of what we all become, don't put us between a rock and a hard spot, at least work with us.

Pete Mitsis, M.A. (tenured 7 year DOE employee)  
Waimea High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Molokai concerns**

1 message

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**Kealoha Laemoa** <kjlaemoa@hawaii.edu>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:20 AM

Aloha;

My name is Kealoha Laemoa. I am a Adult supervisor at the only charter school on Molokai. I personally see and witness the dedication of these teachers in the classroom.

If it's your intent to furlong thousands of dedicated teachers and professors then it's going to be your intent Mr. Governor to allow more Hawaii families go into debt. They cannot afford to provide for their families, rent, food for table. It seems that when you announce this possible furlong your first pick was the public school and the professor at the University. I am a online University of Hawaii student and I will support not only my co-workers but also my Kumu at the University. They do not need more budget cuts, they need to be supported as much as possible.

I am not in support of the furlong or any sort of budget cuts.

Mahalo Nui:  
Kealoha Laemoa

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Candice-Joy Soon** <candice-joy.soon@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:29 AM

Hello,

I'm writing this testimony to voice my concerns about the projected furloughs implemented by HIDOE. I am a second year, non-tenured teacher who is dually-licensed in general and special education. I currently teach 11th grade resource and inclusion English classes.

While I understand and appreciate the difficulties that the state is going through due to COVID-19 and the economic downturn, it has felt like teachers are overwhelmingly bearing the heavy brunt of these budget cuts from both drastic layoffs and furloughs. As teachers trying to teach in a pandemic, we are doing more work than ever by trying to make material palatable and accessible online everyday in addition to dealing with a multitude of problems students are facing at home. My workday essentially never ends - I'm checking emails and communicating with students late into the night because so many students are struggling and failing their classes. As a care coordinator for students in special education, I have even more responsibilities than general education teachers and my caseload goes far beyond those students who I have in my classes. Yet, furloughs are being touted as a viable solution even though students are already so far behind and teachers are drowning in work and trying to play catch-up - I believe the negative impacts of these furloughs will be felt far and wide for parents, students, and teachers alike.

I am currently the sole breadwinner of my family while my husband is in grad school - surviving on one income (not to mention that of a teacher's) is nearly impossible in the state of Hawaii. We are already living paycheck to paycheck even though I juggle two jobs while we wait for my husband to graduate. It has been such a stressful struggle and the looming layoffs and furloughs feel like yet another slap in the face that the state is throwing at us teachers. With the 10% pay cut from furloughs, money is going to be even tighter for us - it feels we are taking one step forward and two steps back by working for the DOE - I know I am not the only one who feels this way. With the furloughs and layoffs looming, how is the state economy going to be revived if so many of its residents are going to be struggling to make ends meet?

I got into teaching special education because I love working with my students and establishing close relationships with them in a smaller setting. The work is undoubtedly rewarding, especially during hard times such as these when my students still voice their appreciation for me. I've always rooted for the underdog and I believe special education students need people who believe in them unconditionally. However, it doesn't feel like HIDOE is rooting for us teachers - we are the ones bearing the brunt of pay cuts, lay offs, furlough days, lack of PPE, etc. with no one bothering to ask for our input or have us participate in any decision-making processes. At the end of the day, no matter how rewarding the work is, the reality is that bills must be paid; teachers will continue to leave the field and the state if HIDOE continues to implement such draconian policies such as these. In a profession that is absolutely essential but so underpaid and underappreciated, the furloughs are going to do much more harm than good.

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to read through my testimony. I sincerely hope that there are other measures HIDOE can take that does not put our teachers, keiki, and the future of Hawaii's educational system at risk.

Thank you,  
Candice Soon

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## Testimony on Furlough

1 message

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**Kathi Andaya** <natsue25@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:30 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This upcoming furlough will destroy our family financially. We have 3 adults and one child in our household. The main breadwinner lost his job of 37 years in the private sector because of the pandemic. He is still not employed. My daughter and I both are office assistants in the DOE schools.

We are paying the bulk of the mortgage, utilities and other household expenses. It also has taken away from the services for my non verbal autistic grandson, who is 5 yrs. old. He only attends school 3x/week and we can no longer afford outside services for his autism.

Furloughs will only HURT our economy even more. The State should of put together an incentive package for those who can retire, then just freeze those positions. Don't hurt the lower paying employees, especially when they are the backbone of school administration offices.

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a math teacher at Maui High School. I am writing in strong opposition to the recently announced furlough plan for DOE employees. My husband and I are both DOE teachers. This is the second time in a little over 10 years that we are both being furloughed by the state. For me, this is not only about money. This is about respect for our profession and for the people you always expect to "save the children".

The public education system in Hawaii is dying a slow and painful death. You expect the system to survive off of teachers "goodwill" and "big hearts". You know very well that our students would not be doing as well as they are, if not for teachers putting in way more time past their contract hours and putting up their own money to supply their classrooms. Yet, there is NEVER any acknowledgement of that by the people sitting at the very top of the DOE. Instead, we are ALWAYS called upon to sacrifice "for the kids". Let's be real - the people doing the most "for the kids" are the school level employees. And here we are, once again, being asked to sacrifice - in the middle of an unprecedented school year - one in which we have sacrificed more than ever before to make distance and hybrid learning work for our students. No one has acknowledged the amount of time and energy teachers have put forth to make this year work for our students. No one has acknowledged the stress and mental toll this has taken on teachers. We are expected to just "keep on keeping on...for the kids". If there has been any acknowledgement of these things, it has been overshadowed by all the slaps in the face by the DOE - us having to fight for safe working conditions, fight for telework, fight for resources - all we have been doing this school year is fighting with the DOE to get some respect and safe working conditions. Imagine that - the most valuable and necessary employees in the school having to fight with their employer about basic working conditions - and now being slapped in the face AGAIN with furloughs.

You see, the problem here is that you think every employee will just suck it up and stay in the DOE "for the kids"....and the ones that choose to go? Well, we'll survive without them, right? WRONG!!! There are lots of highly qualified teachers leaving, because they are either tired of being treated like this and have better opportunities or they just can't afford to stay here in Hawaii. Do you see a long line of applicants waiting to take their place? I don't. We've had a teacher shortage for far too long and haven't been able to recover. Do you see what I mean about public education dying a slow and painful death?

When are we going to stop making excuses for having to starve our already dying public education system and do something about it? The public education system is on a ventilator and we, the employees are the exhausted, overworked medical staff trying desperately to keep it alive. Please stop killing it with furloughs and budget cuts!!!!

Sincerely,

Jodi Kunimitsu  
Kihei, Maui



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough opposition**

1 message

**K E** <karmelcreations@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:36 AM

To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kailua Kona Hawaii. I am the only source of income for my family and would be greatly impacted by any kind of decrease in pay. In times like these, we need to support our teachers and other state employees and not penalize them for circumstances that they are not responsible for. We take care of our keiki within our homes and at our schools. Please do not hurt our families by decreasing our pay.

Mahalo,  
Karen Ellison

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## Testimony against furloughs

1 message

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**Shelly Andrews** <shelly.andrews@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:36 AM

While I agree that the State needs to make budget cuts across the board I think it is unfair that classroom teachers will not be classified as First Responders. As a School Counselor, I have seen the negative impacts of COVID-19 on students this school year and last. More than double of our students this year have been hospitalized for suicidal ideation and depression. With in-person learning, sports, and excursions cut this year students feel disconnected from their classmates and teachers which I believe is contributing to this negative change in their mental health. Many students (the most I have ever seen in my 20-year career as a counselor at Kailua High are failing multiple classes and are in danger of not graduating or failing the year). Teachers are trying their best to try to provide additional support to students, allowing at-risk students to come on campus for in-person learning, scheduling virtual study hall sessions with students after hours and on holidays, calling home to families, mailing letters and care packages while also teaching in a whole new way over a virtual platform. By not putting classroom teachers in the category of First Responders I believe you are further excluding students as most of the furlough days are taken out of teacher planning days as well as school days. Due to COVID-19 teachers have had to spend a number of additional hours outside of the workday to adjust their teaching practices to a virtual and/hybrid learning environment, attend multiple training sessions and attend multiple parent-teacher conferences (all students with specialized academic plans including 504 and SPED students needed to have new plans at the beginning of the school year to ensure their academic needs were being met) and with many students failing more parent-teacher conferences are scheduled to make sure students and families are getting the support they need. While some parents are able to send their children to private school to ensure their children can be provided with adequate academic support a majority of families in Hawaii can not afford to. As I am also a parent of two children in public schools I feel you are doing a disservice to students by treating teachers who are already working numerous hours outside of their workday to serve students in public schools by not classifying them as First Responders.

Shelly Andrews, MEd, NBCT  
Kailua High School, Counselor  
[451 Ulumanu Dr.](#)  
[Kailua, HI 96744](#)  
(808) 266-7900 ext. 2239

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony: DOE Furloughs, Impact on Students, Employees, and Community

1 message

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**Jeremy Seitz** <jeremy.seitz@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:37 AM

15 December 2020

To The Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am submitting testimony in regards to General Business discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

I am opposed to furloughs. I have been through furloughs implemented by the Lingle administration and it has a detrimental effect, not just on the students, but also on the educational platform, the educational system, and the community.

I am thoroughly disappointed in the governor and our DOE leadership. I believe we are being held responsible for the inept and ridiculous actions, taken by our leadership, and that we have no control over. We as teachers spend countless hours planning, preparing, learning, and mastering our craft in order to deliver quality instruction that will prepare students for life after school. These furloughs, including January 4 (Teacher PLANNING Day), will further reduce our capacity to execute and they will rob the students, especially those in disadvantaged, underserved communities, with the RIGHT to a free and appropriate public education.

Further, I am disappointed in this BOARD and its members as I believe that your role is to guide, direct, and at times mandate that actions be taken to ensure the safety, security, and education of these children be delivered with equality, high standards, and maximum effectiveness. You so far have failed to do so. Your latest vote to "reluctantly agree" to the DOE's proposed budget reductions is farcical. As the Board of Education, your job is not to simply go along but to voice your opinions, concerns, and speak the truth. To vote for budget cuts, albeit reluctantly, is shameful. The BOE has the voice and power to stand up to what they believe to be inappropriate, wrong, and detrimental. You did NOT do so. Had you voted against the reductions, the impact and perceptions amongst educators could have perhaps been brighter. As it stands, we teachers are thoroughly disappointed in you and feel that you do not see the true value of a public school educator, let alone the necessity required by our students.

Now is your opportunity to stand up for what is right. Ms. Payne, you have seen firsthand what furloughs can do. They are evil, wrong, and will only move to hurt not just our educational ability, the students' chances for success, but also the economy for the long term. Should you vote for furloughs or again "reluctantly" agree, you will once again have failed not just the educational community but the community of the State of Hawaii.

I see this as a genuine opportunity to stand up and hold those that need to be held accountable. Stand up to the governor and show him that education is not and should never be the first area to look at for cuts. We teachers are poor by every measurable standard. We are one of the lowest paying states in the country and we have worked many years, aside from the last three, without annual increases. Ms. Payne you know

this. You are public school through and through. You know, and we teachers accept, the lifestyle of a teacher. Do not contribute to an increase in what is already a financially challenging life that we live. We do it willingly but we are not punching bags. Teachers will quit. They will take early retirement. They will leave the state. Teachers will lose their homes, their cars, they will deplete their savings and retirement to survive this. Money that should contribute to the community will be lost. 16,000 of us will be unable to adequately contribute to economic growth.

In the long term, students will have learned and experienced less. They will be less equipped to deal with what is sure to be a challenging world when they leave school. All academic performance measures will show dramatic decreases. Student and teacher mental health will see a massive decline. Domestic violence will continue to see alarming increases in the number of incidents.

There is no positive benefit to furloughs. You of all people should know this. I know Mr. Voss, Ms. Cox and the like do not know at all what it's like to be a teacher and surely their children will never know the poverty that the majority of our students experience daily. They are already deprived of many rights that some of the very board members' children will never need to know. Make a decision and vote with your heart. Do not try to play the political game. You are the voice of not just 16,000 teachers but also over 200,000 public school students. Together we represent nearly 13% of the state's population.

Do for once, what is right in your heart. Stand up, be the voice of reason and decency. Stand up for the teachers and the students. Imagine the impact that a board of education that backs the very people it was formed to protect, could have on the future of our educational system. Do not hold up your hands as though you have no power or authority. Your voice is loud and valuable. USE IT!!

Jeremy R. Seitz  
Teacher  
Farrington High School

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony re: DOE Furloughs, etc.**

1 message

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**Andrew Jones** <jonesbaron23@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:41 AM

Aloha, Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education.

My name is Andy Jones, and I am a Language Arts teacher at Radford High School. This is my 28<sup>th</sup> year in the teaching profession. I have been at Radford since 2007; before my time in the Hawai'i DOE, I taught in Taiwan for a dozen years beginning in the early 1990s.

Half a decade ago I was a regular attendee of BOE meetings. I submitted many rounds of testimony on various topics and also did so before the state legislature's education committees. Over a period of several years, I also published several dozen letters and opinion pieces in local newspapers pertaining to numerous aspects of public education in our state. I discontinued these activities roughly four years ago for several reasons, perhaps the most salient of which was the feeling that I had said everything I had to say about school improvement and that it was time to hear from other educators.

Since I discontinued my activities, I believe that there has been a rising general optimism that the situation for schools, teachers, and students has been gradually improving. In 2014, David Ige suggested that he would be an "education governor," in contrast to his two immediate predecessors who had made unfortunate choices that have caused long-lasting damage to public education in Hawai'i. In 2017, the Board appointed Christina Kishimoto as our new superintendent, and, while many teachers had hoped for the appointment of a local educator, most classroom teachers would probably agree with me that Superintendent Kishimoto has made a significant, positive departure from the toxic and "invasive" approach of her predecessor - a non-educator who had signed teachers and students up for the numerous burdensome and anti-educative measures associated with the Race to the Top grant. A year after Superintendent Kishimoto's appointment, Governor Ige made a wise decision that shocked and delighted so many teachers when he appointed veteran educator and educational advocate Catherine Payne as chairperson to this Board; in the past two years, Payne has led the Board in working with HSTA, the DOE, Governor Ige, etc., resulting in considerable progress in a number of directions. Finally, through all of these positive developments, HSTA President Corey Rosenlee must be mentioned as a tireless force of advocacy for teachers, schools, and students - an advocacy that began before his election in 2015 as he raised public awareness of the unfolding crisis as a teacher at Campbell High School. Under President Rosenlee's leadership, HSTA has conducted significant studies that rigorously and with considerable detail document what educators and many others in our state have long known - namely, that Hawai'i public schools are among the most underfunded in the country, and our teachers the most underpaid.

Now, COVID-19 appears to have provided educators with a clear and painful illustration of the latter half of the "one step forward, two steps back" adage. A year ago teachers were optimistic that, following on the heels of the important decision to attract Special Education teachers by offering them a generous stipend, all teachers might look forward to further decisions that would redress the long period during which we have been underpaid for years of service, in addition to potential, robust salary increases in a future contract that was beginning to look like more than just a dream, as educational decision-makers of various stripes seemed

to be approaching a consensus that, without paying teachers better, our chronic teacher shortage would only worsen.

I believe I speak for a majority of public school teachers when I exclaim how disheartening it is for us to have seen all of these promising steps suddenly and summarily erased due to a worldwide public health crisis, and to find ourselves back at the drawing board that we faced a decade ago, having once more to take time from our busy work schedules to revert to basic arguments concerning professional survival that we began constructing during the last furlough period – a period that, just a year ago, we were happy to view as a bygone era governed by decision-makers who did not prioritize public education.

My plea today is implicit in the above. Please do whatever you can, Members of the Board, to prevent furloughs from erasing the progress we've made in the past few years and to prevent a further professional "brain drain" and the concomitant chaos that will undoubtedly ensue as thousands of Hawai'i teachers, echoing The Who in "Won't Get Fooled Again," decide that this latest setback is indeed the last straw and either leave education for other professions or seek teaching work in systems that are less subject to the ever-shifting vagaries and whims of public policy.

Mahalo,  
Andy Jones  
NBCT  
Language Arts Department Chair  
HSTA Head Rep  
Radford High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Abbey Palmer** <abbey.palmer@gmail.com>  
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:42 AM

Hello my name is Abigail Palmer and I am a special education teacher. I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees**. I am extremely concerned about the furloughs and how it will affect my household and my students. I am a single income household trying to survive in Hawaii. To further my education and to better help my students, I got my masters degree in special education. If teachers are furloughed and our pay gets cut, I don't know how I am going to be able to continue living in Hawaii. I am already paying back student loans and barely able to afford my rent. If you furlough teachers, we won't be able to survive. If you furlough teachers, our students will suffer too. I teach such a diverse group of students all with different learning disabilities and because of this, the majority of the workbooks and every day supplies (colored pens, pencils, paper) I provide for the students out of my own paycheck. Each students needs are unique so there is a lot of differentiation required and additional supplies needed to help each student. If teachers are furloughed, there will be so many of us that will be forced to leave the profession, forced to move to the mainland because of the high cost of living in Hawaii. The keiki will suffer because of this and that is not fair to them. Teachers have already been through so much, teaching during a pandemic. When COVID-19 hit, teachers immediately adjusted their entire curriculum and instruction for distance learning so that students wouldn't fall behind during the pandemic. We are continuing to provide content for students in person and online, adapting for the needs of each individual keiki. We risk our own health and safety by coming in to teach students face to face. We are working double the hours and going home and spending countless hours after school modifying and lesson planning to provide additional supports to students during the pandemic. We are educating the future. Future doctors, future lawyers, future politicians. Please don't furlough the teachers, our futures and the futures of our keiki depend on this.

Thank you.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

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**Erin Mickelsen** <e.m.mickelsen7828@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:50 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Erin Mickelsen and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee School. I have been teaching there and in the Hawaii DOE for 15 years.

This idea of furloughs is UNACCEPTABLE! There are teachers that never fully recovered from the Linda Lingle Furloughs many years ago. Besides hurting teachers and their families, furloughs hurt our students! Students, teachers, and parents have had to endure one of the hardest years of their lives and furloughs will make it even harder.

Teachers finally just got raises and now we are to get a pay cut. We already have a teacher shortage crisis and furloughs will make it worse. Meanwhile, the State of Hawaii is shelling out millions of dollars for the rail project that is costing much more than anticipated, taking way longer than expected, and will only benefit a small portion of our State.

Please do not instill furloughs on us! I have never thought so seriously about leaving this thankless profession!

Erin Mickelsen



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony - furlough

1 message

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**Nellwyne Young** <nellwyneyoung@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:53 AM

This is a written testimony on general business meeting discussion item [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

Educators all across the state have been working harder and tirelessly since the start of this pandemic. Prior to this, we were hoping we were on our way to negotiate a new contract which would include a nice salary package. As an educator for 26 years my salary in this state helps my family of 4 to get by. We do not live beyond our means. We were never in a position to purchase brand new cars, go on lavish trips or have top of the line things. We just get by. Now with a pay cut having to pay for two college tuitions just frightens me. We may be "furloughed" but the work still has to get done somehow, someway. We were also presented with proposed budget cuts to our school which will definitely have an impact. Loss of positions will mean bigger class sizes or loss of additional support. How will this help our students?

What happened to educators being essential? How will we ever be able to attract our students into education? I "lived" through furlough Fridays under Lingle, teacher pay cut though Abercombie and now this?? What a slap in the face for a profession that always has students in their best interest. Yes, I want what's best for my students, but not at the expense of my own kids and myself.

There has got to be a better way.

Nellwyne Young  
James Campbell High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony, Human Resource Meeting

1 message

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**Tiffany Schnittger** <tschnittger@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:53 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board,

I have been with Hawaii's DOE since 2003, and currently **work as a teacher at Holomua EI with first grade**. In fact, my husband and I were both teachers for over 10 years. We raised our family on our salaries, and struggled. The furloughs of the past put such a strain on our family that we felt impoverished, and even had to go without a car and other financial hardships...

My husband left the DOE and started his own small business, and that helped our situation. However, if these furloughs take effect, as planned, I will also be leaving as soon as possible. There is a breaking point where I have to look out for my family's well-being more than the demanding, constant job can justify.

**I am 100% against the proposed furloughs**, as my salary has still not caught up with inflation and cost of living to survive and thrive in Hawaii. Cutting teachers' salaries in Hawaii will only exasperate the teacher shortages and issues with student performances in the years to come. This will hurt generations in our state. So, it is with a sad heart that I start looking elsewhere for better opportunities for me as an educator, and I am not the only one.

Thank you,  
Tiffany Schnittger

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Tiffany Schnittger, M.Ed.  
(808) 439-2238

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

As a single mom and a teacher, I am used to living life on a treadmill. I talked about this in my Community Voice article in Civilbeat back in September 2016. At the time, I was still coping with the aftermath of the 2008 furlough and facing dramatic cost increases of medical expenses. Unfortunately, I find myself still on this treadmill but it's faster and even harder to keep up in 2020. I have been running in place since August when the fall term began. Each day, it's a triage of student and technical obstacles and a budget cut for 2021 would greatly harm the already fragile support for teachers and students. I am concerned that I would be thrown off the treadmill.

In terms of student impact, current difficulties would be made much worse. Since the tracking of the positivity rate, Moanalua High, where I teach, began a combination of online and in-person teaching. This is simultaneously done by the teacher. At best, I can organize the students in a discussion of our reading in class and through Google Classroom with various levels of engagement. Even if a student loses his Internet connection, GC offers a transcript of the conversation. Even if my voice transmission gets dropped (poor bandwidth? network hiccup?), I can type in my feedback to students. At worst, I can have students misbehaving online (off-task behavior, putting down others, disrupting class conversation) and a student giving up at her desk 6 feet from me since her education assistant is no longer available to help her. In this latter case, I can handle one situation at a time but I cannot be at two places at the same time. Budget cuts would make the school even more short-staffed and technology even less reliable.

In addition to the classroom teaching, I find myself doing much more in other ways too. As our school counselors go on leave, even their replacement goes on leave too, so the net result is more vacancies and more work is left undone. I also found myself talking to parents and understanding that the child is struggling since the family is suffering: in a typical family, one or both parents may have lost their jobs; in some cases, my student could not attend class since she began to work to help pay bills. I am not a social worker, not a counselor, but I help some parents to call the unemployment office and translate the application for them. As these needs build up, I am finding that in order to teach, I have to try to address these other issues first. It is getting harder and harder to stay steady on my treadmill.

In terms of personal impact, I am just recovering from the 2008 furlough. At the time, my two kids at home were age 8 and 11. Now, they are working their way through college. Their independence gives me hope. But it still takes more than one paycheck to pay rent. As head of my household of 3, my annual income is at 65% of the area median income. With Governor Ige's plan to cut pay by 9% via furlough, it translates into less \$450 per month for me. That is my entire food budget for the month. Although this pay reduction is applied equally to other unions and managers of the state government, it is not necessarily equitable.

I hope that the Board of Education and lawmakers can guide us through 2021 and beyond without further cuts to public education.

Sincerely,

Helen W. Lau  
English and Chinese Teacher  
Moanalua High School





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY for teachers**

1 message

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**Brynne Clark** <brynne.clark@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:56 AM

**This is my TESTIMONY!!**

**As a teacher, I would like to ask that our state protect public education funding by asking for the board's support in our fight to prevent furloughs.**

**Furloughs would greatly impact my family especially during these trying times of less income. Furloughs would also impact my students in the class by receiving even less instruction time than they are already receiving, and would impact our entire school. I beg you please do not allow furloughs.**

**Sincerely,  
~Brynne**

--

Brynne Clark  
First Grade Teacher  
Pomaika'i Elementary School  
[4650 S. Kamehameha Ave](#)  
[Kahului, HI 96732](#)  
[REDACTED]

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## The Senate

STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Hawaii Board of Education  
Special Meeting on December 17, 2020

Submitted via Email  
Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Petition Number 20-01  
Proposing new rule for public input

Aloha, Chair Payne and Members of the Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my **support** for amending the process by which the Department of Education responds to comment requests. Any such comment by the DOE should be informed by the interests and will of the impacted community.

The purpose of this proposed amendment would not create an undue burden on DOE or shift responsibility for gathering public comment from proposing entities to DOE. Rather, if asked to comment, the BOE could either decline to provide any comment or make sure it has considered all the facts before commenting.

By asking DOE for comment, the applicant seeks another voice to add to its public outreach, a voice that might not have been heard otherwise. At a minimum, the school principal and school advisory council should be polled. When there is a potential controversy, an opportunity for public input related to school operations or concerns should be welcomed.

In the case of the Na Pua Makani wind project, a controversial development that had been opposed by the Kahuku community for years, the DOE missed an opportunity to accurately comment. Community concerns, particularly about health and wellbeing of students and residents, are school concerns.

Informed decision making requires informed input. DOE would do better by considering the opinion of affected communities before commenting on controversial projects. Surely, the BOE has it within its kuleana to improve its commenting process.

Mahalo for your favorable consideration.

Respectfully,

Gil Riviere  
Senator, District 23  
Oahu's North and Windward Shores

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I, Jalen Lee urge you to consider preventing the devastating furloughs that will begin to occur on January 4th. The imposed furloughs that Governor David Ige has announced not only will affect teachers throughout the state but will drastically create long lasting effects on the Keiki of Hawaii. Why is it that when the state is in a financial crisis, the state workers, especially the teachers are cut first? This must stop. This has gone on for many years and through many of the past governors of Hawaii. WHY? We have fought so long to finally get to where we are. Do you know how long it took some teachers to get to that 9-10% raise? Now, it is being taken away all at once. This is unacceptable.

Everytime teacher pay cuts or possible furloughs are in the talks, my familys livelihood is on the chopping block. We have to not only prepare ourselves for the impacts that the pay cut or furloughs will have on our family but we have to consider leaving our state we have called home. My family has worked so hard to get to the point where we are and now we are back to square one. Please I beg with all the teachers and keikis across Hawaii to fight for us and reconsider the furloughs that will take place on January 4th. Like Rita Pierson so forcefully states "Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be." So I will end with this question, "Who will be our keikis champion when all the teachers has gone elsewhere?"

Mahalo,

Jalen Lee



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## I Oppose DOE Budget Cuts and Furloughs

1 message

**John Fitzpatrick** <fitzformai@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:34 AM

Aloha Honorable Hawaii Board of Education,

I am John Fitzpatrick and I am a 7th grade integrated science teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I am writing because I am opposed to the furloughs that Governor Ige is mandating at a time when our already meagerly funded Hawaii public education system faces drastic budget cuts that will lay off thousands of teachers, reduce the ability to provide needed supplies to our students, and PPE in our classrooms for a safe place for our students to learn and develop during this COVID 19 pandemic.

Cutting the days we have to prepare and get ready to safely welcome back our students for the first time during the pandemic is dangerous and utterly irresponsible. As a teacher we have been tasked with learning new modes of teaching, preparing for multiple modes of education, and adapting to the new "normal" of educating our keiki and helping them develop as people through this pandemic. This has been an incredibly challenging year and cutting the time we get to prepare for our students, grade, and help our students through a pandemic does not make it any easier.

As a teacher who already on average makes less than \$18,000 as their counterparts with similar degrees a roughly 10% pay cut will make paying bills incredibly difficult for me and my fellow co-workers. So many of my coworkers can barely afford rent, live off their credit cards, and can not afford child care for their children during this pandemic. 60-70% of teachers in Hawaii have second jobs mainly in the tourism industry and have already lost a substantial portion of their income. I am one of those teachers that have lost roughly \$15,000 per year of income because I got laid off of my second job as a captain on Ali'i nui. Both these pay cuts combined amounts to a 30% pay reductions.

I understand there are so many families across the State and across the country who have been hit hard by the pandemic. But we can not be crabs in a bucket and tear down everyone when there are other ways to balance the budgets. When there are surpluses the legislature and governor rarely support pay raises, but when there is an economic collapse we are the first ones on the chopping block.

A year ago today we were asking for \$40 million in order to fund special education, Hawaiian immersion and hard to staff differentials to teachers who work in these areas and they have been widely successful despite not having widespread support at the state legislature and coming from within the DOE budget and supplementary budget of Governor David Ige. We were also asking for \$30 million to get veteran teachers that have sacrificed and been hit hard during every economic downturn to be placed at their correct step. It was like pulling teeth from the legislature and governor to try to do what is right for our most experienced teachers and unfortunately the pandemic hit and all was lost.

During this economic downturn we must band together and ask the legislature to look for alternatives like taxing REITS, asking those making more than \$200,000 to pay 10% more in taxes (this is how much we are being cut and if we, the worst paid teachers in the nation when adjusted for cost of living, can "afford" it they can certainly afford it), close loopholes that allow corporations to avoid state and local taxes, increase sales tax on out of state online shopping, a daily hotel education fee are ideas that we could do to help balance the budget.

Thank you for fighting for teachers and I hope you send a strong message to the governor and the state legislature that we can no longer balance budgets on the backs of our keiki and their teachers.

Mahalo,  
Fitz

**John Fitzpatrick**

*Fitz For Maui*

email: [fitzformai@gmail.com](mailto:fitzformai@gmail.com)

████████████████████  
[85 Mokuahi St.](#)  
[Makawao,](#)  
[Hi, 96768](#)



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for 12/17/20**

1 message

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**Jessica Kato** <jessicakato80@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:37 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and the Board of Education,

Although my husband and I are both public school teachers, I am writing to you as a parent of a public school first grader and a preschool student, who will be entering public kindergarten next year.

When I shared the furlough concerns with a friend of mine, who has young children in public schools, initially she expressed concern for our family about the reduction in pay. However, she did not fully understand that it also meant her children would have less days of school. When she realized that, her immediate reaction was to turn to her husband and say, we need to put in applications to private schools, just in case.

I am concerned about the expected teacher exodus and impending shortage, but I am equally concerned about an exodus of students, whose parents have the means to send them to a private setting. The inequity in our school systems will grow deeper, the divide even more wide. I am a proud public school parent and I believe I will keep my children in the system, but it has crossed my mind if that is in their best interest. Will they be forever behind their peers in other settings? With their formative school years being cut short, will I be able to compensate at home?

My family is a family of educators, so my children are lucky; however, not all children will have the benefit of added learning at home and there will be long term effects on our society.

I believe the Board of Education shares my hope for a society in which all children have the opportunity to learn and grow to their fullest potential. Please use your power and influence to help our leaders to think creatively about budgets and ensure that these opportunities are not cut short.

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Jessica Kato  
Kevin Kato  
Public School Parents



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Pamela Mintzer** <pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:39 AM

**I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

I am writing on how I will be affected by the furloughs announced by the HIDOE and Governor Ige. I am an occupational therapist who has been working here in the State of Hawaii on the island of Maui since 2015. Originally coming here as a contractor and taking a payout to move here, I switched over to the DOE OT position 3 years later after feeling "used" as a contractor who was constantly moved around, yet again, taking a payout in hopes of stability and consistency in my new position. I work in a hard to fill position servicing three islands in one complex and at one point having over 12 schools across the three islands, not leaving much time for many of my workload demands to be completed in an 8 hour work day.

Having furlough days fall on teacher work days speaks volumes about how we as HIDOE employees are viewed. What that states is teachers and staff should work for free, unless of course it is expected that we have the children come into school, sit 6 feet apart in silence while we are busy scrambling to prepare lessons for the following days. Expecting related service providers to meet IEP demands in less school days adds more stress to an already stressful position. Expecting those of us who already have unmanageable caseloads to continue to reach deeper and stretch ourselves further is unethical, unfathomable, and incomprehensible.

The past 9 months have been some of the most challenging months for many of us. Working with children with special needs, their families, and their team members requires incredible thought, planning, collaboration, and empathy individualized for each child. I work well past my 8 hour work day planning, prepping, meeting with staff and parents, and collaborating all to provide the best service for the children and families I work with everyday. Many of my children have cried to me, many of the parents of those children have cried to me, and many staff members have cried to me. The emotional toll the past 9 months on our staff, parents, and children's mental health is apparent to those of us that work in the field. Your actions indicate that doesn't seem to matter to the board. I ask, how many of you have seen or heard students cry that they miss their friends, that they miss coming to their safe space of school, that they miss learning? How many of you have witnessed parents of children yell at their kids, console their kids, speak to us as team members out of stress? How many of you have struggled to put food on your table? How many of you have had a hard time paying your bills?

I live alone and support myself. I've had three jobs at one time in order to remain here on Maui, doing what I love. In order to cover student loans, utilities, rent, a car payment, and other bills I have had to sacrifice many other opportunities during my time here, but because I had a consistent paycheck every two weeks, I was able to scrape by and (barely) make enough to live on. However, at this current time, the thought of working another job (which are not easy to come by during the pandemic) leaves me burying my head in my hands- how am I supposed to perform at another job when my tank is empty? How am I going to perform well enough to keep another job and make enough money to cover the pay I will be losing from these furlough days? When will I have the time and energy to work another job when most of my free time is spent doing work related things or trying to further myself in my career path to be a better OT for the kids? How will I travel to see my family, some of which I have not seen in 3 years due to my financial situation?

By suggesting these furloughs, the opinion on the importance of education, the future of our keiki, and how we as staff are valued is stated loud and clear. Those of us that work tirelessly day after day don't feel appreciated for our efforts to help teach and educate the children within the community. It appears as though our children and those of us that help

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

raise them into strong, kind, and educated contributors to society are not valued. Due to these furloughs I, like many others, will be considering other job opportunities where our efforts are valued.

Pam Mintzer, OTR/L  
Canoe Complex Occupational Therapist  
Maui District  
[pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us](mailto:pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us)

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**furloughs :(**

1 message

**Erin Thompson** <etnandi@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To the Hawai'i BOE,

I am a high school science teacher of 27 years in Kona, Hawai'i.

My life has been dedicated to the education of our keiki, and it has been a joy and an honor to work as a public school teacher all these years. Unfortunately there is a darker side to this otherwise fulfilling career: Hawai'i teachers are the lowest compensated teachers in the nation.

Teachers struggle to make ends meet, teachers leave the profession in large numbers, teachers feel unsupported and unappreciated, and teachers are exhausted.

I know our state must take measures to address the current economic crisis, but cutting down the lowest paid teachers in the United States, slashing the time and resources these stalwart educators are able to give to the students of Hawai'i - these measures do not make good sense.

Most of us can barely afford to live here as it is. Please don't drive us out of the jobs, and away from the land and people, we love.

Sincerely,

Erin Thompson

<https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/wallethub-hawaii-teacher-salary-goes-least-furthest-in-u-s/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/03/16/592221378/the-fight-over-teacher-salaries-a-look-at-the-numbers>

<https://kahlerfinancial.com/financial-awakenings/weekly-column/teacher-salaries-adjusted-for-cost-of-living>

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-06-01-graph-where-do-us-teacher-salaries-really-go-the-furthest>



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Ms. O** <teachermichellerose@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha esteemed board members,

I am concerned about the proposed furloughs for teachers. I am probationary teacher, highly qualified in science. I teach 7th grade Life Science. My time as a teacher is spent preparing lessons and assignments, working directly with students during class time and one and one, communicating with parents, counselors, administrators and other teachers on my team to support student needs, reviewing and giving feedback on student work, inputting grades, and researching new teaching practices and tools to increase student engagement and make learning more relevant and aligned with the HA standards and 3 dimensions of NGSS. If we are to undergo furloughs and a 9..2% pay cut, which of these practices that I do as a teacher should be reduced or eliminated?

Also next semester when the proposed cuts to our pay are proposed to begin, we will begin concurrent teaching: teaching students virtually at home while simultaneously teaching students who are physically present in the classroom with us. Of course we will need to monitor and support students during this time as well as uphold expectations and maintain our classroom culture for two separate environments at the same time, Essentially doing double the work. How does it make sense to cut our pay at a time when we are being asked to do even more? This is time that additional resources and support should be available, not fewer.

I am asking you to please reject the proposed furloughs and pay cuts and instead dedicate more support for educators and families.

Mahalo For Your time.

Sincerely,

Michelle O'Byrne



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Fwd: Testimony for upcoming furloughs**

1 message

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**Jamie-Sue West** <jslwest55@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:42 AM

Hello,

I am writing to provide testimony against the upcoming DOE furloughs. Although I am not a DOE employee or a parent, I am close to many who are and am very worried what will happen to our keiki. I am also quite concerned we will lose some of the most amazing teachers and other DOE employees I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. My background and my company based in Hawaii is one that is a research, science and data backed one. When this pandemic began and Gov. Ige suggested a pay cut to teachers, I started doing my own research and data analysis. Did you know that Hawaii teacher salaries are one of the lowest when ranked against the cost of living. Please refer to my attached scatter chart showing what an incredible outlier our state is already and the next slide shows you how much more of an outlier Hawaii would be if there is a pay cut.

I also included the Medicare Reimbursement rate vs. Cost Index because Hawaii is rated the WORST in the country - no wonder we have so few good doctors and other Health Care Workers. I have also included the source date for these scatter charts in an excel workbook along with the websites where the data from which the data was retrieved.

I urge you... Please do not make Hawaii any worse than it already is. Our keiki are our future and their teachers deserve to be able to make a living wage. They aren't making a living wage now, but to then furlough them means many will leave the state and leave us with a shortage! Look at the data... the facts and do the right thing.

Mahalo for your time.

Jamie-Sue West  
Kihei, HI  
Hawaii-Based Business Owner

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**2 attachments** **Hawaii CI vs. TSR Pres.pdf**  
339K **Hawaii Cost & Reimbursement Analysis\_16Dec2020.xlsx**  
18K



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Anne Alves** <alves.anne.a@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:42 AM

To Chair Payne and the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VB: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees. My name is Anne Alves and I am a teacher at Waianae Intermediate School.

I humbly ask that you stand in solidarity with teachers and the thousands of students that these illegal furloughs will negatively affect. History has shown us how furloughs and budget cuts to education create long-lasting damage not only to our schools and to our students. I will not write to you a message dripping with ethos because, to be frank, I do not have the time. I, like many educators are working 80+ hours a week to do the most we can for our students. The challenges presented this year have been tremendous but we keep on persevering because thousands of kids are depending on us to do so. It is they who will suffer the most if we don't keep giving of ourselves. But to be very clear, when teachers are suffering, our students feel it, no matter how hard we try to mask our pain and be strong for them.

What I will point out, though, is that these furloughs are illegal and unnecessary. These furloughs were not negotiated with the union and Governor Ige's decision has been made prematurely. The governor had said that he would only impose furloughs as a last resort. But even members of our state legislature have said there are still possibilities in the works. If the state has no money, it has no money. But, it's too early to make that call when the state is projected to have an estimated \$546 million surplus at the end of the fiscal year. The bottom line is that the state will not go bankrupt without these furloughs, but many educators very well may.

Please stand in solidarity with us.

Respectfully,

Anne Alves

December 15, 2020

Aloha Honorable Board chair Catherine Payne and Hawaii Board of Education members,

My name is Sandy Ramiscal, a teacher at Farrington High School. I am submitting testimony on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

I am at a loss for words that the state expects teachers to accept another blow to our lives. I realize that everyone is taking a hit, but if we are expected to provide an excellent quality education to the youth of Hawai'i, why are you taking away any value and support we need to do this?

It just amazes me that people have this view of what teachers are doing and have been doing since March 13, 2020. Even before this, people didn't respect what we do to help our students. I treat my students as my kids. They will always be my kids and I will care for them always. When you take away anything from teachers, you are just expecting us to do our work as slaves. It hurts my pride and soul when people believe that it is so easy.

For ALL of us, we feel like this is our first year of teaching all over again. No one taught us how to do distance learning when I got my Bachelor's and my Master's. But WE DID IT because we love our jobs. Now the state (the Governor and the Superintendent) wants us to keep doing our job, but with less. My husband and I went through Furlough Fridays and I don't think we ever recovered from that. We now have two teens that we should be saving for so they have some money for college/university, but how can we do that? Other teacher friends have second jobs or small businesses, but how can we do that when everyone else has less money? I know people who are retiring earlier than expected simply because this is coming. I, unfortunately, cannot.

I respectfully request you consider our plight as we move on in this time of struggle. You can only expect excellent quality if you value the people who are doing the hard work.

Sincerely,

Sandy Ramiscal

*Public school graduate 1991 Farrington*

*Public school educator since 1996*

*Parent of two public school students (class of 2024 and 2026)*

*Wife of public school administrator*



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**Davi Kanewa** <wehiona@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:45 AM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

Aloha B.O.E Members,

Mahalo for allowing me to testify today- December 16, 2020.

I usually start most testimonies with questions. Today is no different. My questions are:

1. Are our keiki TRULY our future? Well, assuming most of us come out of our pandemic not just alive but healthy & ready to face whatever else our world has in store for us, then the answer is a resounding YES! Second question:
2. If our keiki are, in fact, truly our future, then what kind of future are we talking about & how do we plan to support our future, our keiki?

The furlough logic presented to me is one of hypocrisy, geared toward a "forced-to-work" (during a pandemic, mind you- leaders tend to gloss over this quite complacently; hoping it "just goes away") mentality & despair. Let me explain...

1. Hypocritical furlough proposal- How do we value our keiki/ education/ future AND take things away from them at the same time? We proclaim & we push for teachers & students to "return to learn" & at the same time we say... "well, yes, we value all these things" and speak it from one side of our mouths, while saying, "and we're going to attain all these goals by taking learning days away from you (even though we're supposed to return to learn- hypocrisy), taking teachers away from you, taking food services away from you (as we continue to battle with homelessness, poverty & family/ mental health issues), taking custodial services away from you (leaving facilities unclean & sanitized during our pandemic); our health nurse positions are slowly but surely disappearing. Can you see the hypocrisy here?

Personally, my 'ohana is quite fortunate & my keiki is thriving in his virtual classes. He was even invited to be a part of a special program this school year because his kumu felt that he has potential to develop further as a student & human being- we all can. Perhaps we need to think about continuing along this train of thought & have keiki who are doing well at home continue learning at home for the academics & perhaps return to campus only for certain subjects, like: PE, Social/ Emotional development, etc.

2. Furlough on our Economy- Our state has relied way too long on a forced-to-work economy of tourism. Our commercial agricultures thrived & came to an end. When it did, our state supported those in this industry to get re-trained, so workers could continue to find jobs. We are a giving state. We are also a state that relies too much, for too long on industries that are unsustainable. We all suffer because we put all our eggs in to one (or too few unsustainable) basket(s). Our state workers, if they're smart, knowing that their pay will be cut, will NOT spend more- on anything! Our already tight budgets, will become even tighter. We will spend less & how is that supposed to help 'stimulate' our economy. Do the math. How are we supposed to spend more when we're being offered less? Hypocrisy rears it hypocritical head once again: We want our citizens to spend more to stimulate & grow our economy, but we're taking away more money. How does that work again? Oh yeah, the tourists will come to spend their \$... during covid. Do our leaders even care to support us, transparently through covid? More hypocrisy... how do we keep ourselves safe when we continue to welcome tourists from all over the world in to our tiny island state? And even if there was no covid, tourism again, is an unsustainable, island crowding, resource killing/ depriving industry. If you take away our state services & pay you are showing our keiki & our communities that they only matter when our leaders say they matter. Right now, our leaders are showing & telling us that a furlough is supposed to help our economy. However, I beg to differ. To me it sounds like hypocrisy, it smells like methane gas, it tastes like hunger & it feels like betrayal.

Specifically, our HSTA has been waging wage wars with our own state government for years. I was a state HSTA rep. during our last strike almost 20 years ago & our leaders were fearless; worked hard & long hours to get our teachers where they are today. In the twinkling of an eye, it is all to be taken away- raises, differential incentives, benefits. You can not buy morale. You can not put a price on potential. But you can make the right decisions to support your keiki & 'ohana by getting rid of unwanted & unnecessary projects that do not support our communities as a whole. The rail, TMT, outdated roundabouts/ highway plans, etc. reassess what we all need in our island: clean air, clean water, healthy resources, sustainable resources that will allow all our keiki to thrive NOW so they have & can be a part of a future that thrives!

Mahalo for listening.

Kumu Kanewa, Hilo Union Preschool  
Special Education Teacher



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**Testimony RE Teacher Furloughs (due by 1:30 pm Dec. 16)**

1 message

**Derek Bishop** <derek.bishop@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:45 AM

Dear Esteemed Hawaii State DOE Board of Education Members,

I am a special education teacher of 31 years and I am against the furloughs.

I understand that we are in unprecedented times. I understand that Hawaii is facing unprecedented financial challenges.

Having said this, I do believe that there will be damaging cascading impacts on our keiki due to the proposed furloughs. For days that students would otherwise be in school, that is missed instruction. For non-instructional days, that is a loss of planning, preparation, and professional development for teachers that will negatively impact quality of instruction for students.

Additionally, there will be a loss of pay for teachers. Hawaii already ranks the lowest in the nation for pay when cost of living is factored in. Many teachers already are living paycheck to paycheck and are barely making it financially. Loss of income will cause a spike in credit card balances, car loan defaults, and housing evictions. Rents and housing prices are going up steeply at this time as wealthy people on the mainland are relocating to Hawaii in search of better circumstances for their families to weather the ravages of COVID-19. This comes as a double whammy for furloughed teachers.

Personally, I have many expenses that I will not be able to meet if I am placed on furlough. Though I love Hawaii, and though I appreciate the quality of life that I have here, I will be forced to consider relocating to California where I can earn \$40,000 more per year with a shorter work year, less complex special education compliance procedures, and a lower cost of living. We all pay a big price financially to be here in Hawaii. Furloughs with a four-year time horizon (as suggested by Governor Ige), could be the straw that breaks the camel's back for many of Hawaii's teachers who have more lucrative mainland options.

Hawaii already has a severe teacher shortage. Cutting pay at this time will not help the DOE's recruiting efforts. Schools will struggle with higher turnover of staff. Students will face higher class sizes and a revolving door of long-term subs and beginning teachers with inadequate training.

I urge the Board of Education to consider the negative impact furloughs will have on students and teachers. I beg the Board of Education to demand that Governor Ige seek funds from the Federal government -- or elsewhere -- to shore up the State's finances during this period of COVID-19 impacts. US billionaire net worth (think Apple, Amazon, Walmart and the like) is said to be up \$1 trillion due to the COVID shutdown, as our economy becomes more centralized due to the loss of 100's of thousands of small businesses. Why can't the owners of these megacorporations share some of their record profits with the people most adversely affected by the policies that have benefitted them? There must be another, less damaging path forward through this than DOE furloughs at this time!

Mahalo,

Derek Bishop  
Special Education Teacher  
Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School, Big Island

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Amy Colmenares** <mrscolmenares7@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:59 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education Members:

I am writing against the imposed furloughs that the State has put forth, and am highly disgusted at the sheer disrespect these imposed pay cuts shows to teachers.

I have been teaching at Highlands Intermediate School in Pearl City for 21 years. In my first year I experienced the strike and in subsequent years I have experienced numerous acts of disrespect to the teaching profession via furloughs, pay cuts, and pay freezes. In a year when I am working harder than ever to maintain some normalcy and rigor in education for my students, it's beyond hurtful to be hit with these furloughs. My husband is also a DOE teacher and we have two children in the DOE system. To say that these cuts will adversely affect our family is an understatement.

The way in which we have received information regarding the furloughs is another slap in the face. Our administrators are just as blindsided as we are, and our union hasn't even been informed by the employer to discuss the dates and the ways in which the furloughs are being imposed.

Please support our children and education by finding and supporting other ways of balancing the state's budget. It's been far too long that teachers have been carrying this burden for the state.

Sincerely,  
Amy Colmenares



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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Lillian Shaw** <lilshaw168@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15,

I am a special educator at Kawanankoa Middle School. I am a highly qualified Sped as well as Math teacher. Due to the recent school closure, I have to impact meetings during my prep besides my regular annual IEPs and re-evaluations. I lost my prep period for these meetings and have to work over time on my lessons. I was told to complete all meetings before the end of this quarter.

I am stressed out and it impacted my mental health. Recently, I had symptoms of depression such as crying for no reasons and felt fatigue and lack of energy. I had scheduled appointments with a therapist and Psychologist to get professional help.

Today, I just got the furlough dates from the DOE. I put them in my calendar and feel sorry for myself and my colleagues who have to suffer financial hardship. I remember from Linda Lingo's era, there were two teachers who were a married couple, had to work as a waiter and waitress to meet their monthly mortgage payment. Similar situation will happen when the furlough takes place in January 2021-June 2021 which is illegal and against our existing contract. We need help we can to secure our teachers' income and not be impacted due to COVID, state loss of income.

We also need to recognize the stress level teachers have to face during this non-precedent virtual learning format. We had only several days to prepare ourselves before the school started this year. It was not fair for either teachers or students. Teachers' well being needs to be addressed and taken care of.

Lillian Shaw  
Kawanankoa Middle School  
Tel: (808) 294-0008  
Fax: (866) 875-7394



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Lindsay Sugihara Yuh** <lmsugihara@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:57 AM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB:Presentations on Question regarding Department of Education Furloughs

I strongly feel that the furloughs will have an extremely negative impact on both students and teachers. I am both a teacher and a mother and am so disheartened by the decision to impose furloughs. I have been working 20% harder this year as a 100% online teacher in order to make sure all my students' needs (academically, socially, emotionally, and health wise) are being met, so to be told that I will now be paid 9.2% less is a slap in face! This is very disappointing and for the first time ever, I ashamed to be a part of the DOE.

-Lindsay Yuh  
Parent and 3rd Grade Online teacher

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

j l &lt;jlhilo3@yahoo.com&gt;

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:47 AM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

Please protect public education funding. I ask you to support us in preventing the destructive furloughs.

I am a 32 year veteran teacher. I have dedicated my life to education. My family has been through furloughs and strikes before. Like many other educators, we have never recovered from them.

I am single mother of 3. I have the cost of college tuition, books, supplies, and student loans for my 2 daughters. My son is a senior in high school. He's already been stripped of his final year in high school and the celebration of his hard work and dedication because his parents made education TOP priority. I am already struggling to pay my bills. The BILLS! Which one do I eliminate? Electricity, water, propane for the heater and stove, gas, the much needed internet for education and work, car insurance, food, mortgage, cost of household, health, and living needs? Which one do I cut out? The rates are increasing! I could cut the internet, but what happens to my work at home? My daughter's college classes? The hotspots don't work well enough. I cancelled the the cable service months ago. I could eliminate the propane, we've done it before washing our clothes while we bathed in cold water and cooking on an outside fire instead. How about the struggle to pay for medical bills? I have thousands of dollars of medical bills to pay. I've already taken a loan on my retirement. Already decreased additional contributions to my retirement. Should I get one more job? I was up to 3 jobs, now down to 2 all while still teaching! How can I take on another job when I also take care of my elderly parents and family members with existing health problems, including myself? I have a 20 year old car that we share. One of my daughters went to the military, so we share that car too. I have an old house in need of repairs, but you make do with what you have. I do my own plumbing, carpentry, etc. Why? I am already struggling. Furloughs will be devastating and will affect our ability to survive financially. I will have to sell my home.

I had plans to continue teaching for another 6-8 years. I love teaching. I love my students. I am now considering many options.

I am considering retiring as soon as possible. I am not of age to retire yet. Retiring would be as early as the first quarter of next year. It is always a negative impact on students when an educator leaves during the school year. I am tormented with how that affects our students, but with furloughs, my family won't survive.

I am considering moving away from Hawaii with my children and parents. Being an NBCT does have it's benefits. I was born and raised in Hawaii with its high cost of living, the financial struggle is real and with furloughs, I can't make it staying in Hawaii.

I'm already looking for more jobs and selling things.

I personally know of 5 educators leaving the profession or retiring before they intended during the winter break. Several are moving to the mainland. These are absolutely wonderful, talented, dedicated educators. It is sad to see valuable experts in their field of education leaving. The loss will greatly affect our students.

Most of family members are employees of the State. We will all be affected by furloughs. I have family members who have lost their jobs and are already struggling due to the pandemic. A family

member has put off heart surgery because he feels his students' education are more important, he can't afford his portion of the medical bills or take leave, especially with furloughs coming up! Yet, he purchases thousands of dollars of art supplies for his students every year. We have cut down visits to the doctor due to the expenses of our co-pay. The furloughs will be devastating.

My principal has already informed us of positions being eliminated due to budget cuts. Cuts in teacher positions, EA's, tutors, supplies, operational costs will be devastating to our students' educational needs. Students are already behind due to the pandemic, virtual learning, synchronous teaching, negative impacts to their social emotional well-being. The imposed furloughs that Governor Ige plans to begin in January will have a prolonged, devastating impact on our teacher workforce, on our keiki, and our community.

Sincerely,  
Jacqueline Kubo Luna



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furlough Testimony

1 message

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**Kawai** <kawaimar@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:56 AM

We all understand that the pandemic has taken a toll on us all, however I am extremely disappointed in the decision to furlough the teachers.

I have 4 children in public school including 1 with special needs. All children are receiving an sub-standard education this year due to COVID, and these furloughs are going to further sub-standardize the education they are receiving.

With respect to my child with special needs, this will further disrupt his routine, cause an interruption in the services he is currently receiving (which by the way, is less frequent than it should be), and ultimately violates our rights under IDEA.

Teachers already work for crap pay and they give so much. Forcefully taking more of their already lacking paycheck is just insulting.

I ask that you reconsider and find somewhere else to meet your budget.

Respectfully,  
Gabrielle Mar  
Parent of 4 students, Waikiki Elementary



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Rayna Nitta** <rayna.nitta@wilsonschoolhawaii.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:56 AM

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education,

Thank you for your service and continued commitment to our keiki, our future. I am a second grade teacher at my alma mater, Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School in Honolulu. I write to you today in regard to discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

For myself, my colleagues, and my students, the past semester has been full of new learning. Teachers have figured out how to teach virtually, build relationships with students, and meet their learning needs from a distance. In order to do so to the best of my ability, I come to school at 7:00 AM, leave between 5-6 PM, and continue working at home for two to three more hours each night. On the weekends, I plan lessons, grade, continue to provide feedback to students, and catch up with other tasks that I didn't have the energy to do during the week. With the announcement of furlough days by Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto, my first thoughts were *I'm not going to make it and this is so not worth it*. Of course, those thoughts don't change the dedication that I have to my students, however I know I am not alone in feeling slighted. Morale is low; I have heard sentiments like *I want to quit, I can't handle this, and this is not what I signed up for* from more than one colleague.

These furloughs are not only heartbreaking from an emotional standpoint, they are bank-breaking. As it stands, my mortgage alone drains a full paycheck and dips into the next. My husband was recently accepted into graduate school, so we will soon be in further debt and have less income as he completes his coursework. Starting a family has been in the plans, but how can we adequately provide for a child when we are struggling financially to provide for ourselves?

Last week, my principal informed our faculty of deep budget cuts that will most likely impact staff positions. We were asked to brainstorm solutions and predict the potential impacts to our students and the staff who remain. Imagine the feeling of having to provide input as to which of our colleagues are most expendable. Amidst a pandemic that has impacted students' learning and socio-emotional well-being to the incredible degree that it has, no more should be taken away. In fact, this is a time when our operating budget needs to increase so that we have the resources to mitigate the negative impacts of the past nine months.

When I moved back home after living on the mainland for ten years, I chose to be a public school teacher. I knew it was going to be a lot of work for a lot less money. However, everyone has a breaking point and mine is just around the corner. For the sake of the students and in wanting to make a difference in my community, I've given so much of myself to this profession. The governor and superintendent may need to cut the budget, but it doesn't have to be in the form of furloughs. Implementing any amount of furlough days takes away from students and teachers, and doing so will only prolong and exacerbate the negative impacts that this pandemic has caused. Additionally, finding experienced, qualified teachers to replace the ones who will be leaving the profession due to these turn of events will be difficult, especially with the teacher shortage we are already facing. Thank you for hearing the cries of the teachers, families, and keiki of Hawai'i.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Sincerely,

Rayna J.S. Nitta

Second Grade Teacher

Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**RE: DOE furloughs and related school issues due to DOE Budget cuts**

1 message

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**Angie Hashimoto** <ahash94@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:57 AM

Aloha,

I would like to speak on behalf of the 3,000 plus Educational Assistant employees- statewide in the DOE Special Education department.

- \* Educational Assistants work supervised by a teacher and reviewed by administration.
- \* Most Educational Assistants put in timeless hours of support to assist and help their students' educational success.
- \* Presently, there are many Educational Assistants working in HUBs to support our students; some with certificated teachers, and some unbelievably on their own!
- \* Educational Assistants are directed to complete many tasks at their schools without training or oversight.
- \* Some are beyond their contracted duties, and beyond even what a teacher might do themselves!
- \* It is the DOE's responsibility to realize these issues and make sure that the right employee is tasked and doing the job to properly support our students.
- \* Educational Assistants need training as much as teachers, if in fact, more for their specific job needs and this changing educational workplace.
- \* Understanding the role of an Educational Assistant needs to be addressed by the DOE/BOE to better service our students with educational needs.
- \* Employees are being told there is a hiring freeze for Educational Assistant positions; how is this occurring as student support should be the DOE's main focus, which is also an Educational Assistant's, main task/job duty(ies).
- \* As other staff have time to complete paperwork and other; Educational Assistants are tasked with more duties and find it difficult to complete their work tasks within their assigned workday.
- \* Communication to Educational Assistants' in regards to COVID19 and the health and safety issues on campus' must be given equal time at school wide meetings versus receiving a memo after issues are decided without Educational Assistants' comments.

Angie Hashimoto, King Intermediate EA III



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**J W** <jawiehl@msn.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:58 AM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

To whom it may concern,

I have still never recovered from the last Linge fiasco of furlough Fridays (so now you make-call- them Mondays) and my family has suffered greatly because of this.

Not once have we ever received back the 9 +% that was stolen from us while those making 6 figures incomes have flourished during these years.

Every time we ask for fair wages, we get very little. Every time we ask for better benefits, we get less than our fair share.

A 9% cut is more impacting those of us at the low end of the scale than those at the top end. You could be considering fixing this problem not creating a worse problem for you public employees.

For those making 6 figures, cut their pay by 18% and then we can start to talk about what is fair for all in this pandemic.

You are just making things worse for every one

I can't even qualify for food stamps or free medical, or any such thing. Yet you want us to be out there in the COVID 19 public and you won't get the means to keep us all safe? What gives other than our own blood, sweat and tears?

This is so unfair for those of us who only clear \$29,000. a year. You are leaving all of us at poverty levels and you don't see the trickle down of this problem.

Nothing that we all pay for has been frozen at last year's levels, my fees increase, banks still charge interest at their usual pace, nothing has stopped except you want us to give up our low wages even further. UNFAIR!

Thank you for at least reading this.

Ms. Janine Wiehl  
HGEA Unit 3 @SR08



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**Mahina Anguay** <mahina.anguay@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:58 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Mahina Anguay &lt;mahina.anguay@k12.hi.us&gt;, Paul Zina &lt;Paul.Zina@k12.hi.us&gt;

Aloha Chair Payne and Board members,

I'm testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB: Presentation on questions regarding DOE furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services

I am writing to share my concerns about the upcoming furloughs and the impact I believe it will have on my school, my students, my teachers, and my community.

I purposely waited until the absolute last day to complete my financial plan meeting with our district people because I knew that I was going to have to cut positions and the thought of telling people that I was going to have to eliminate their job just before the holidays was something I just couldn't bear to do. These are people who have given their entire career to Waimea High School, who have volunteered their personal time on weekends and evenings to chaperone events, travel with students to outer island competitions, and dug into their own pockets to cover costs for graduation cap and gowns or prom. Now my task is to figure out how we can still support students, minus these key people?

Furloughs in 2009 with its 5% cut hit all of us hard; the upcoming proposed 9% cuts will be devastating. As a department, we will lose teachers, support personnel, and administrators who will either take early retirement or just leave the profession entirely. At my school, I have ten staff members who may leave the HDOE because while we/they all understand the dire straits the state finds itself in, furloughs are like a slap in the face to those who have completely redesigned how we deliver instruction in the face of a pandemic. My staff has undergone intensive, continuous professional development since April to learn how to teach, assess, and engage students virtually. I am very worried about the possibility of having to replace up to 10 staff members while we are in a budget crisis.

I'm also concerned about how the proposed furlough dates will affect my 12-month classified staff as there will be two pay periods when they will have to furlough multiple days within a pay period. If we have to go down this road, I believe there has to be a better way to even out the economic hardship this will have on those who are the backbone of our organization.

I love my job and have found my true purpose in serving my community. My fervent hope is that the state finds other ways to bridge the budget shortfalls that do not include our schools or children.

Aloha,

Mahina Anguay  
Principal, Waimea High School

Mahina Anguay  
Principal, Waimea High School  
PO Box 339  
Waimea, HI . 96796  
808-338-6800

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Jennifer Grant** <jenniferg@farringtonhighschool.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:00 PM

To Honorable Catherine Payne, Chairperson, Board of Education,

I am testifying on discussion items, [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

My husband and I are both teachers here on Oahu. I am so worried about the furloughs. On a personal level, this will affect our family's budget without a doubt. I already have a second job to help with the bills but this contracted job will most likely end in June. Then what?

I know several teachers that are retiring based on the furloughs. I also know some fellow teachers that are already dealing with a lost job in the family and now this just adds to the burden.

I think it is so disgraceful that teachers for months were denied telework because we were being called "essential workers". All of a sudden when it comes to the budget, we are now expendable. This is a huge mistake.

The first furlough day is on a teacher workday. This is really a low thing to do to teachers. Many of our schools are returning face 2 face next semester and REALLY needed that planning day. The DOE knew that this would not make the parents mad so they took away a planning day. Despicable. The department knows that teachers will probably plan anyway.

I have always been the kind of teacher that answers emails at all hours (if I am awake), I grade on weekends, I contact students outside of my contactual hours. If furloughs go into effect, I will be sure to not work on those days which means students will not get my responses, planning will not occur, nor will grading. Who ends up getting hurt by this? The students.

We are so undervalued and under appreciated.No other profession is treated like this. If a first responder goes to a call, they get paid.

Please stop putting all of the states budget woes on teachers. We are trying our best to educate and be there for the students during this crazy time. Adding furloughs is just another slap in the face.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Grant



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for BOE Item 5B for 12.17.2020**

1 message

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**Caroline Freudig** <caroline.freudig@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:00 PM

Aloha Chair Payne & Board of Education Members,

I am submitting testimony regarding item 5B for the December 17th, 2020 Board of Education meeting.

As you may be aware, furlough dates were emailed to teachers on the evening of December 14th. These dates were decided by DOE leadership and did not include any discussion or any input from HSTA. I feel this is an example of poor leadership on the part of Superintendent Kishimoto. To expect teachers to be on furlough on the one day in between semesters (January 4th) or on the last teacher day of the school year for 10-month teachers (June 1st) is absolutely unfair to our students.

Teachers use January 4th to prepare, plan and get ready for the second semester as well as work on the Q2 grades & report cards. When are teachers expected to do this if that day is a furlough? How will they be ready for students January 5th without that day to get ready? This is an injustice to our students as well as to the teachers.

I was asked by KITV to give my thoughts on the furloughs and you might have seen portions of what I said on the news 12/15th or 16th. The gist of it is that teachers work way more than a 7-hour work day M-F on a regular basis and by taking this teacher day away it's implying that teachers will do 'what's right' anyway and 'work'.

Time and time again, teachers are being asked to do more with less and this is no exception. In the end, the teachers are exhausted and cannot give their students 100% so it's the students losing out on the best possible education because of the decisions that our DOE leadership is making.

Thank you for your time.

Caroline Freudig  
Kalāheo Elementary School, 1st Grade  
Room U-304  
Work: (808) 332-6801  
Cell: (808) 651-3357

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## Testimony regarding DOE furlough concerns

1 message

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**Crystal Motomura** <crystal.motomura@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:01 PM

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

The imposed furloughs that Gov. Ige plans to begin in January will have a prolonged, devastating impact on our teacher workforce and on our keiki.

The governor claims he has no choice but to implement furloughs. This is not true. He has options other than furloughs as HSTA President **Corey Rosenlee** has already sent in.

My concern is not only for the students who are already having a difficult time at home because their families wish them to be safe at home instead of on campus but also for our Big Island community.

We have already seen testimony from the **University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization study** last spring indicating "that multipliers can be even larger in periods of extreme slack, such as the downturn we are now entering. The results may very well understate the benefit of borrowing now to keep state and county spending in place.

Teachers are already feeling the pressure to take leave or retire if possible as the pandemic and the response of current covid planning in education is less than stellar. All of these things are coupled with the ongoing problem of offering wages to entice future teachers to select education as a profession.

Education must be made a priority as each time we make it the first place to target when considering budget cuts we are not, "Improving public education" as Governor Ige has said. Hawaii's children deserve quality public education and it should remain our moral and civic duty to give our keiki that opportunity by looking for ways to preserve education funding instead of cutting budgets that will harm students and the community for years to come.

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Mahalo,  
Crystal Motomura  
Keaau Elementary School

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## Testimony for Furlough

1 message

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**Kaylie Breaux** <kaylie.breaux@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:03 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My husband and I are both teachers for the DOE; he is a middle school math teacher and I am a middle school special educator. We have made permanent decisions based off of the salary that was contractually promised to us. We bought a house, a vehicle, and have made other commitments such as life insurance plans, etc., that cannot be reversed without serious penalty. If this furlough goes through, we will have no other choice than to leave the profession and obtain employment with a salary that is honored per its legal contract which can support our family of 4 considering the cost of living in this state.

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough Testimony-NO PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1 message

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**Linsi Osland** <linsi.osland@k12.hi.us>  
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:09 PM

Aloha,

My name is Linsi Osland and I am a second year special education teacher at Kealakehe Elementary School. The purpose of this email is to address the direct impact teacher furloughs will have on myself, our school, and our community.

It has been extremely disappointing seeing education funding being viewed as the first resort to get us out of our current financial crisis. I received my undergraduate degree in a state that is nationally ranked for their support for public education, and I took a significant pay cut in order to teach in Hawaii. I love my job and my students, but I will not be able to survive on Hawaii island if our salary continues to decrease. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, special education teachers were finally feeling support and recognition with the differentials going into effect. Knowing that these could be taken away in addition to getting furloughed will force me to explore other career paths in order to afford to live here.

If I am having to work additional jobs in order to survive and continue to teach in Hawaii, this means that I will be taking jobs away from those in equal need in our community. It is also noteworthy to mention the extreme social-emotional distress COVID-19 has placed on our students due to the lack of stability and uncertainty at home. School is a "safe space" for many of our students, and continuing to decrease pay for teachers and remove school days not only hurts us, but directly hurts our students as well. With distance learning currently taking place, many community members have argued that our keiki need to go back to school in order to send parents back to work. How will furloughing teachers and eliminating school days alleviate this issue?

Ultimately, supporting our keiki and community needs to start with supporting education.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

--

Linsi Osland  
3rd Grade Special Education Teacher  
Kealakehe Elementary School

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**PLEASE**

1 message

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**Pamela Hurley** <hurleygirlie66@icloud.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Aloha,

Regarding furloughs:

I am a single mother. My senior is planning to attend college. I have never worked harder, had to be more flexible, or learned more, than teaching this school year. Take the money from elsewhere. Teachers are struggling financially as it is. I implore you. Our students are having a hard enough time learning virtually, less instructional days is the last thing they need.

This pandemic has caused enormous stress. Do not add to that with a new financial burden.

Sincerely,

Pamela Hurley

7th grade ELA

Kealakehe Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony on Furlough days

1 message

**Amber Riel** <a.riel@seariders.k12.hi.us>  
 To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

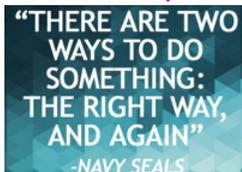
Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Good afternoon members of the Hawaii State BOE,

"Building the plane while we're flying it" has been the mantra echoed by my administrators since the beginning of this pandemic as a way to smooth over the frayed nerves and snuff out any inkling of discontent of teachers at my school, Waianae High School, as we have faced down one change after another and a severe lack of clarity and proactive planning. Teachers, by nature, are planners. Even in my first years of teaching about 15 years ago, I had the entire semester planned out before the students set foot in the classroom. We have transitioned from face-to-face learning to fully remote in March to hybrid at the beginning of this year to now hybrid with most students at home, which forces us to teach students online and in person concurrently. Every time the plan changed mid-flight, we regrouped, rallied, and rearranged our curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments. Every one of those changes and adjustments took time to create so that we could welcome our students into our physical and virtual classrooms the next day and ensure them that even though the outside world is chaotic right now, school is still a stable environment for them with adults who truly care about them, as well as their education.

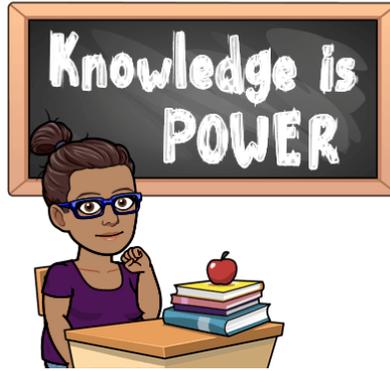
We all understand our state's economy is hurting just as we all are from this pandemic. We can see it as we drive around the island and see boarded up businesses who ran out of parts to build their planes while they flew. Money is tight. Money for teachers has always been tight. While I do not at all agree with the furloughs as an economic savior, I am more concerned right now with the fact that during the last week of this semester it was determined that our first furlough day would be our day between the semesters. This is a teacher work day that we have fought hard to have included in our contract. In a high school on a block schedule, like Waianae High School, that means creating curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments for a brand new course, for some up to 3 brand new courses. We needed 9 days to prepare for virtual learning at the beginning of this semester and we were still largely "building that plane as we flew it". Now, as we head into the spring semester, we don't even get the one day our contract allows. This final week of the semester is usually used to administer final exams and work with students to revise their work from the semester, before taking a much deserved winter break and returning fresh on the day between semesters to finalize grades and prepare for the new semester. With the recent announcement that we are being furloughed on that teacher work day, my colleagues and I will either be frantically trying to administer finals, help students revise work, finalize grades, and plan for all of the courses we will need Google Classrooms set up for in the spring this week or will end up surrendering a large portion of our winter break with our families to get these tasks done. Many of my colleagues will end up opting for working for free on that furlough day just to get the work done we know needs to happen. Without that day between the semester, we will all undoubtedly be back in that same plane frantically trying to put that plane together starting January 5, 2021 during every spare second while trying to also teach our students via Google Meets. While I'd rather not have any furlough days because we have already bent over backwards and put our lives on the line, both literally and financially, several times in support of our students, I especially am against giving up the day between semesters that we use to prepare for our students.

Without wax,



**Amber Riel**  
 Algebra 1 & 2 Teacher  
 Waianae High School  
 (812) 266-0451  
 a.riel@seariders.k12.hi.us

*Mathematics may not teach us how to add love or minus hate, but it gives us every reason to hope that every problem has a solution.*



Board of Education GBM December 17, 2020

Written Testimony submitted by Susan A. Pcola-Davis

**OPPOSE: V B** Presentation on questions regarding the DOE furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

As if the situation wasn't bad enough, let's cut salaries, let's furlough teachers, can't fix the unemployment system to improve the economy, that's a lost cause. So, yes, locals have to spend wisely. This is the domino effect of relying on tourism and education is ALWAYS at the bottom.

Hawaii is notorious for making hasty decisions with band aid solutions. The Department of Education budget cuts and furlough days are just two examples of how the state puts education first.

It is imperative that the Board understand that delaying these decisions made in haste, the effects of Ebenezer Scrooge economics (google it, and the Board's obligation to our state's Education system is negatively affecting the students, teachers, and families of Hawaii. The teachers should not have to testify to draw you the dismal picture. You are intelligent, you already know. Don't plead with teachers to testify to the effects of these actions because you need to HEAR them. They have been pleading with you for over 6 months. The Department still does it her way, regardless of what is heard at this meeting. A red flag should have gone up when the Board did not have a chance to provide input or comment on the submitted budget because it was ALREADY ON THE GOVERNOR'S DESK!

The Board must take a stance, alongside of HSTA, regardless of your appointment to the Board by the Governor. If not, the Board is part of the problem, "another brick in the wall."

It is a disgrace to the teaching profession that our Governor takes this position that education gets lumped in with other government entities to salvage our economy. Yet, he designates teachers as essential employees, forcing them to work and then ask for lowering their pay and furloughs. Other essential employees are protected BUT NOT OUR TEACHERS.

From the last meeting, the Board MUST, required by law, approve an Education budget, with zero input. The reluctant voting of "aye" from Board members is unacceptable. If the Board is required to approve the budget, then those members that did not want to, should have been able to vote their conscience.

The Board of Education has become a platform for discussions and testimonies that lead down the rabbit hole.

No amount of testimonies, written or oral, will have the action taken that is necessary to stand our ground in the face of this travesty.

Nothing should be stopping the Board for requesting a formal meeting with the Governor, yourselves, and AT LEAST plead your case. If you truly support the Department, then show it!

The community is losing faith in the Board of Education, please step up to the plate.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**(no subject)**

1 message

**Genevieve Gandy** <gengandy@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:12 PM

My name is Genevieve Gandy, I have been a Special Education teacher for 11 years. I taught my first year on Oahu before moving to the mainland for the past ten years, where I continued to teach Special Education before moving back to Hawaii to be closer to family. I am a single mom and I am barely managing. I am very concerned about the furloughs because many educators already live paycheck to paycheck. I absolutely love my job and the students I work with. I can't imagine doing anything else. Luckily I have a loving family that helps me take care of my son while I go to work.

&gt;

I am also concerned about my health and safety as my school had a positive case this month, yet as "essential workers" we are required to come into work. I am especially worried about bringing something home to my parents; both in their mid seventies, or to my son, I continue to come to work each day because I want to be there for my students. I am not aware of any other jobs cutting pay for "essential workers".

&gt;

Teachers and their families have been put at risk each day. We have been asked to completely alter our jobs to fit the restrictions of the pandemic. We have become technology experts, counselors, nurses, CDC guidelines experts and classroom cleaners. Most of these additional duties or tasks have been accomplished with no additional training or funding. We've taken these costs out of our own pockets in order to continue serving our students and communities. We have not asked for anything in return because we are here for our students and their families. However, we are now being targeted for furloughs that will hurt teachers, students and families during an already difficult time. Society getting back to normal rests heavily on teachers and schools. In order for families to go back to work, they need schools to function normally, yet furloughs will negatively impact that process.

Please consider serious efforts to find a more effective solution with less impact to teachers, students and families in our state. I strongly believe that further discussion and consideration of less impactful options should be vigorously pursued at this point. Certainly a "blanket" one size fits all furlough program for State employees is not the final answer nor the best answer. A more specific and targeted approach to solve the State's budget problems should be undertaken. Some possible areas to consider could be; a temporary salary cut back for any State employee with a six figure or higher per year income, not a "pay cut" disguised as a furlough program for Classroom teachers. Another avenue is a strenuous scrub of all State funded positions to identify and/or eliminate any funded but not filled positions. Eliminate outmoded or unused programs such as outdated computer programs, under served outreach programs. To lower maintenance and support costs, a system wide review to identify unused or excess equipment/supplies. Two specific examples might be unused musical instruments locked in closets at schools which no longer have a music program or art supplies that could be moved from schools which no longer have an art program to one that does. These could then be redistributed to other schools/districts. Also, maintenance, lunch room, or other physical support equipment could be moved from schools with dropping enrollment to schools with more students. These actions would all save money and not require using new funds or appropriations to purchase new supplies or equipment.

None of the above suggestions will solve all the DOE funding challenges nor the State's at large. However, given that we've yet to see our elected politicians at the local, county, or State Legislature members vote to take a total across the board pay cut, it is a bit frustrating to see that furloughing "essential worker" Classroom teachers is a first choice for saving the budget. Having these elected leaders set the example up front would certainly make accepting a furlough pay cut more believable if not acceptable.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Helena Costa** <keanuenue@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:16 PM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear Chair Payne and BOE,

I am writing in response to the proposed furloughs.

The issues here are manifold. However, educators- particularly locally-grown educators- do not have a nest egg. We are not well-paid, despite many of us holding multiple degrees, having many years of service, and continuously completing professional development to become more competent in our field. 9.6% of a significantly smaller salary than other state workers puts many of us straight into the alarming situation of not having enough money to cover bills, but still making too much to qualify for assistance. When we were asked to pivot and create a totally new form of instructional delivery, it did not come with many of the necessary programs- we have already spent a lot of money out of our own pockets trying to meet the educational needs of our students. It is already a financial struggle for me to meet the needs of my own family and my class.

The time, care and money we have poured into making this year work as best as we can is enormous. The vitriol that comes back at us from the public is disheartening to say the least. But we did not create this pandemic, and we are doing our best to keep the keiki and ourselves safe and educated.

The salt in the wound is taking the furlough days from our teacher prep days. One day is never enough to reflect, plan, complete grades, clean things up and get the room ready for another semester in a good year. This year, the work takes so much more time- creating digital content, delivering it through live instruction, responding to student work takes hours- far, far beyond our contracted hours, but many of us are doing it. Those days, to open a semester, to close the school for the year, are precious. We do a lot of work on our own time, and taking away the little time we are given is a slap in the face. Especially because we know that those duties will still be expected to be performed- so it is a pay cut. The workload is not lessened, you are just taking away the paid time to do it. Unlike other professions, because we care for children, we cannot just "make time"- most of our hours are completely dedicated to working with the children. The only way to complete those duties is to do it on our own time, which is already filled with all the other educational duties that we are expected to complete within an unreasonably short period of time.

Additionally, we are also being asked to prepare to switch models again. How are we expected to continuously shift and develop good content, which benefits the kids, with no time to do it?

If you are going to furlough us, at least treat us with the dignity the rest of the furloughed workers will receive, which is an adjustment in work in exchange for a pay cut, and protect the already insufficient preparation days we have. Take the days throughout the 6 months. Treat our students with respect by giving us enough time to prepare things for them properly. Or don't take them at all, and look for other means.

Mahalo for your time,  
Helena Costa



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony - Special Education Perspective

1 message

**Derek Govin** <derek.govin@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:16 PM

12/16/20

Dear Board Members,

My name is Derek Govin. I am a Special Education Teacher at Roosevelt High School (RHS) for our Community-Based Instruction Program. This program supports students with moderate to severe disabilities who are working towards a certificate of completion as opposed to a diploma. These students focus on functional academics, communication, problem solving skills, self-advocacy, and transition to post high school. Everything I say in this testimony are my own words, and not to be representative of Roosevelt High School or any of the other teachers of RHS faculty.

I write testimony today to oppose discussion item 5B:

[B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees](#)

I have been a Special Education Teacher in the HODOE for what will complete my fourth year at the close of the 20-21 school year. To say that this year has been difficult is an understatement. Upon working closely with 20 other Special Education Teachers for the past two months, it is quite evident that my story is one that resonates with MANY Special Education Teachers this year.

For the sake of being concise and transparent, I will share my responsibilities below in bullet form:

1. I am a teacher. My job is to teach. How?

- Virtual students - Design programs aligned to IEPs that can be delivered online. Not just teach these, but teach adult staff how to deliver instruction because I cannot be in not two, but THREE spaces at once. The other two spaces?
- Classroom #1 - Three students here, Monday through Friday, 8am-2pm.
- Classroom #2 - Two students here, Monday through Friday, 8am-2pm.

\* I would love to talk with anyone willing to listen why these classes are separated, as well as how much time I actually get with each student to teach them. All students with disabilities deserve a licensed, highly qualified special education teacher for their entire school day. This should go without saying. Look above and ask yourself how I could be expected to do this? Is this worth the \$10,000 differential?

Let's continue on with my responsibilities.

2. I am a special education teacher. My job is also to complete paperwork regarding compliance.

- IEPs - I have a caseload of 12 students. This is on the lower side. Absolutely. However, that being said, I have had nearly one revision per month for just one student. Entire team needs to be present, data review, preparation, graphing, then proposing revisions to the team at the formal meeting.

- Re-evaluations - This year, any student with a 1:1 instructional support that was contracted and we wanted to continue that service, those students needed to have a functional behavior assessment to consider the need. Great timing, considering nearly all of my students have a 1:1 instructional support due to their individualized needs.
- Contingency Plans - In case my classroom or the entire school closes down, have each student's contingency plan created, reviewed with the team, and have a meeting to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- Distance Learning Plans - For any student in the community based instruction program, it was evident that the Acellus program was not going to appropriately instruct students with severe disabilities. That being said, develop a distance learning plan for any student who signed up for distance learning for the 20-21 school year AND develop that curriculum to be delivered online. Hold a meeting, present to parents to ensure everyone is on the same page.
  - Be sure and complete another contingency plan from this to then say "what if the distance learning plan isn't working...how will we move forward?"
- COVID Impact Plans - Complete the Covid Impact Determination Sheet by each student's IEP objective and using data from Quarter 3, Quarter 4, and current progress, determine with the IEP team if any skills were lost, to what extent, and how we plan to get the student back up to where we left off in March 2020.
  - Oh, and after we pushed you to finish this by the end of Quarter 1, know that there is no place for you to upload this document in our official system of ECSSS. Wait, are you kidding me?
- Quarterly Progress Reports - Each student with an IEP gets a quarterly progress report on each IEP objective. Analyzing data, collaborating with service providers, all of this must occur before writing a data driven report to give to parents with updates on their children's educational program. The easy thing to do is simply push "progressing" on each student's objective and move on, but I'm not the special education teacher to "check boxes." **My students and their families deserve better than that.**

Can you imagine how many hours of planning, how many school team meetings, how many IEP team meetings, **HOW MUCH TIME** is given to try and figure out how to support our students with disabilities during a time when all we want to do is TEACH. To be clear, I can't just teach. As seen above, I have three separate spaces to keep track of. There is not one person who could do the job I was assigned to. It's not humanly possible, and it is unfair to the teacher, it is unfair to the assistants in the classroom who are being asked to do more than they are paid to do, and most importantly, it is unfair to the students who are missing out on the services that cannot be legally fulfilled.

This brings me back to the point. Why do I share this with you? Understand me when I say that I am in this profession because it is my spiritual calling. Having family members with severe special needs, I advocate for each and every child of mine because I remember when my family had to push for their students to have the services they deserved. Had I not had that connection as a part of my story, this profession would simply be a part of my history. That's sad, because **the HIDOE is going to (and already has) lose highly qualified special education teachers as a result of asking them to do the impossible.**

In looking at the "furlough" dates given, it is clear that the focus was on instructional days not being taken away. However, from a special education teacher lens, consider my responsibilities I have shared with you above. When do you think I have the time to do these things? When considering the days to be taken off of our calendar, do you think that my responsibilities for those days also disappear? They absolutely do not! What will happen is we will be asked to do these at home on our own time (which has been told to me personally), or to do them during instructional time and have someone else "supervise" my students

(triggering word, my students deserve to be taught, not supervised like this is a daycare). Nonetheless, still get it done. Tell me, does that sound like a furlough to you, or a **pay cut** since responsibilities will still be expected to be completed?

If my performance this year is not adequate, it is because I have prioritized myself after drowning myself in my first three months of being a special education teacher for the 20-21 school year. **The demands that have been placed upon me, as well as every other special education teacher I have worked closely with over the past two months, are unrealistic, inconsistent, unfair, and unacceptable.** To then tell us to take a pay cut because everyone will be doing will be causing students with disabilities to again lose out on having a highly qualified special education teacher. Are we working for the system to improve, listening to our special education teachers, or are we “checking boxes”, asking the grassroots individuals to do more and more, take their money, then expect them to do the work for **free**? Oh, and let's hope retention rates don't drop.

BOE, ask yourselves if you are considering special education differently here, because it is time that the special education perspective is considered as opposed to lumping it with general education, yet again.

Respectfully,

Derek Govin  
Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**Lydia Haff** <lydia.haff@outlook.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:17 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Hello BOE,

I am a 3rd year licensed teacher. I've been working hard to make my way up the pay scale, so I can afford to stay here. I have earned a master's degree in the process to move up as soon as possible. If furloughs are imposed on Hawaii teachers, I will have to look at other options, more likely moving and teaching in another state. I will not be able to afford to stay here and teach.

The state's decision to cut the budget in the DOE AND impose furloughs on the teachers makes me realize that the state does not care about teachers here or their well-being. The decision to furlough on the days when we would plan and grade for students implies that they expect us to do these tasks on our own time, unpaid. I am seriously considering other careers because of this continued treatment by the state. And I am sure I am not the only one.

There will be several negative, long-lasting effects of this decision by the state. Many teachers will be leaving, either the profession or the state. The teacher shortage will become worse than it has been, and our students will be left to suffer. Our state will be more dependent on long-term subs and emergency hires, who are not trained or qualified to be teaching.

Please reconsider the decision to cut more funding from our schools and pay from our teachers,

Lydia Haff  
Waianae High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**(no subject)**

1 message

**Jose Nunez** <jnunez@lokelanischool.k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:22 PM

Hi HSTA and HBE,

My name is Jose Nunez and I've been working for the Department of Education since 2014, two of those years as a substitute teacher in about 6 different schools on Maui, and the rest permanently in three schools. I also have invested financially in my career with the department and plan to continue in this field for the rest of my life in Hawaii. I am a certified teacher currently working at Lokelani Intermediate in my second year, in the world language department.

I have been following very closely the events related to the position cuts because it will directly affect me since the school is planning to cut all the electives but PE and AVID for the SY 2021-2022. If an agreement cannot be reached, 100% of my income will be lost. I already lost my second job because of the economic situation we are in. My wife and daughter depends on me for health insurance, food, and other services. I hope the governor and the decision makers in the State can reach an agreement with the union, otherwise I will be unemployed. Thank you very much.

--

*Jose Nunez*  
**Spanish Teacher**  
**Lokelani Intermediate**





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Patty Gorski** <pgorski@kkhs.k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:23 PM

Aloha, I write to you today in regards to the furloughs slated to happen in January 2021.

First and foremost, this is unacceptable to cut the amount of instructional time our students receive (my own son included) while they have already been so impacted this school year due to COVID.

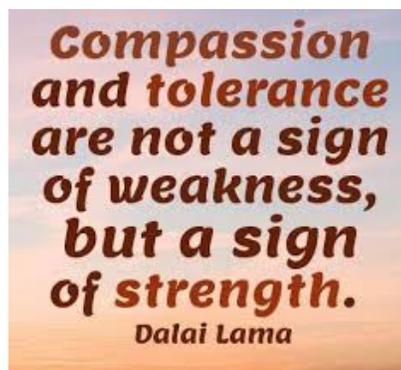
Cuts in pay will no doubt result in the retirement of teachers and teachers moving to the mainland (they may have had supplementary income impacted by the shutdowns and can no longer afford cost of living).

Class sizes will no doubt increase with the school and sped budgets being cut, which will further degrade quality of instruction as we are forced to do more with less.

Teacher burnout will send more teachers to the mainland or other occupations with all of these increased duties with cut pay.

Coupled with the possibility of losing the differentials, many teachers will quit entirely after such a blow to their pay, especially those like myself, who has worked so hard to reclassify as a class 7 teacher this year. I spent years of schooling and money to make it this far, and it is unreal that I could potentially be set back to where I was years ago. I will no doubt leave the classroom if the furloughs occur in conjunction with the ending of the differential pay. I will not be able to afford life. I know I am not alone in these sentiments.

Patty Gorski  
Special Education Teacher  
King Kekaulike HS  
11 & 12 Career and Life Planning





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for BOE meeting, Dec. 17**

1 message

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**Katherine Alarcio** <kgalarcio@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:25 PM

Aloha,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in regards to the possible furloughs for public workers, including Hawai`i public school employees.

First off, I understand that we are in financial hardship due to the pandemic and all the ways it has affected us as a state. However, I do not believe it should be on the backs of public employees and DOE employees, to maintain the financial stability of our state. As educators this year, we have already been asked to make changes to our entire curriculum practically overnight, teach online and in person at the same time, change our normal teaching line to something completely different, and endless more abnormalities. And though it has been hard, we have done it.

Educators are the first to say that we care for the wellbeing of our students over many things. But we also are taking a stand for our students by standing up for ourselves. With poor funding and furloughs, how are we able to take care of the students that are so dear to our hearts? How can I care and teach my students well, when I am burdened down with financial worries that furloughs and budget cuts bring? I am a young, 25 year old teacher, who already needs to plan and budget carefully, to live on my own. But with a significant cut to our pay due to furloughs, I am riddled with anxiety trying to figure out how I will be able to survive. And as a young, single person living on my own, I can only imagine how much harder it will be for those with families and children to take care of.

The state has asked us to take care of Hawai`i's keiki. And educators have gone so far above and beyond this year. And yet our state is saying they will not take care of us, as we take care of the keiki. We have put in countless hours, worked evenings, early mornings, and weekends, to ensure our students are given the best possible education in this pandemic. And yet our state is still sending us the contradictory message that we are "essential" yet unimportant at the same time.

So I ask you, to please go the extra mile for us, as we have gone the extra mile for our students and their families. I so dearly want to continue with this profession that I love. But I am forced to consider other options, if I am unable to take care of myself due to furloughs. I love my students and my career as a teacher, but how can I continue to survive in such a high cost of living area, with such small paychecks?

Educators love their students as their own children. But we cannot continue with that love and care if the state will not put in the work to support educators and families of Hawai`i. I am worried, and even that is an understatement. Worried for myself, my students, their families, and my fellow educators. We fight for our students. Please fight for us too.

Thank you for your time in reading this testimony.  
Katherine Alarcio



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony: Furlough Concerns

1 message

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**Melissa Padilla** <melissa\_a\_padilla@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:27 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Testimony: General Business Meeting Discussion Item V.B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

Aloha, Members of the Board of Education!

My name is Melissa A. Padilla. I am a teacher at James Campbell High School in Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony regarding the furloughs that will begin January 2021.

January 2021 will begin my 29th year as a public school teacher in Hawaii's Department of Education. And it saddens me that I must once again submit testimony to encourage this Board to support our long suffering educators and struggling youth.

We, educators and students, have worked diligently and persevered this school year in this time of a global pandemic. With multiple changes to how school will begin and schedules we are asked to juggle, educators and students have rolled and flexed to navigate the rough waters of school year 2020-2021.

However, the announcement of furloughs in an email sent after 9:30pm on December 14th was the smack in the face that drew blood. This will be worse than the furloughs under Gov. Lingle and the imposed contract under Gov. Abercrombie.

Educators have been working beyond their contractual hours to replica or reinvent lessons and units they now have to deliver (for many secondary educators) in a virtual format. Additionally, educators have been mindful and hyper aware of their students' social-emotional learning as the digital environment, for many of our students, makes it more difficult to "see" how students are doing. We are all feeling the stress of these difficult times.

Thus, the imposing of furloughs on faculties and staffs across the state on top of the deep budget cuts schools are also facing will have a devastating effect on our students. How are we going to continue to support our students with these significant reductions in public education funding? Will we begin to see a wider gap in our teacher shortage because of these unfair furloughs as teachers reconsider their options about staying in the profession or seeking better opportunities out of state?

We, public school teachers, would be grateful to the Board if you support looking for alternatives to balancing the state budget without detrimental furloughs and continuing to safeguard public education funding for our students.

Sincerely,  
Melissa A. Padilla  
National Board Certified Teacher  
AP English and Art History Teacher  
HSTA Faculty Representative  
James Campbell High School

~\*~\*~ Noblesse Oblige ~\*~\*~



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESOL requirement for Hawaii Teachers**

1 message

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**John Shim** <johnshim13@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:29 PM

Aloha,

I'm writing this email because of the unfair burdens being placed on Hawaii Teachers to receive TESOL sheltered instruction certification during a time where we face furloughs and budget cuts. Taking the courses to fulfill this requirement costs hundreds/thousands of dollars and significant investment of time. If this is so critical I would like to suggest HIDOE offer TESOL certification courses for free on the school's time. Mahalo.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Angela Sagisi** <angesagisi@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:40 PM

Hello, my name is Angela Sagisi and I am a grade 4 teacher at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I am testifying in regards to V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs. Including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

The proposed furloughs will not only impact all of the above, but it will also decrease my chances of staying in the profession. I just recently graduated with my master's degree in Curriculum Studies. I borrowed a substantial amount of money just to further my education and to move up in step. However, with the proposed furloughs, it doesn't seem like my pay is going to increase (like what was promised through reclassification). In fact, it's going to be less. Where will I get the money to pay my loan? My bills? Other essential expenses needed to survive? The thought of receiving less on my paycheck scares me. I honestly do not know what to do if this happens. Should I get another job? When will I sleep? Should I focus less on the students and more on surviving? I honestly don't know what to do. All I know is that I will drown, and I feel that there is no one able to help me.

So I ask you this, BOE and Governor Ige, I hope you reconsider your proposed furloughs and find another avenue to make up for Covid's loss. Otherwise, you will be losing yet another, highly qualified teacher who puts their whole heart and soul into these kids and their education.

Mahalo,  
Angela Sagisi



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Aoi Shinagawa** <aishinagawa@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:42 PM

To the Board of Education:

I am writing to submit my testimony regarding the illegally imposed furloughs. My name is Aoi Shinagawa and I am the music teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I am being impacted by the furloughs and possibly by the recent reduction of the DOE budget.

I am sure you do not need another person to tell you how furloughs are highly illogical, as [research by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) points out. I am sure you have already heard that this will cause a mass exodus of teachers who retire or quit to pursue other paths that will lead to a better source of income. I am sure you do not need to be reminded that qualified, passionate educators are necessary to ensure all students receive a high-quality and vigorous educational experience. I can throw dozens of numbers at you, citing many sources of research that show that these furloughs will hurt an already suffering system, leaving the most vulnerable population behind, while failing to accomplish what it is intended to do.

But I won't, because numbers don't paint the full picture - they feel cold, and statistics are easy to ignore. A number doesn't have a face, a family, a life - but people do. Instead of citing studies and statistics, I will tell you about a young educator, starting her career during a pandemic and seeing her life crumble around her. This is about what I have been through in order to become an educator.

I was raised by a single mother, who is also a teacher. She teaches in a low-income community that serves a large population of immigrant families. She sought out this position because of her passion for helping others. I watched her struggle to pay for our bills, working two to three jobs to get enough income to support her two children. When I woke up in the morning, she would be running out the door to get to her school. She came home 13 hours later, exhausted from teaching all day followed by providing in-home tutoring services to earn extra income. This was her Monday through Friday. On Saturdays during testing season, she would spend the morning with us and then leave to spend her afternoon at the local test prep center, coming home at 6 or 7pm.

Despite working long hours and having a salaried job with benefits, the teacher salary was so low that my mother was never able to save up a down-payment to purchase property. This was after former Gov. Lingle's furloughs but before Gov. Ige's illegally imposed furloughs. Because we didn't own the property and could never afford newly built rentals, we were "renovicted" (evicted due to the owners renovating) a total of three times in four years - something that I didn't realize caused my mother to take on huge amounts of debt. The day I turned 16 I got a work permit and offered to get a job to help out - my mother declined my offer, saying that I needed to focus on my studies so that I could get a scholarship for college. She reminded me that this was the only way I could go, as she didn't have the money to help me out. I asked her if she would consider getting a higher paying job - she told me about how much she loves teaching. She told me about how thankful the kids were to have someone who cared about them. I thought that was beautiful. She is a dedicated educator.

When I was applying for college, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer. Inspired by my mother's passion for teaching and serving underprivileged youth, I changed my mind at the last minute. I decided that I

wanted to follow the same path and go into education, hoping to find a place in a high-needs school. When I told my mom what I wanted to do, she was unable to hide her disappointment. At the time, I couldn't understand why. After all, she is a dedicated educator.

In the last month of high school, I began searching for my first job. Through a referral from a friend, I was able to get a job at my local Zippy's. Through the first year of my university, I worked about 30 hours a week, taking the shift from 4pm to midnight so that I could work after school. As I got used to the workload and gained experience, I moved around to different restaurants and began waiting tables. My day started at 7am and ended at midnight. I was always exhausted. Between school and working, I had exactly 0 days off every week. But I was a hard worker - such a hard worker that some of my managers asked if I would be willing to quit school, offering me full-time positions. I declined them all, even though they were very tempting and would instantly put me in a financially better position. But I am a dedicated educator, so I passed up these opportunities.

At the end of my college career, I began playing part-time with the Royal Hawaiian Band in addition to working in the restaurants. I was well-liked by my colleagues in the band, and was asked by them what my plans were after graduation. Would I consider going full-time with the band? They said I should ask to apply, and although not guaranteed, it was possible that I could fill the vacant flute spot. I declined, saying that I really wanted to be a teacher. Many musicians wait their entire lives for an audition. But I am a dedicated educator, so I passed up this opportunity.

After graduating, I secured my first teaching position as the music teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I was elated. I was able to quit restaurants. I maintained my part-time position with the Royal Hawaiian Band to supplement the starting teacher salary, as it was quite low. I still had to work 7 days a week, but I knew that there was so much good I could do in education. For the first time in what felt like forever, I was truly satisfied with my life. The pay was low, but there was room to grow and the stability that comes with being on salary. The job was tiring, but it was endlessly rewarding. It felt like all of my struggles were finally worth it.

But now, with the state budget being balanced on the back of public education, I realize that this is unsustainable. You may be wondering - I thought you were a dedicated educator? What do you mean this is unsustainable? The fact is, I cannot afford to be paid less than I already am. Pre-pandemic, I was working 7 days a week to make ends meet. With teacher furloughs, how am I supposed to make up for this loss? There are not enough hours in the week for me to do this. Therefore, I have no choice but to leave the profession.

Why am I sharing this? To show you the kind of people public education is losing. I am not the only one with a story like this. There are hundreds of others. Please take into consideration how important it is to keep passionate educators in the profession. How can we have public education without teachers? How can we say we appreciate and value educators when we treat them as disposable?

--

Aoi Shinagawa  
(808)439-5093



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony from a Moloka'i teacher**

1 message

**Lokelani Han** <dlokelani.han@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:44 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I love my job as a teacher. I love working with my fellow teachers to provide a meaningful education experience to my 'ohana - both immediate and extended, hānau and hānai.

I put the health and welfare of my own family at risk every day that I come to school because of this pandemic. But I do it because I recognize my kuleana to mālama all our keiki and give them some semblance of a school that they deserve. I am the only person in my home employed at this time and not unlike many others, I have costs like mortgage, food, medicine, utilities and clothing, car payments, fuel, insurance, dental costs..... and the list goes on!

I know I cannot afford to leave "my" kids without a safe place to learn and grow but I definitely cannot afford to survive with a 10% pay cut.

**FIND SOME OTHER SOLUTION TO BALANCE THE STATE BUDGET THAN PUTTING IT ON THE BACKS OF OUR TEACHERS!**

na'u,

na Lokelani Han

Kumu, Kula Kaiapuni o Kualapu'u, Moloka'i



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**S475-Ian French** <s475-ian.french@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:49 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I believe furloughs are a terrible idea, this is because teachers need to make money on their abysmal paychecks, and teachers getting unpaid leave puts them in a bad situation just because the local government isnt flexible enough to make money that isnt mostly from tourism. The board of education or state government should make budget cuts to different services etc. because during a pandemic you have to make big decisions and cutting teacher pay probably isnt the best option.

This is a student email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. The contents of this email are governed by the laws of the state and the board policies of the school district.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**S475-Koa Curley** <s475-koa.curley@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:56 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I think that the additional off days would be beneficial. However, I think that younger kids should not be out of school very much. as they are still developing and need a lot of grooming.

This is a student email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. The contents of this email are governed by the laws of the state and the board policies of the school district.



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129  
email: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)  
December 17, 2020

**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*  
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander  
Ms. Sara Alimoot  
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta  
Ms. Virginia Beringer  
Ms. Mary Brogan  
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman  
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Ms. Bernadette Lane  
Ms. Sarah Man  
Ms. Dale Matsuura  
Ms. Cheryl Matthews  
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Ms. Kiele Pennington  
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto  
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Ms. Rosie Rowe  
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Ms. Ivalee Sinclair  
Mr. James Street  
Mr. Francis Taelle  
Mr. Steven Vannatta  
Ms. Lisa Vegas  
Ms. Paula Whitaker  
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to  
the Superintendent*  
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to  
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff  
Susan Rocco, Staff

Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: V. B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Department's December 14th notification to employees that it will be implementing furloughs beginning January 4th, 2021. The Department's actions are in response to Governor Ige's direction to State Departments to implement furloughs as a cost-saving measure, given the current and forecasted budgetary shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SEAC fully supports the Board's action to get more clarity regarding the impending furloughs. Once the true costs of furloughs are brought to light, it will hopefully spur policy makers and legislators to first engage in creative and thoughtful problem-solving before taking such Draconian actions that will create lasting hardships for teachers and students alike.

History has demonstrated that furloughs are much costlier than the short-term savings they yield. The Furlough Fridays imposed by Governor Lingle in the 2009-10 School Year not only contributed to poor academic outcomes for students with disabilities due to a reduction in instructional days by approximately 10%. It also exacerbated the chronic shortage of qualified special education teachers by lowering the retention rate of trained teachers and negatively impacting teacher recruitment in the years following the furloughs.

Additionally, Hawaii's furloughs sparked two class action lawsuits on behalf of students with disabilities prompting the *NY Times* to publish an editorial commenting on the furloughs entitled "Hawaii's Children,



Left Behind.” (October 30, 2009). It included comments by then Secretary of Education Arne Duncan who found it “inconceivable” that furlough Fridays were the best solution to Hawaii’s school-budget woes. While the class action suits failed to halt the imposition of furloughs, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit noted in *N.D. v State of Hawaii* that furloughs involving special education students could result in “a material failure to implement the IEP,” thereby raising the spectre of multiple costly lawsuits.

SEAC is very concerned that a combination of proposed special education teacher reductions plus fewer instructional days brought about by furloughs may jeopardize a free appropriate public education for many students with complex academic and behavioral needs. These harsh measures will likely set back the recent progress made in special education teacher recruitment and retention and place far too many students with IEPs at risk of academic failure that will impact their future ability to lead successful lives.

Rather than risk a multi-year cycle of educational erosion by imposing furloughs, SEAC advises a more proactive and thoughtful approach to protect the quality of public education in Hawaii. The Legislature must seek out new revenue streams to maintain supports to vulnerable students and classroom teachers or reprioritize available funds, so that we protect students at highest risk of disproportionate harm.

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our views. SEAC stands ready to work collaboratively with the Department and the Board to find creative solutions to the delivery of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Kelsey Rasmuson** <kelsey.rasmuson@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:55 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

This school year, I returned to Hawaii after working as a teacher in Arizona for several years where I needed not only a second job, but a third job to survive. I was ecstatic to return to work for HODOE where I was treated as a professional and cared for as a teacher. Now, my trust in the security and strength of Hawaii's education system has been toppled. Not only is my pay about to be cut, but I have also been informed that one teacher in my grade level will be cut next school year as well as several other positions on my campus. Most likely, as a first year probationary teacher once again, I will lose my job. I returned to Hawaii this summer full of hope and faith in the public school system. Currently, I am feeling devalued, and unimportant in the community. Do not disgrace the teaching profession and the future of our keiki by implementing furloughs. These budget cuts relay the message to teachers and students alike, "you do not matter that much. Your work is not that important. You are replaceable." Thank you for listening to my testimony.

I would prefer to remain anonymous if this testimony is read aloud.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Rene Suckoll** <rsuckoll@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

I am a 12 month employee that has been with the DOE for 24 years. For most of the 23 years I was a Unit 3 member and moved to Unit 4 within the last five years. I decided to finally take a promotion to get ahead, only to find out due to contract rules I could only promote 3 steps in pay increase, although I moved 8 steps in job levels. I have gone without pay raises and step movements for many of those years and even endured furloughs during the 2009-2010 years. I've stayed the course with hope and trust that the employer and union would take care of their employees/members.

Now with more furloughs and possible layoffs on the table during a worldwide pandemic, it worries me that staying the course may not have been the best option. I know many people lost their jobs during this time, but they were also able to collect unemployment with additional bonuses in amounts that they wouldn't have normally made if they were working. I did not lose my job, however, I had to continue to work in a tiny office that doesn't allow much for social distancing and work with the public on a daily. I did this day in and day out for the same salary, with no extra pay, no restaurant cards, no bonuses. And I hoped and prayed everyday, that I would not contract the virus while working and bring it home to my family.

Also during this time, I waited patiently for our contracts to be funded. It was well deserved and much needed as the cost of monthly bills continued to rise. To face another furlough, especially during this pandemic could be detrimental. It could mean choosing between paying a bill or buying groceries. With my children home distance learning, the utilities and grocery bills have increased and the need to have internet access at home has become more of a necessity, rather than a luxury. It could also mean that my child in college may not be able to continue because I wouldn't be able to continue paying the tuition. Facing furloughs again is not something I can take lightly. It could mean that I would need to find a second job to make ends meet, which during this time could be nearly impossible.

The furloughs are unfair. Unfair that certain essential employees would not face furloughs. Unfair that 10 month employees would be furloughed only 6 days while the 12 month employees would be furloughed for 10 days. Why should the 12 month employees be burdened with a bigger financial responsibility? Are we getting our retro pay that we are due from when our contracts went into effect in July? Are our raises that are due in January being funded? Are we being furloughed on the new salary amounts that we are supposed to see in January?

Furloughs are also unfair for our students who will be missing out more days of school that they really can't afford to miss. Our students and families are already struggling with this and have been for the past 8-9 months. Our office will be greatly impacted with 10 less days to get work done and being tasked to somehow squeeze the work into the shortened work weeks. Offices and schools will also be greatly impacted when employees start leaving. I already know of a few employees who have said they will leave the DOE.

Still trying to be hopeful...

Rene



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Wendy Nickl** <wendyfivec@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:02 AM

Aloha,

I am a 34 year public school teacher at Kohala Middle School on Hawaii Island. I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

The furloughs will affect our public school students who have gone through so much already during the pandemic. Our administrator has talked to our staff about budget cuts affecting our SpEd dept, which in turn affects our most vulnerable students! We have already struggled to support these students academically, socially and emotionally, while trying to keep them and our personnel safe. Now we will take away essential supports to those who need it the most.

In our Hawaii public school system, we also support our families. I have consoled and supported numerous parents and grandparents who have broken down crying on the phone and in conferences, as they feel the weight of supporting their family members and helping children with their education. Cutting school funding will hurt these families.

I will personally be affected by the furloughs and budget. My son will be coming home from his university and attending school online, so we can save money on his rooming fees. My husband is retired and my family depends on my income for a majority of our household bills.

Please support our students, our most vulnerable population group. Find creative funding ways to help our public schools.

Mahalo,

Wendy Nickl

Kohala Middle School

Big Island of Hawaii



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furlough concerns

1 message

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**Shanielle Tuinei** <shanielle.mm@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:13 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a DOE Unit 03-12 month employee I am outraged at these furloughs. I am an OAIII and we work the most but get paid the least. We don't have paid breaks or intermissions like our other unit 03-10 month employees. Now we have 4 more extra days then they do? If we have to be on furlough then the playing grounds should be fair. During this pandemic I was very grateful to have a job but it was painstaking to have to come to work each day while others who normally wouldn't qualify for unemployment, receive benefits and more! We don't make enough to live comfortably but we make too much according to the State and don't qualify for any benefits. We the working middle class people deserved those extra \$600+ a month and those restaurant cards. It is very hard living paycheck to paycheck and now with less paid days it will be a tremendous struggle. I am thankful that I have a husband who is employed, so I can't imagine all of our single parents who are in the same job position as I am. These "10 furlough days" may not mean alot to our State but it will have a devastating effect on our DOE employees. Please reconsider this decision and work for the people not against us!



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**pmitsis3@aol.com** <pmitsis3@aol.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:15 AM

Reply-To: pmitsis3@aol.com

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

To Who it may concern,

Regarding the furloughs:

Consider the past years' rent, utilities, taxes, and food costs that increased then add a pandemic. Consider the 9% which takes away purchasing power and economic stability for a select few state workers. In the light of this, try considering spreading 9% across all state agencies and employees to reduce the duress upon your and your childrens' teachers.

Your marginalization for the cost of doing business on the few will both fail in the short term and the long term. You see this as a business decision: therefore, don't ask educators who have been limited partners in your business and historically have been marginalized to shoulder the burden with sub-pay to take another hit. Educators are the bedrock of what we all become, don't put us between a rock and a hard spot, at least work with us.

Pete Mitsis, M.A. (tenured 7 year DOE employee)  
Waimea High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Molokai concerns**

1 message

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**Kealoha Laemoa** <kjlaemoa@hawaii.edu>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:20 AM

Aloha;

My name is Kealoha Laemoa. I am a Adult supervisor at the only charter school on Molokai. I personally see and witness the dedication of these teachers in the classroom.

If it's your intent to furlong thousands of dedicated teachers and professors then it's going to be your intent Mr. Governor to allow more Hawaii families go into debt. They cannot afford to provide for their families, rent, food for table. It seems that when you announce this possible furlong your first pick was the public school and the professor at the University. I am a online University of Hawaii student and I will support not only my co-workers but also my Kumu at the University. They do not need more budget cuts, they need to be supported as much as possible.

I am not in support of the furlong or any sort of budget cuts.

Mahalo Nui:  
Kealoha Laemoa

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Candice-Joy Soon** <candice-joy.soon@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:29 AM

Hello,

I'm writing this testimony to voice my concerns about the projected furloughs implemented by HIDOE. I am a second year, non-tenured teacher who is dually-licensed in general and special education. I currently teach 11th grade resource and inclusion English classes.

While I understand and appreciate the difficulties that the state is going through due to COVID-19 and the economic downturn, it has felt like teachers are overwhelmingly bearing the heavy brunt of these budget cuts from both drastic layoffs and furloughs. As teachers trying to teach in a pandemic, we are doing more work than ever by trying to make material palatable and accessible online everyday in addition to dealing with a multitude of problems students are facing at home. My workday essentially never ends - I'm checking emails and communicating with students late into the night because so many students are struggling and failing their classes. As a care coordinator for students in special education, I have even more responsibilities than general education teachers and my caseload goes far beyond those students who I have in my classes. Yet, furloughs are being touted as a viable solution even though students are already so far behind and teachers are drowning in work and trying to play catch-up - I believe the negative impacts of these furloughs will be felt far and wide for parents, students, and teachers alike.

I am currently the sole breadwinner of my family while my husband is in grad school - surviving on one income (not to mention that of a teacher's) is nearly impossible in the state of Hawaii. We are already living paycheck to paycheck even though I juggle two jobs while we wait for my husband to graduate. It has been such a stressful struggle and the looming layoffs and furloughs feel like yet another slap in the face that the state is throwing at us teachers. With the 10% pay cut from furloughs, money is going to be even tighter for us - it feels we are taking one step forward and two steps back by working for the DOE - I know I am not the only one who feels this way. With the furloughs and layoffs looming, how is the state economy going to be revived if so many of its residents are going to be struggling to make ends meet?

I got into teaching special education because I love working with my students and establishing close relationships with them in a smaller setting. The work is undoubtedly rewarding, especially during hard times such as these when my students still voice their appreciation for me. I've always rooted for the underdog and I believe special education students need people who believe in them unconditionally. However, it doesn't feel like HIDOE is rooting for us teachers - we are the ones bearing the brunt of pay cuts, lay offs, furlough days, lack of PPE, etc. with no one bothering to ask for our input or have us participate in any decision-making processes. At the end of the day, no matter how rewarding the work is, the reality is that bills must be paid; teachers will continue to leave the field and the state if HIDOE continues to implement such draconian policies such as these. In a profession that is absolutely essential but so underpaid and underappreciated, the furloughs are going to do much more harm than good.

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to read through my testimony. I sincerely hope that there are other measures HIDOE can take that does not put our teachers, keiki, and the future of Hawai'i's educational system at risk.

Thank you,  
Candice Soon

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## Testimony on Furlough

1 message

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**Kathi Andaya** <natsue25@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:30 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This upcoming furlough will destroy our family financially. We have 3 adults and one child in our household. The main breadwinner lost his job of 37 years in the private sector because of the pandemic. He is still not employed. My daughter and I both are office assistants in the DOE schools.

We are paying the bulk of the mortgage, utilities and other household expenses. It also has taken away from the services for my non verbal autistic grandson, who is 5 yrs. old. He only attends school 3x/week and we can no longer afford outside services for his autism.

Furloughs will only HURT our economy even more. The State should of put together an incentive package for those who can retire, then just freeze those positions. Don't hurt the lower paying employees, especially when they are the backbone of school administration offices.

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a math teacher at Maui High School. I am writing in strong opposition to the recently announced furlough plan for DOE employees. My husband and I are both DOE teachers. This is the second time in a little over 10 years that we are both being furloughed by the state. For me, this is not only about money. This is about respect for our profession and for the people you always expect to "save the children".

The public education system in Hawaii is dying a slow and painful death. You expect the system to survive off of teachers "goodwill" and "big hearts". You know very well that our students would not be doing as well as they are, if not for teachers putting in way more time past their contract hours and putting up their own money to supply their classrooms. Yet, there is NEVER any acknowledgement of that by the people sitting at the very top of the DOE. Instead, we are ALWAYS called upon to sacrifice "for the kids". Let's be real - the people doing the most "for the kids" are the school level employees. And here we are, once again, being asked to sacrifice - in the middle of an unprecedented school year - one in which we have sacrificed more than ever before to make distance and hybrid learning work for our students. No one has acknowledged the amount of time and energy teachers have put forth to make this year work for our students. No one has acknowledged the stress and mental toll this has taken on teachers. We are expected to just "keep on keeping on...for the kids". If there has been any acknowledgement of these things, it has been overshadowed by all the slaps in the face by the DOE - us having to fight for safe working conditions, fight for telework, fight for resources - all we have been doing this school year is fighting with the DOE to get some respect and safe working conditions. Imagine that - the most valuable and necessary employees in the school having to fight with their employer about basic working conditions - and now being slapped in the face AGAIN with furloughs.

You see, the problem here is that you think every employee will just suck it up and stay in the DOE "for the kids"....and the ones that choose to go? Well, we'll survive without them, right? WRONG!!! There are lots of highly qualified teachers leaving, because they are either tired of being treated like this and have better opportunities or they just can't afford to stay here in Hawaii. Do you see a long line of applicants waiting to take their place? I don't. We've had a teacher shortage for far too long and haven't been able to recover. Do you see what I mean about public education dying a slow and painful death?

When are we going to stop making excuses for having to starve our already dying public education system and do something about it? The public education system is on a ventilator and we, the employees are the exhausted, overworked medical staff trying desperately to keep it alive. Please stop killing it with furloughs and budget cuts!!!!

Sincerely,

Jodi Kunimitsu  
Kihei, Maui



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough opposition**

1 message

**K E** <karmelcreations@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:36 AM

To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kailua Kona Hawaii. I am the only source of income for my family and would be greatly impacted by any kind of decrease in pay. In times like these, we need to support our teachers and other state employees and not penalize them for circumstances that they are not responsible for. We take care of our keiki within our homes and at our schools. Please do not hurt our families by decreasing our pay.

Mahalo,  
Karen Ellison

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## Testimony against furloughs

1 message

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**Shelly Andrews** <shelly.andrews@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:36 AM

While I agree that the State needs to make budget cuts across the board I think it is unfair that classroom teachers will not be classified as First Responders. As a School Counselor, I have seen the negative impacts of COVID-19 on students this school year and last. More than double of our students this year have been hospitalized for suicidal ideation and depression. With in-person learning, sports, and excursions cut this year students feel disconnected from their classmates and teachers which I believe is contributing to this negative change in their mental health. Many students (the most I have ever seen in my 20-year career as a counselor at Kailua High are failing multiple classes and are in danger of not graduating or failing the year). Teachers are trying their best to try to provide additional support to students, allowing at-risk students to come on campus for in-person learning, scheduling virtual study hall sessions with students after hours and on holidays, calling home to families, mailing letters and care packages while also teaching in a whole new way over a virtual platform. By not putting classroom teachers in the category of First Responders I believe you are further excluding students as most of the furlough days are taken out of teacher planning days as well as school days. Due to COVID-19 teachers have had to spend a number of additional hours outside of the workday to adjust their teaching practices to a virtual and/hybrid learning environment, attend multiple training sessions and attend multiple parent-teacher conferences (all students with specialized academic plans including 504 and SPED students needed to have new plans at the beginning of the school year to ensure their academic needs were being met) and with many students failing more parent-teacher conferences are scheduled to make sure students and families are getting the support they need. While some parents are able to send their children to private school to ensure their children can be provided with adequate academic support a majority of families in Hawaii can not afford to. As I am also a parent of two children in public schools I feel you are doing a disservice to students by treating teachers who are already working numerous hours outside of their workday to serve students in public schools by not classifying them as First Responders.

Shelly Andrews, MEd, NBCT  
Kailua High School, Counselor  
[451 Ulumanu Dr.](#)  
[Kailua, HI 96744](#)  
(808) 266-7900 ext. 2239

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## Testimony: DOE Furloughs, Impact on Students, Employees, and Community

1 message

**Jeremy Seitz** <jeremy.seitz@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:37 AM

15 December 2020

To The Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am submitting testimony in regards to General Business discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

I am opposed to furloughs. I have been through furloughs implemented by the Lingle administration and it has a detrimental effect, not just on the students, but also on the educational platform, the educational system, and the community.

I am thoroughly disappointed in the governor and our DOE leadership. I believe we are being held responsible for the inept and ridiculous actions, taken by our leadership, and that we have no control over. We as teachers spend countless hours planning, preparing, learning, and mastering our craft in order to deliver quality instruction that will prepare students for life after school. These furloughs, including January 4 (Teacher PLANNING Day), will further reduce our capacity to execute and they will rob the students, especially those in disadvantaged, underserved communities, with the RIGHT to a free and appropriate public education.

Further, I am disappointed in this BOARD and its members as I believe that your role is to guide, direct, and at times mandate that actions be taken to ensure the safety, security, and education of these children be delivered with equality, high standards, and maximum effectiveness. You so far have failed to do so. Your latest vote to "reluctantly agree" to the DOE's proposed budget reductions is farcical. As the Board of Education, your job is not to simply go along but to voice your opinions, concerns, and speak the truth. To vote for budget cuts, albeit reluctantly, is shameful. The BOE has the voice and power to stand up to what they believe to be inappropriate, wrong, and detrimental. You did NOT do so. Had you voted against the reductions, the impact and perceptions amongst educators could have perhaps been brighter. As it stands, we teachers are thoroughly disappointed in you and feel that you do not see the true value of a public school educator, let alone the necessity required by our students.

Now is your opportunity to stand up for what is right. Ms. Payne, you have seen firsthand what furloughs can do. They are evil, wrong, and will only move to hurt not just our educational ability, the students' chances for success, but also the economy for the long term. Should you vote for furloughs or again "reluctantly" agree, you will once again have failed not just the educational community but the community of the State of Hawaii.

I see this as a genuine opportunity to stand up and hold those that need to be held accountable. Stand up to the governor and show him that education is not and should never be the first area to look at for cuts. We teachers are poor by every measurable standard. We are one of the lowest paying states in the country and we have worked many years, aside from the last three, without annual increases. Ms. Payne you know

this. You are public school through and through. You know, and we teachers accept, the lifestyle of a teacher. Do not contribute to an increase in what is already a financially challenging life that we live. We do it willingly but we are not punching bags. Teachers will quit. They will take early retirement. They will leave the state. Teachers will lose their homes, their cars, they will deplete their savings and retirement to survive this. Money that should contribute to the community will be lost. 16,000 of us will be unable to adequately contribute to economic growth.

In the long term, students will have learned and experienced less. They will be less equipped to deal with what is sure to be a challenging world when they leave school. All academic performance measures will show dramatic decreases. Student and teacher mental health will see a massive decline. Domestic violence will continue to see alarming increases in the number of incidents.

There is no positive benefit to furloughs. You of all people should know this. I know Mr. Voss, Ms. Cox and the like do not know at all what it's like to be a teacher and surely their children will never know the poverty that the majority of our students experience daily. They are already deprived of many rights that some of the very board members' children will never need to know. Make a decision and vote with your heart. Do not try to play the political game. You are the voice of not just 16,000 teachers but also over 200,000 public school students. Together we represent nearly 13% of the state's population.

Do for once, what is right in your heart. Stand up, be the voice of reason and decency. Stand up for the teachers and the students. Imagine the impact that a board of education that backs the very people it was formed to protect, could have on the future of our educational system. Do not hold up your hands as though you have no power or authority. Your voice is loud and valuable. USE IT!!

Jeremy R. Seitz  
Teacher  
Farrington High School

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**Testimony re: DOE Furloughs, etc.**

1 message

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**Andrew Jones** <jonesbaron23@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:41 AM

Aloha, Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education.

My name is Andy Jones, and I am a Language Arts teacher at Radford High School. This is my 28<sup>th</sup> year in the teaching profession. I have been at Radford since 2007; before my time in the Hawai'i DOE, I taught in Taiwan for a dozen years beginning in the early 1990s.

Half a decade ago I was a regular attendee of BOE meetings. I submitted many rounds of testimony on various topics and also did so before the state legislature's education committees. Over a period of several years, I also published several dozen letters and opinion pieces in local newspapers pertaining to numerous aspects of public education in our state. I discontinued these activities roughly four years ago for several reasons, perhaps the most salient of which was the feeling that I had said everything I had to say about school improvement and that it was time to hear from other educators.

Since I discontinued my activities, I believe that there has been a rising general optimism that the situation for schools, teachers, and students has been gradually improving. In 2014, David Ige suggested that he would be an "education governor," in contrast to his two immediate predecessors who had made unfortunate choices that have caused long-lasting damage to public education in Hawai'i. In 2017, the Board appointed Christina Kishimoto as our new superintendent, and, while many teachers had hoped for the appointment of a local educator, most classroom teachers would probably agree with me that Superintendent Kishimoto has made a significant, positive departure from the toxic and "invasive" approach of her predecessor - a non-educator who had signed teachers and students up for the numerous burdensome and anti-educative measures associated with the Race to the Top grant. A year after Superintendent Kishimoto's appointment, Governor Ige made a wise decision that shocked and delighted so many teachers when he appointed veteran educator and educational advocate Catherine Payne as chairperson to this Board; in the past two years, Payne has led the Board in working with HSTA, the DOE, Governor Ige, etc., resulting in considerable progress in a number of directions. Finally, through all of these positive developments, HSTA President Corey Rosenlee must be mentioned as a tireless force of advocacy for teachers, schools, and students - an advocacy that began before his election in 2015 as he raised public awareness of the unfolding crisis as a teacher at Campbell High School. Under President Rosenlee's leadership, HSTA has conducted significant studies that rigorously and with considerable detail document what educators and many others in our state have long known - namely, that Hawai'i public schools are among the most underfunded in the country, and our teachers the most underpaid.

Now, COVID-19 appears to have provided educators with a clear and painful illustration of the latter half of the "one step forward, two steps back" adage. A year ago teachers were optimistic that, following on the heels of the important decision to attract Special Education teachers by offering them a generous stipend, all teachers might look forward to further decisions that would redress the long period during which we have been underpaid for years of service, in addition to potential, robust salary increases in a future contract that was beginning to look like more than just a dream, as educational decision-makers of various stripes seemed

to be approaching a consensus that, without paying teachers better, our chronic teacher shortage would only worsen.

I believe I speak for a majority of public school teachers when I exclaim how disheartening it is for us to have seen all of these promising steps suddenly and summarily erased due to a worldwide public health crisis, and to find ourselves back at the drawing board that we faced a decade ago, having once more to take time from our busy work schedules to revert to basic arguments concerning professional survival that we began constructing during the last furlough period – a period that, just a year ago, we were happy to view as a bygone era governed by decision-makers who did not prioritize public education.

My plea today is implicit in the above. Please do whatever you can, Members of the Board, to prevent furloughs from erasing the progress we've made in the past few years and to prevent a further professional "brain drain" and the concomitant chaos that will undoubtedly ensue as thousands of Hawai'i teachers, echoing The Who in "Won't Get Fooled Again," decide that this latest setback is indeed the last straw and either leave education for other professions or seek teaching work in systems that are less subject to the ever-shifting vagaries and whims of public policy.

Mahalo,  
Andy Jones  
NBCT  
Language Arts Department Chair  
HSTA Head Rep  
Radford High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Abbey Palmer** <abbey.palmer@gmail.com>  
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:42 AM

Hello my name is Abigail Palmer and I am a special education teacher. I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees**. I am extremely concerned about the furloughs and how it will affect my household and my students. I am a single income household trying to survive in Hawaii. To further my education and to better help my students, I got my masters degree in special education. If teachers are furloughed and our pay gets cut, I don't know how I am going to be able to continue living in Hawaii. I am already paying back student loans and barely able to afford my rent. If you furlough teachers, we won't be able to survive. If you furlough teachers, our students will suffer too. I teach such a diverse group of students all with different learning disabilities and because of this, the majority of the workbooks and every day supplies (colored pens, pencils, paper) I provide for the students out of my own paycheck. Each students needs are unique so there is a lot of differentiation required and additional supplies needed to help each student. If teachers are furloughed, there will be so many of us that will be forced to leave the profession, forced to move to the mainland because of the high cost of living in Hawaii. The keiki will suffer because of this and that is not fair to them. Teachers have already been through so much, teaching during a pandemic. When COVID-19 hit, teachers immediately adjusted their entire curriculum and instruction for distance learning so that students wouldn't fall behind during the pandemic. We are continuing to provide content for students in person and online, adapting for the needs of each individual keiki. We risk our own health and safety by coming in to teach students face to face. We are working double the hours and going home and spending countless hours after school modifying and lesson planning to provide additional supports to students during the pandemic. We are educating the future. Future doctors, future lawyers, future politicians. Please don't furlough the teachers, our futures and the futures of our keiki depend on this.

Thank you.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

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**Erin Mickelsen** <e.m.mickelsen7828@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:50 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Erin Mickelsen and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee School. I have been teaching there and in the Hawaii DOE for 15 years.

This idea of furloughs is UNACCEPTABLE! There are teachers that never fully recovered from the Linda Lingle Furloughs many years ago. Besides hurting teachers and their families, furloughs hurt our students! Students, teachers, and parents have had to endure one of the hardest years of their lives and furloughs will make it even harder.

Teachers finally just got raises and now we are to get a pay cut. We already have a teacher shortage crisis and furloughs will make it worse. Meanwhile, the State of Hawaii is shelling out millions of dollars for the rail project that is costing much more than anticipated, taking way longer than expected, and will only benefit a small portion of our State.

Please do not instill furloughs on us! I have never thought so seriously about leaving this thankless profession!

Erin Mickelsen



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony - furlough

1 message

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**Nellwyne Young** <nellwyneyoung@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:53 AM

This is a written testimony on general business meeting discussion item [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

Educators all across the state have been working harder and tirelessly since the start of this pandemic. Prior to this, we were hoping we were on our way to negotiate a new contract which would include a nice salary package. As an educator for 26 years my salary in this state helps my family of 4 to get by. We do not live beyond our means. We were never in a position to purchase brand new cars, go on lavish trips or have top of the line things. We just get by. Now with a pay cut having to pay for two college tuitions just frightens me. We may be "furloughed" but the work still has to get done somehow, someway. We were also presented with proposed budget cuts to our school which will definitely have an impact. Loss of positions will mean bigger class sizes or loss of additional support. How will this help our students?

What happened to educators being essential? How will we ever be able to attract our students into education? I "lived" through furlough Fridays under Lingle, teacher pay cut though Abercombie and now this?? What a slap in the face for a profession that always has students in their best interest. Yes, I want what's best for my students, but not at the expense of my own kids and myself.

There has got to be a better way.

Nellwyne Young  
James Campbell High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony, Human Resource Meeting

1 message

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**Tiffany Schnittger** <tschnittger@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:53 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Board,

I have been with Hawaii's DOE since 2003, and currently **work as a teacher at Holomua EI with first grade**. In fact, my husband and I were both teachers for over 10 years. We raised our family on our salaries, and struggled. The furloughs of the past put such a strain on our family that we felt impoverished, and even had to go without a car and other financial hardships...

My husband left the DOE and started his own small business, and that helped our situation. However, if these furloughs take effect, as planned, I will also be leaving as soon as possible. There is a breaking point where I have to look out for my family's well-being more than the demanding, constant job can justify.

**I am 100% against the proposed furloughs**, as my salary has still not caught up with inflation and cost of living to survive and thrive in Hawaii. Cutting teachers' salaries in Hawaii will only exasperate the teacher shortages and issues with student performances in the years to come. This will hurt generations in our state. So, it is with a sad heart that I start looking elsewhere for better opportunities for me as an educator, and I am not the only one.

Thank you,  
Tiffany Schnittger

--

Tiffany Schnittger, M.Ed.  
(808) 439-2238

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

As a single mom and a teacher, I am used to living life on a treadmill. I talked about this in my Community Voice article in Civilbeat back in September 2016. At the time, I was still coping with the aftermath of the 2008 furlough and facing dramatic cost increases of medical expenses. Unfortunately, I find myself still on this treadmill but it's faster and even harder to keep up in 2020. I have been running in place since August when the fall term began. Each day, it's a triage of student and technical obstacles and a budget cut for 2021 would greatly harm the already fragile support for teachers and students. I am concerned that I would be thrown off the treadmill.

In terms of student impact, current difficulties would be made much worse. Since the tracking of the positivity rate, Moanalua High, where I teach, began a combination of online and in-person teaching. This is simultaneously done by the teacher. At best, I can organize the students in a discussion of our reading in class and through Google Classroom with various levels of engagement. Even if a student loses his Internet connection, GC offers a transcript of the conversation. Even if my voice transmission gets dropped (poor bandwidth? network hiccup?), I can type in my feedback to students. At worst, I can have students misbehaving online (off-task behavior, putting down others, disrupting class conversation) and a student giving up at her desk 6 feet from me since her education assistant is no longer available to help her. In this latter case, I can handle one situation at a time but I cannot be at two places at the same time. Budget cuts would make the school even more short-staffed and technology even less reliable.

In addition to the classroom teaching, I find myself doing much more in other ways too. As our school counselors go on leave, even their replacement goes on leave too, so the net result is more vacancies and more work is left undone. I also found myself talking to parents and understanding that the child is struggling since the family is suffering: in a typical family, one or both parents may have lost their jobs; in some cases, my student could not attend class since she began to work to help pay bills. I am not a social worker, not a counselor, but I help some parents to call the unemployment office and translate the application for them. As these needs build up, I am finding that in order to teach, I have to try to address these other issues first. It is getting harder and harder to stay steady on my treadmill.

In terms of personal impact, I am just recovering from the 2008 furlough. At the time, my two kids at home were age 8 and 11. Now, they are working their way through college. Their independence gives me hope. But it still takes more than one paycheck to pay rent. As head of my household of 3, my annual income is at 65% of the area median income. With Governor Ige's plan to cut pay by 9% via furlough, it translates into less \$450 per month for me. That is my entire food budget for the month. Although this pay reduction is applied equally to other unions and managers of the state government, it is not necessarily equitable.

I hope that the Board of Education and lawmakers can guide us through 2021 and beyond without further cuts to public education.

Sincerely,

Helen W. Lau  
English and Chinese Teacher  
Moanalua High School





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY for teachers**

1 message

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**Brynne Clark** <brynne.clark@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:56 AM

**This is my TESTIMONY!!**

**As a teacher, I would like to ask that our state protect public education funding by asking for the board's support in our fight to prevent furloughs.**

**Furloughs would greatly impact my family especially during these trying times of less income. Furloughs would also impact my students in the class by receiving even less instruction time than they are already receiving, and would impact our entire school. I beg you please do not allow furloughs.**

**Sincerely,  
~Brynne**

--

Brynne Clark  
First Grade Teacher  
Pomaika'i Elementary School  
[4650 S. Kamehameha Ave](#)  
[Kahului, HI 96732](#)  
[REDACTED]

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## The Senate

STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Hawaii Board of Education  
Special Meeting on December 17, 2020

Submitted via Email  
Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Petition Number 20-01  
Proposing new rule for public input

Aloha, Chair Payne and Members of the Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my **support** for amending the process by which the Department of Education responds to comment requests. Any such comment by the DOE should be informed by the interests and will of the impacted community.

The purpose of this proposed amendment would not create an undue burden on DOE or shift responsibility for gathering public comment from proposing entities to DOE. Rather, if asked to comment, the BOE could either decline to provide any comment or make sure it has considered all the facts before commenting.

By asking DOE for comment, the applicant seeks another voice to add to its public outreach, a voice that might not have been heard otherwise. At a minimum, the school principal and school advisory council should be polled. When there is a potential controversy, an opportunity for public input related to school operations or concerns should be welcomed.

In the case of the Na Pua Makani wind project, a controversial development that had been opposed by the Kahuku community for years, the DOE missed an opportunity to accurately comment. Community concerns, particularly about health and wellbeing of students and residents, are school concerns.

Informed decision making requires informed input. DOE would do better by considering the opinion of affected communities before commenting on controversial projects. Surely, the BOE has it within its kuleana to improve its commenting process.

Mahalo for your favorable consideration.

Respectfully,

Gil Riviere  
Senator, District 23  
Oahu's North and Windward Shores

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I, Jalen Lee urge you to consider preventing the devastating furloughs that will begin to occur on January 4th. The imposed furloughs that Governor David Ige has announced not only will affect teachers throughout the state but will drastically create long lasting effects on the Keiki of Hawaii. Why is it that when the state is in a financial crisis, the state workers, especially the teachers are cut first? This must stop. This has gone on for many years and through many of the past governors of Hawaii. WHY? We have fought so long to finally get to where we are. Do you know how long it took some teachers to get to that 9-10% raise? Now, it is being taken away all at once. This is unacceptable.

Everytime teacher pay cuts or possible furloughs are in the talks, my familys livelihood is on the chopping block. We have to not only prepare ourselves for the impacts that the pay cut or furloughs will have on our family but we have to consider leaving our state we have called home. My family has worked so hard to get to the point where we are and now we are back to square one. Please I beg with all the teachers and keikis across Hawaii to fight for us and reconsider the furloughs that will take place on January 4th. Like Rita Pierson so forcefully states "Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be." So I will end with this question, "Who will be our keikis champion when all the teachers has gone elsewhere?"

Mahalo,

Jalen Lee



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## I Oppose DOE Budget Cuts and Furloughs

1 message

**John Fitzpatrick** <fitzformai@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:34 AM

Aloha Honorable Hawaii Board of Education,

I am John Fitzpatrick and I am a 7th grade integrated science teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate School. I am writing because I am opposed to the furloughs that Governor Ige is mandating at a time when our already meagerly funded Hawaii public education system faces drastic budget cuts that will lay off thousands of teachers, reduce the ability to provide needed supplies to our students, and PPE in our classrooms for a safe place for our students to learn and develop during this COVID 19 pandemic.

Cutting the days we have to prepare and get ready to safely welcome back our students for the first time during the pandemic is dangerous and utterly irresponsible. As a teacher we have been tasked with learning new modes of teaching, preparing for multiple modes of education, and adapting to the new "normal" of educating our keiki and helping them develop as people through this pandemic. This has been an incredibly challenging year and cutting the time we get to prepare for our students, grade, and help our students through a pandemic does not make it any easier.

As a teacher who already on average makes less than \$18,000 as their counterparts with similar degrees a roughly 10% pay cut will make paying bills incredibly difficult for me and my fellow co-workers. So many of my coworkers can barely afford rent, live off their credit cards, and can not afford child care for their children during this pandemic. 60-70% of teachers in Hawaii have second jobs mainly in the tourism industry and have already lost a substantial portion of their income. I am one of those teachers that have lost roughly \$15,000 per year of income because I got laid off of my second job as a captain on Ali'i nui. Both these pay cuts combined amounts to a 30% pay reductions.

I understand there are so many families across the State and across the country who have been hit hard by the pandemic. But we can not be crabs in a bucket and tear down everyone when there are other ways to balance the budgets. When there are surpluses the legislature and governor rarely support pay raises, but when there is an economic collapse we are the first ones on the chopping block.

A year ago today we were asking for \$40 million in order to fund special education, Hawaiian immersion and hard to staff differentials to teachers who work in these areas and they have been widely successful despite not having widespread support at the state legislature and coming from within the DOE budget and supplementary budget of Governor David Ige. We were also asking for \$30 million to get veteran teachers that have sacrificed and been hit hard during every economic downturn to be placed at their correct step. It was like pulling teeth from the legislature and governor to try to do what is right for our most experienced teachers and unfortunately the pandemic hit and all was lost.

During this economic downturn we must band together and ask the legislature to look for alternatives like taxing REITS, asking those making more than \$200,000 to pay 10% more in taxes (this is how much we are being cut and if we, the worst paid teachers in the nation when adjusted for cost of living, can "afford" it they can certainly afford it), close loopholes that allow corporations to avoid state and local taxes, increase sales tax on out of state online shopping, a daily hotel education fee are ideas that we could do to help balance the budget.

Thank you for fighting for teachers and I hope you send a strong message to the governor and the state legislature that we can no longer balance budgets on the backs of our keiki and their teachers.

Mahalo,  
Fitz

**John Fitzpatrick**

*Fitz For Maui*

email: [fitzformai@gmail.com](mailto:fitzformai@gmail.com)

████████████████████  
[85 Mokuahi St.](#)  
[Makawao,](#)  
[Hi, 96768](#)



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for 12/17/20**

1 message

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**Jessica Kato** <jessicakato80@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:37 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and the Board of Education,

Although my husband and I are both public school teachers, I am writing to you as a parent of a public school first grader and a preschool student, who will be entering public kindergarten next year.

When I shared the furlough concerns with a friend of mine, who has young children in public schools, initially she expressed concern for our family about the reduction in pay. However, she did not fully understand that it also meant her children would have less days of school. When she realized that, her immediate reaction was to turn to her husband and say, we need to put in applications to private schools, just in case.

I am concerned about the expected teacher exodus and impending shortage, but I am equally concerned about an exodus of students, whose parents have the means to send them to a private setting. The inequity in our school systems will grow deeper, the divide even more wide. I am a proud public school parent and I believe I will keep my children in the system, but it has crossed my mind if that is in their best interest. Will they be forever behind their peers in other settings? With their formative school years being cut short, will I be able to compensate at home?

My family is a family of educators, so my children are lucky; however, not all children will have the benefit of added learning at home and there will be long term effects on our society.

I believe the Board of Education shares my hope for a society in which all children have the opportunity to learn and grow to their fullest potential. Please use your power and influence to help our leaders to think creatively about budgets and ensure that these opportunities are not cut short.

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Jessica Kato  
Kevin Kato  
Public School Parents



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Pamela Mintzer** <pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:39 AM

**I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

I am writing on how I will be affected by the furloughs announced by the HIDOE and Governor Ige. I am an occupational therapist who has been working here in the State of Hawaii on the island of Maui since 2015. Originally coming here as a contractor and taking a payout to move here, I switched over to the DOE OT position 3 years later after feeling "used" as a contractor who was constantly moved around, yet again, taking a payout in hopes of stability and consistency in my new position. I work in a hard to fill position servicing three islands in one complex and at one point having over 12 schools across the three islands, not leaving much time for many of my workload demands to be completed in an 8 hour work day.

Having furlough days fall on teacher work days speaks volumes about how we as HIDOE employees are viewed. What that states is teachers and staff should work for free, unless of course it is expected that we have the children come into school, sit 6 feet apart in silence while we are busy scrambling to prepare lessons for the following days. Expecting related service providers to meet IEP demands in less school days adds more stress to an already stressful position. Expecting those of us who already have unmanageable caseloads to continue to reach deeper and stretch ourselves further is unethical, unfathomable, and incomprehensible.

The past 9 months have been some of the most challenging months for many of us. Working with children with special needs, their families, and their team members requires incredible thought, planning, collaboration, and empathy individualized for each child. I work well past my 8 hour work day planning, prepping, meeting with staff and parents, and collaborating all to provide the best service for the children and families I work with everyday. Many of my children have cried to me, many of the parents of those children have cried to me, and many staff members have cried to me. The emotional toll the past 9 months on our staff, parents, and children's mental health is apparent to those of us that work in the field. Your actions indicate that doesn't seem to matter to the board. I ask, how many of you have seen or heard students cry that they miss their friends, that they miss coming to their safe space of school, that they miss learning? How many of you have witnessed parents of children yell at their kids, console their kids, speak to us as team members out of stress? How many of you have struggled to put food on your table? How many of you have had a hard time paying your bills?

I live alone and support myself. I've had three jobs at one time in order to remain here on Maui, doing what I love. In order to cover student loans, utilities, rent, a car payment, and other bills I have had to sacrifice many other opportunities during my time here, but because I had a consistent paycheck every two weeks, I was able to scrape by and (barely) make enough to live on. However, at this current time, the thought of working another job (which are not easy to come by during the pandemic) leaves me burying my head in my hands- how am I supposed to perform at another job when my tank is empty? How am I going to perform well enough to keep another job and make enough money to cover the pay I will be losing from these furlough days? When will I have the time and energy to work another job when most of my free time is spent doing work related things or trying to further myself in my career path to be a better OT for the kids? How will I travel to see my family, some of which I have not seen in 3 years due to my financial situation?

By suggesting these furloughs, the opinion on the importance of education, the future of our keiki, and how we as staff are valued is stated loud and clear. Those of us that work tirelessly day after day don't feel appreciated for our efforts to help teach and educate the children within the community. It appears as though our children and those of us that help

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

raise them into strong, kind, and educated contributors to society are not valued. Due to these furloughs I, like many others, will be considering other job opportunities where our efforts are valued.

Pam Mintzer, OTR/L  
Canoe Complex Occupational Therapist  
Maui District  
[pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us](mailto:pamela.mintzer@k12.hi.us)

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**furloughs :(**

1 message

**Erin Thompson** <etnandi@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Hawai'i BOE,

I am a high school science teacher of 27 years in Kona, Hawai'i.

My life has been dedicated to the education of our keiki, and it has been a joy and an honor to work as a public school teacher all these years. Unfortunately there is a darker side to this otherwise fulfilling career: Hawai'i teachers are the lowest compensated teachers in the nation.

Teachers struggle to make ends meet, teachers leave the profession in large numbers, teachers feel unsupported and unappreciated, and teachers are exhausted.

I know our state must take measures to address the current economic crisis, but cutting down the lowest paid teachers in the United States, slashing the time and resources these stalwart educators are able to give to the students of Hawai'i - these measures do not make good sense.

Most of us can barely afford to live here as it is. Please don't drive us out of the jobs, and away from the land and people, we love.

Sincerely,

Erin Thompson

<https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/wallethub-hawaii-teacher-salary-goes-least-furthest-in-u-s/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/03/16/592221378/the-fight-over-teacher-salaries-a-look-at-the-numbers>

<https://kahlerfinancial.com/financial-awakenings/weekly-column/teacher-salaries-adjusted-for-cost-of-living>

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-06-01-graph-where-do-us-teacher-salaries-really-go-the-furthest>



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Ms. O** <teachermichellerose@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha esteemed board members,

I am concerned about the proposed furloughs for teachers. I am probationary teacher, highly qualified in science. I teach 7th grade Life Science. My time as a teacher is spent preparing lessons and assignments, working directly with students during class time and one and one, communicating with parents, counselors, administrators and other teachers on my team to support student needs, reviewing and giving feedback on student work, inputting grades, and researching new teaching practices and tools to increase student engagement and make learning more relevant and aligned with the HA standards and 3 dimensions of NGSS. If we are to undergo furloughs and a 9..2% pay cut, which of these practices that I do as a teacher should be reduced or eliminated?

Also next semester when the proposed cuts to our pay are proposed to begin, we will begin concurrent teaching: teaching students virtually at home while simultaneously teaching students who are physically present in the classroom with us. Of course we will need to monitor and support students during this time as well as uphold expectations and maintain our classroom culture for two separate environments at the same time, Essentially doing double the work. How does it make sense to cut our pay at a time when we are being asked to do even more? This is time that additional resources and support should be available, not fewer.

I am asking you to please reject the proposed furloughs and pay cuts and instead dedicate more support for educators and families.

Mahalo For Your time.

Sincerely,

Michelle O'Byrne



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Fwd: Testimony for upcoming furloughs**

1 message

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**Jamie-Sue West** <jslwest55@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:42 AM

Hello,

I am writing to provide testimony against the upcoming DOE furloughs. Although I am not a DOE employee or a parent, I am close to many who are and am very worried what will happen to our keiki. I am also quite concerned we will lose some of the most amazing teachers and other DOE employees I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. My background and my company based in Hawaii is one that is a research, science and data backed one. When this pandemic began and Gov. Ige suggested a pay cut to teachers, I started doing my own research and data analysis. Did you know that Hawaii teacher salaries are one of the lowest when ranked against the cost of living. Please refer to my attached scatter chart showing what an incredible outlier our state is already and the next slide shows you how much more of an outlier Hawaii would be if there is a pay cut.

I also included the Medicare Reimbursement rate vs. Cost Index because Hawaii is rated the WORST in the country - no wonder we have so few good doctors and other Health Care Workers. I have also included the source date for these scatter charts in an excel workbook along with the websites where the data from which the data was retrieved.

I urge you... Please do not make Hawaii any worse than it already is. Our keiki are our future and their teachers deserve to be able to make a living wage. They aren't making a living wage now, but to then furlough them means many will leave the state and leave us with a shortage! Look at the data... the facts and do the right thing.

Mahalo for your time.

Jamie-Sue West  
Kihei, HI  
Hawaii-Based Business Owner

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**2 attachments** **Hawaii CI vs. TSR Pres.pdf**  
339K **Hawaii Cost & Reimbursement Analysis\_16Dec2020.xlsx**  
18K



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Anne Alves** <alves.anne.a@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:42 AM

To Chair Payne and the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VB: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees. My name is Anne Alves and I am a teacher at Waianae Intermediate School.

I humbly ask that you stand in solidarity with teachers and the thousands of students that these illegal furloughs will negatively affect. History has shown us how furloughs and budget cuts to education create long-lasting damage not only to our schools and to our students. I will not write to you a message dripping with ethos because, to be frank, I do not have the time. I, like many educators are working 80+ hours a week to do the most we can for our students. The challenges presented this year have been tremendous but we keep on persevering because thousands of kids are depending on us to do so. It is they who will suffer the most if we don't keep giving of ourselves. But to be very clear, when teachers are suffering, our students feel it, no matter how hard we try to mask our pain and be strong for them.

What I will point out, though, is that these furloughs are illegal and unnecessary. These furloughs were not negotiated with the union and Governor Ige's decision has been made prematurely. The governor had said that he would only impose furloughs as a last resort. But even members of our state legislature have said there are still possibilities in the works. If the state has no money, it has no money. But, it's too early to make that call when the state is projected to have an estimated \$546 million surplus at the end of the fiscal year. The bottom line is that the state will not go bankrupt without these furloughs, but many educators very well may.

Please stand in solidarity with us.

Respectfully,

Anne Alves

December 15, 2020

Aloha Honorable Board chair Catherine Payne and Hawaii Board of Education members,

My name is Sandy Ramiscal, a teacher at Farrington High School. I am submitting testimony on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

I am at a loss for words that the state expects teachers to accept another blow to our lives. I realize that everyone is taking a hit, but if we are expected to provide an excellent quality education to the youth of Hawai'i, why are you taking away any value and support we need to do this?

It just amazes me that people have this view of what teachers are doing and have been doing since March 13, 2020. Even before this, people didn't respect what we do to help our students. I treat my students as my kids. They will always be my kids and I will care for them always. When you take away anything from teachers, you are just expecting us to do our work as slaves. It hurts my pride and soul when people believe that it is so easy.

For ALL of us, we feel like this is our first year of teaching all over again. No one taught us how to do distance learning when I got my Bachelor's and my Master's. But WE DID IT because we love our jobs. Now the state (the Governor and the Superintendent) wants us to keep doing our job, but with less. My husband and I went through Furlough Fridays and I don't think we ever recovered from that. We now have two teens that we should be saving for so they have some money for college/university, but how can we do that? Other teacher friends have second jobs or small businesses, but how can we do that when everyone else has less money? I know people who are retiring earlier than expected simply because this is coming. I, unfortunately, cannot.

I respectfully request you consider our plight as we move on in this time of struggle. You can only expect excellent quality if you value the people who are doing the hard work.

Sincerely,

Sandy Ramiscal

*Public school graduate 1991 Farrington*

*Public school educator since 1996*

*Parent of two public school students (class of 2024 and 2026)*

*Wife of public school administrator*



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**Davi Kanewa** <wehiona@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:45 AM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item **V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.**

Aloha B.O.E Members,

Mahalo for allowing me to testify today- December 16, 2020.

I usually start most testimonies with questions. Today is no different. My questions are:

1. Are our keiki TRULY our future? Well, assuming most of us come out of our pandemic not just alive but healthy & ready to face whatever else our world has in store for us, then the answer is a resounding YES! Second question:
2. If our keiki are, in fact, truly our future, then what kind of future are we talking about & how do we plan to support our future, our keiki?

The furlough logic presented to me is one of hypocrisy, geared toward a "forced-to-work" (during a pandemic, mind you- leaders tend to gloss over this quite complacently; hoping it "just goes away") mentality & despair. Let me explain...

1. Hypocritical furlough proposal- How do we value our keiki/ education/ future AND take things away from them at the same time? We proclaim & we push for teachers & students to "return to learn" & at the same time we say... "well, yes, we value all these things" and speak it from one side of our mouths, while saying, "and we're going to attain all these goals by taking learning days away from you (even though we're supposed to return to learn- hypocrisy), taking teachers away from you, taking food services away from you (as we continue to battle with homelessness, poverty & family/ mental health issues), taking custodial services away from you (leaving facilities unclean & sanitized during our pandemic); our health nurse positions are slowly but surely disappearing. Can you see the hypocrisy here?

Personally, my 'ohana is quite fortunate & my keiki is thriving in his virtual classes. He was even invited to be a part of a special program this school year because his kumu felt that he has potential to develop further as a student & human being- we all can. Perhaps we need to think about continuing along this train of thought & have keiki who are doing well at home continue learning at home for the academics & perhaps return to campus only for certain subjects, like: PE, Social/ Emotional development, etc.

2. Furlough on our Economy- Our state has relied way too long on a forced-to-work economy of tourism. Our commercial agricultures thrived & came to an end. When it did, our state supported those in this industry to get re-trained, so workers could continue to find jobs. We are a giving state. We are also a state that relies too much, for too long on industries that are unsustainable. We all suffer because we put all our eggs in to one (or too few unsustainable) basket(s). Our state workers, if they're smart, knowing that their pay will be cut, will NOT spend more- on anything! Our already tight budgets, will become even tighter. We will spend less & how is that supposed to help 'stimulate' our economy. Do the math. How are we supposed to spend more when we're being offered less? Hypocrisy rears it hypocritical head once again: We want our citizens to spend more to stimulate & grow our economy, but we're taking away more money. How does that work again? Oh yeah, the tourists will come to spend their \$... during covid. Do our leaders even care to support us, transparently through covid? More hypocrisy... how do we keep ourselves safe when we continue to welcome tourists from all over the world in to our tiny island state? And even if there was no covid, tourism again, is an unsustainable, island crowding, resource killing/ depriving industry. If you take away our state services & pay you are showing our keiki & our communities that they only matter when our leaders say they matter. Right now, our leaders are showing & telling us that a furlough is supposed to help our economy. However, I beg to differ. To me it sounds like hypocrisy, it smells like methane gas, it tastes like hunger & it feels like betrayal.

Specifically, our HSTA has been waging wage wars with our own state government for years. I was a state HSTA rep. during our last strike almost 20 years ago & our leaders were fearless; worked hard & long hours to get our teachers where they are today. In the twinkling of an eye, it is all to be taken away- raises, differential incentives, benefits. You can not buy morale. You can not put a price on potential. But you can make the right decisions to support your keiki & 'ohana by getting rid of unwanted & unnecessary projects that do not support our communities as a whole. The rail, TMT, outdated roundabouts/ highway plans, etc. reassess what we all need in our island: clean air, clean water, healthy resources, sustainable resources that will allow all our keiki to thrive NOW so they have & can be a part of a future that thrives!

Mahalo for listening.

Kumu Kanewa, Hilo Union Preschool  
Special Education Teacher



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**Testimony RE Teacher Furloughs (due by 1:30 pm Dec. 16)**

1 message

**Derek Bishop** <derek.bishop@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:45 AM

Dear Esteemed Hawaii State DOE Board of Education Members,

I am a special education teacher of 31 years and I am against the furloughs.

I understand that we are in unprecedented times. I understand that Hawaii is facing unprecedented financial challenges.

Having said this, I do believe that there will be damaging cascading impacts on our keiki due to the proposed furloughs. For days that students would otherwise be in school, that is missed instruction. For non-instructional days, that is a loss of planning, preparation, and professional development for teachers that will negatively impact quality of instruction for students.

Additionally, there will be a loss of pay for teachers. Hawaii already ranks the lowest in the nation for pay when cost of living is factored in. Many teachers already are living paycheck to paycheck and are barely making it financially. Loss of income will cause a spike in credit card balances, car loan defaults, and housing evictions. Rents and housing prices are going up steeply at this time as wealthy people on the mainland are relocating to Hawaii in search of better circumstances for their families to weather the ravages of COVID-19. This comes as a double whammy for furloughed teachers.

Personally, I have many expenses that I will not be able to meet if I am placed on furlough. Though I love Hawaii, and though I appreciate the quality of life that I have here, I will be forced to consider relocating to California where I can earn \$40,000 more per year with a shorter work year, less complex special education compliance procedures, and a lower cost of living. We all pay a big price financially to be here in Hawaii. Furloughs with a four-year time horizon (as suggested by Governor Ige), could be the straw that breaks the camel's back for many of Hawaii's teachers who have more lucrative mainland options.

Hawaii already has a severe teacher shortage. Cutting pay at this time will not help the DOE's recruiting efforts. Schools will struggle with higher turnover of staff. Students will face higher class sizes and a revolving door of long-term subs and beginning teachers with inadequate training.

I urge the Board of Education to consider the negative impact furloughs will have on students and teachers. I beg the Board of Education to demand that Governor Ige seek funds from the Federal government -- or elsewhere -- to shore up the State's finances during this period of COVID-19 impacts. US billionaire net worth (think Apple, Amazon, Walmart and the like) is said to be up \$1 trillion due to the COVID shutdown, as our economy becomes more centralized due to the loss of 100's of thousands of small businesses. Why can't the owners of these megacorporations share some of their record profits with the people most adversely affected by the policies that have benefitted them? There must be another, less damaging path forward through this than DOE furloughs at this time!

Mahalo,

Derek Bishop  
Special Education Teacher  
Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School, Big Island

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Amy Colmenares** <mrscolmenares7@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:59 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education Members:

I am writing against the imposed furloughs that the State has put forth, and am highly disgusted at the sheer disrespect these imposed pay cuts shows to teachers.

I have been teaching at Highlands Intermediate School in Pearl City for 21 years. In my first year I experienced the strike and in subsequent years I have experienced numerous acts of disrespect to the teaching profession via furloughs, pay cuts, and pay freezes. In a year when I am working harder than ever to maintain some normalcy and rigor in education for my students, it's beyond hurtful to be hit with these furloughs. My husband is also a DOE teacher and we have two children in the DOE system. To say that these cuts will adversely affect our family is an understatement.

The way in which we have received information regarding the furloughs is another slap in the face. Our administrators are just as blindsided as we are, and our union hasn't even been informed by the employer to discuss the dates and the ways in which the furloughs are being imposed.

Please support our children and education by finding and supporting other ways of balancing the state's budget. It's been far too long that teachers have been carrying this burden for the state.

Sincerely,  
Amy Colmenares



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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Lillian Shaw** <lilshaw168@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15,

I am a special educator at Kawanankoa Middle School. I am a highly qualified Sped as well as Math teacher. Due to the recent school closure, I have to impact meetings during my prep besides my regular annual IEPs and re-evaluations. I lost my prep period for these meetings and have to work over time on my lessons. I was told to complete all meetings before the end of this quarter.

I am stressed out and it impacted my mental health. Recently, I had symptoms of depression such as crying for no reasons and felt fatigue and lack of energy. I had scheduled appointments with a therapist and Psychologist to get professional help.

Today, I just got the furlough dates from the DOE. I put them in my calendar and feel sorry for myself and my colleagues who have to suffer financial hardship. I remember from Linda Lingo's era, there were two teachers who were a married couple, had to work as a waiter and waitress to meet their monthly mortgage payment. Similar situation will happen when the furlough takes place in January 2021-June 2021 which is illegal and against our existing contract. We need help we can to secure our teachers' income and not be impacted due to COVID, state loss of income.

We also need to recognize the stress level teachers have to face during this non-precedent virtual learning format. We had only several days to prepare ourselves before the school started this year. It was not fair for either teachers or students. Teachers' well being needs to be addressed and taken care of.

Lillian Shaw  
Kawanankoa Middle School  
Tel: (808) 294-0008  
Fax: (866) 875-7394



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Lindsay Sugihara Yuh** <lmsugihara@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:57 AM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB:Presentations on Question regarding Department of Education Furloughs

I strongly feel that the furloughs will have an extremely negative impact on both students and teachers. I am both a teacher and a mother and am so disheartened by the decision to impose furloughs. I have been working 20% harder this year as a 100% online teacher in order to make sure all my students' needs (academically, socially, emotionally, and health wise) are being met, so to be told that I will now be paid 9.2% less is a slap in face! This is very disappointing and for the first time ever, I ashamed to be a part of the DOE.

-Lindsay Yuh  
Parent and 3rd Grade Online teacher

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

j l &lt;jlhilo3@yahoo.com&gt;

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:47 AM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

Please protect public education funding. I ask you to support us in preventing the destructive furloughs.

I am a 32 year veteran teacher. I have dedicated my life to education. My family has been through furloughs and strikes before. Like many other educators, we have never recovered from them.

I am single mother of 3. I have the cost of college tuition, books, supplies, and student loans for my 2 daughters. My son is a senior in high school. He's already been stripped of his final year in high school and the celebration of his hard work and dedication because his parents made education TOP priority. I am already struggling to pay my bills. The BILLS! Which one do I eliminate? Electricity, water, propane for the heater and stove, gas, the much needed internet for education and work, car insurance, food, mortgage, cost of household, health, and living needs? Which one do I cut out? The rates are increasing! I could cut the internet, but what happens to my work at home? My daughter's college classes? The hotspots don't work well enough. I cancelled the the cable service months ago. I could eliminate the propane, we've done it before washing our clothes while we bathed in cold water and cooking on an outside fire instead. How about the struggle to pay for medical bills? I have thousands of dollars of medical bills to pay. I've already taken a loan on my retirement. Already decreased additional contributions to my retirement. Should I get one more job? I was up to 3 jobs, now down to 2 all while still teaching! How can I take on another job when I also take care of my elderly parents and family members with existing health problems, including myself? I have a 20 year old car that we share. One of my daughters went to the military, so we share that car too. I have an old house in need of repairs, but you make do with what you have. I do my own plumbing, carpentry, etc. Why? I am already struggling. Furloughs will be devastating and will affect our ability to survive financially. I will have to sell my home.

I had plans to continue teaching for another 6-8 years. I love teaching. I love my students. I am now considering many options.

I am considering retiring as soon as possible. I am not of age to retire yet. Retiring would be as early as the first quarter of next year. It is always a negative impact on students when an educator leaves during the school year. I am tormented with how that affects our students, but with furloughs, my family won't survive.

I am considering moving away from Hawaii with my children and parents. Being an NBCT does have it's benefits. I was born and raised in Hawaii with its high cost of living, the financial struggle is real and with furloughs, I can't make it staying in Hawaii.

I'm already looking for more jobs and selling things.

I personally know of 5 educators leaving the profession or retiring before they intended during the winter break. Several are moving to the mainland. These are absolutely wonderful, talented, dedicated educators. It is sad to see valuable experts in their field of education leaving. The loss will greatly affect our students.

Most of family members are employees of the State. We will all be affected by furloughs. I have family members who have lost their jobs and are already struggling due to the pandemic. A family

member has put off heart surgery because he feels his students' education are more important, he can't afford his portion of the medical bills or take leave, especially with furloughs coming up! Yet, he purchases thousands of dollars of art supplies for his students every year. We have cut down visits to the doctor due to the expenses of our co-pay. The furloughs will be devastating.

My principal has already informed us of positions being eliminated due to budget cuts. Cuts in teacher positions, EA's, tutors, supplies, operational costs will be devastating to our students' educational needs. Students are already behind due to the pandemic, virtual learning, synchronous teaching, negative impacts to their social emotional well-being. The imposed furloughs that Governor Ige plans to begin in January will have a prolonged, devastating impact on our teacher workforce, on our keiki, and our community.

Sincerely,  
Jacqueline Kubo Luna



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furlough Testimony

1 message

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**Kawai** <kawaimar@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:56 AM

We all understand that the pandemic has taken a toll on us all, however I am extremely disappointed in the decision to furlough the teachers.

I have 4 children in public school including 1 with special needs. All children are receiving an sub-standard education this year due to COVID, and these furloughs are going to further sub-standardize the education they are receiving.

With respect to my child with special needs, this will further disrupt his routine, cause an interruption in the services he is currently receiving (which by the way, is less frequent than it should be), and ultimately violates our rights under IDEA.

Teachers already work for crap pay and they give so much. Forcefully taking more of their already lacking paycheck is just insulting.

I ask that you reconsider and find somewhere else to meet your budget.

Respectfully,  
Gabrielle Mar  
Parent of 4 students, Waikiki Elementary



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Rayna Nitta** <rayna.nitta@wilsonschoolhawaii.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:56 AM

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education,

Thank you for your service and continued commitment to our keiki, our future. I am a second grade teacher at my alma mater, Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School in Honolulu. I write to you today in regard to discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

For myself, my colleagues, and my students, the past semester has been full of new learning. Teachers have figured out how to teach virtually, build relationships with students, and meet their learning needs from a distance. In order to do so to the best of my ability, I come to school at 7:00 AM, leave between 5-6 PM, and continue working at home for two to three more hours each night. On the weekends, I plan lessons, grade, continue to provide feedback to students, and catch up with other tasks that I didn't have the energy to do during the week. With the announcement of furlough days by Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto, my first thoughts were *I'm not going to make it and this is so not worth it*. Of course, those thoughts don't change the dedication that I have to my students, however I know I am not alone in feeling slighted. Morale is low; I have heard sentiments like *I want to quit, I can't handle this, and this is not what I signed up for* from more than one colleague.

These furloughs are not only heartbreaking from an emotional standpoint, they are bank-breaking. As it stands, my mortgage alone drains a full paycheck and dips into the next. My husband was recently accepted into graduate school, so we will soon be in further debt and have less income as he completes his coursework. Starting a family has been in the plans, but how can we adequately provide for a child when we are struggling financially to provide for ourselves?

Last week, my principal informed our faculty of deep budget cuts that will most likely impact staff positions. We were asked to brainstorm solutions and predict the potential impacts to our students and the staff who remain. Imagine the feeling of having to provide input as to which of our colleagues are most expendable. Amidst a pandemic that has impacted students' learning and socio-emotional well-being to the incredible degree that it has, no more should be taken away. In fact, this is a time when our operating budget needs to increase so that we have the resources to mitigate the negative impacts of the past nine months.

When I moved back home after living on the mainland for ten years, I chose to be a public school teacher. I knew it was going to be a lot of work for a lot less money. However, everyone has a breaking point and mine is just around the corner. For the sake of the students and in wanting to make a difference in my community, I've given so much of myself to this profession. The governor and superintendent may need to cut the budget, but it doesn't have to be in the form of furloughs. Implementing any amount of furlough days takes away from students and teachers, and doing so will only prolong and exacerbate the negative impacts that this pandemic has caused. Additionally, finding experienced, qualified teachers to replace the ones who will be leaving the profession due to these turn of events will be difficult, especially with the teacher shortage we are already facing. Thank you for hearing the cries of the teachers, families, and keiki of Hawai'i.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Sincerely,

Rayna J.S. Nitta

Second Grade Teacher

Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**RE: DOE furloughs and related school issues due to DOE Budget cuts**

1 message

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**Angie Hashimoto** <ahash94@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:57 AM

Aloha,

I would like to speak on behalf of the 3,000 plus Educational Assistant employees- statewide in the DOE Special Education department.

- \* Educational Assistants work supervised by a teacher and reviewed by administration.
- \* Most Educational Assistants put in timeless hours of support to assist and help their students' educational success.
- \* Presently, there are many Educational Assistants working in HUBs to support our students; some with certificated teachers, and some unbelievably on their own!
- \* Educational Assistants are directed to complete many tasks at their schools without training or oversight.
- \* Some are beyond their contracted duties, and beyond even what a teacher might do themselves!
- \* It is the DOE's responsibility to realize these issues and make sure that the right employee is tasked and doing the job to properly support our students.
- \* Educational Assistants need training as much as teachers, if in fact, more for their specific job needs and this changing educational workplace.
- \* Understanding the role of an Educational Assistant needs to be addressed by the DOE/BOE to better service our students with educational needs.
- \* Employees are being told there is a hiring freeze for Educational Assistant positions; how is this occurring as student support should be the DOE's main focus, which is also an Educational Assistants', main task/job duty(ies).
- \* As other staff have time to complete paperwork and other; Educational Assistants are tasked with more duties and find it difficult to complete their work tasks within their assigned workday.
- \* Communication to Educational Assistants' in regards to COVID19 and the health and safety issues on campus' must be given equal time at school wide meetings versus receiving a memo after issues are decided without Educational Assistants comments.

Angie Hashimoto, King Intermediate EA III



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**J W** <jawiehl@msn.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:58 AM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

To whom it may concern,

I have still never recovered from the last Linge fiasco of furlough Fridays (so now you make-call- them Mondays) and my family has suffered greatly because of this.

Not once have we ever received back the 9 +% that was stolen from us while those making 6 figures incomes have flourished during these years.

Every time we ask for fair wages, we get very little. Every time we ask for better benefits, we get less than our fair share.

A 9% cut is more impacting those of us at the low end of the scale than those at the top end. You could be considering fixing this problem not creating a worse problem for you public employees.

For those making 6 figures, cut their pay by 18% and then we can start to talk about what is fair for all in this pandemic.

You are just making things worse for every one

I can't even qualify for food stamps or free medical, or any such thing. Yet you want us to be out there in the COVID 19 public and you won't get the means to keep us all safe? What gives other than our own blood, sweat and tears?

This is so unfair for those of us who only clear \$29,000. a year. You are leaving all of us at poverty levels and you don't see the trickle down of this problem.

Nothing that we all pay for has been frozen at last year's levels, my fees increase, banks still charge interest at their usual pace, nothing has stopped except you want us to give up our low wages even further. UNFAIR!

Thank you for at least reading this.

Ms. Janine Wiehl  
HGEA Unit 3 @SR08



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

**Mahina Anguay** <mahina.anguay@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:58 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Mahina Anguay &lt;mahina.anguay@k12.hi.us&gt;, Paul Zina &lt;Paul.Zina@k12.hi.us&gt;

Aloha Chair Payne and Board members,

I'm testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB: Presentation on questions regarding DOE furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services

I am writing to share my concerns about the upcoming furloughs and the impact I believe it will have on my school, my students, my teachers, and my community.

I purposely waited until the absolute last day to complete my financial plan meeting with our district people because I knew that I was going to have to cut positions and the thought of telling people that I was going to have to eliminate their job just before the holidays was something I just couldn't bear to do. These are people who have given their entire career to Waimea High School, who have volunteered their personal time on weekends and evenings to chaperone events, travel with students to outer island competitions, and dug into their own pockets to cover costs for graduation cap and gowns or prom. Now my task is to figure out how we can still support students, minus these key people?

Furloughs in 2009 with its 5% cut hit all of us hard; the upcoming proposed 9% cuts will be devastating. As a department, we will lose teachers, support personnel, and administrators who will either take early retirement or just leave the profession entirely. At my school, I have ten staff members who may leave the HDOE because while we/they all understand the dire straits the state finds itself in, furloughs are like a slap in the face to those who have completely redesigned how we deliver instruction in the face of a pandemic. My staff has undergone intensive, continuous professional development since April to learn how to teach, assess, and engage students virtually. I am very worried about the possibility of having to replace up to 10 staff members while we are in a budget crisis.

I'm also concerned about how the proposed furlough dates will affect my 12-month classified staff as there will be two pay periods when they will have to furlough multiple days within a pay period. If we have to go down this road, I believe there has to be a better way to even out the economic hardship this will have on those who are the backbone of our organization.

I love my job and have found my true purpose in serving my community. My fervent hope is that the state finds other ways to bridge the budget shortfalls that do not include our schools or children.

Aloha,

Mahina Anguay  
Principal, Waimea High School

Mahina Anguay  
Principal, Waimea High School  
PO Box 339  
Waimea, HI . 96796  
808-338-6800

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Jennifer Grant** <jenniferg@farringtonhighschool.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:00 PM

To Honorable Catherine Payne, Chairperson, Board of Education,

I am testifying on discussion items, [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

My husband and I are both teachers here on Oahu. I am so worried about the furloughs. On a personal level, this will affect our family's budget without a doubt. I already have a second job to help with the bills but this contracted job will most likely end in June. Then what?

I know several teachers that are retiring based on the furloughs. I also know some fellow teachers that are already dealing with a lost job in the family and now this just adds to the burden.

I think it is so disgraceful that teachers for months were denied telework because we were being called "essential workers". All of a sudden when it comes to the budget, we are now expendable. This is a huge mistake.

The first furlough day is on a teacher workday. This is really a low thing to do to teachers. Many of our schools are returning face 2 face next semester and REALLY needed that planning day. The DOE knew that this would not make the parents mad so they took away a planning day. Despicable. The department knows that teachers will probably plan anyway.

I have always been the kind of teacher that answers emails at all hours (if I am awake), I grade on weekends, I contact students outside of my contactual hours. If furloughs go into effect, I will be sure to not work on those days which means students will not get my responses, planning will not occur, nor will grading. Who ends up getting hurt by this? The students.

We are so undervalued and under appreciated.No other profession is treated like this. If a first responder goes to a call, they get paid.

Please stop putting all of the states budget woes on teachers. We are trying our best to educate and be there for the students during this crazy time. Adding furloughs is just another slap in the face.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Grant



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for BOE Item 5B for 12.17.2020**

1 message

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**Caroline Freudig** <caroline.freudig@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:00 PM

Aloha Chair Payne & Board of Education Members,

I am submitting testimony regarding item 5B for the December 17th, 2020 Board of Education meeting.

As you may be aware, furlough dates were emailed to teachers on the evening of December 14th. These dates were decided by DOE leadership and did not include any discussion or any input from HSTA. I feel this is an example of poor leadership on the part of Superintendent Kishimoto. To expect teachers to be on furlough on the one day in between semesters (January 4th) or on the last teacher day of the school year for 10-month teachers (June 1st) is absolutely unfair to our students.

Teachers use January 4th to prepare, plan and get ready for the second semester as well as work on the Q2 grades & report cards. When are teachers expected to do this if that day is a furlough? How will they be ready for students January 5th without that day to get ready? This is an injustice to our students as well as to the teachers.

I was asked by KITV to give my thoughts on the furloughs and you might have seen portions of what I said on the news 12/15th or 16th. The gist of it is that teachers work way more than a 7-hour work day M-F on a regular basis and by taking this teacher day away it's implying that teachers will do 'what's right' anyway and 'work'.

Time and time again, teachers are being asked to do more with less and this is no exception. In the end, the teachers are exhausted and cannot give their students 100% so it's the students losing out on the best possible education because of the decisions that our DOE leadership is making.

Thank you for your time.

Caroline Freudig  
Kalāheo Elementary School, 1st Grade  
Room U-304  
Work: (808) 332-6801  
Cell: (808) 651-3357

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony regarding DOE furlough concerns

1 message

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**Crystal Motomura** <crystal.motomura@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:01 PM

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

The imposed furloughs that Gov. Ige plans to begin in January will have a prolonged, devastating impact on our teacher workforce and on our keiki.

The governor claims he has no choice but to implement furloughs. This is not true. He has options other than furloughs as HSTA President **Corey Rosenlee** has already sent in.

My concern is not only for the students who are already having a difficult time at home because their families wish them to be safe at home instead of on campus but also for our Big Island community.

We have already seen testimony from the **University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization study** last spring indicating "that multipliers can be even larger in periods of extreme slack, such as the downturn we are now entering. The results may very well understate the benefit of borrowing now to keep state and county spending in place.

Teachers are already feeling the pressure to take leave or retire if possible as the pandemic and the response of current covid planning in education is less than stellar. All of these things are coupled with the ongoing problem of offering wages to entice future teachers to select education as a profession.

Education must be made a priority as each time we make it the first place to target when considering budget cuts we are not, "Improving public education" as Governor Ige has said. Hawaii's children deserve quality public education and it should remain our moral and civic duty to give our keiki that opportunity by looking for ways to preserve education funding instead of cutting budgets that will harm students and the community for years to come.

--

Mahalo,  
Crystal Motomura  
Keaau Elementary School

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony for Furlough

1 message

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**Kaylie Breaux** <kaylie.breaux@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:03 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My husband and I are both teachers for the DOE; he is a middle school math teacher and I am a middle school special educator. We have made permanent decisions based off of the salary that was contractually promised to us. We bought a house, a vehicle, and have made other commitments such as life insurance plans, etc., that cannot be reversed without serious penalty. If this furlough goes through, we will have no other choice than to leave the profession and obtain employment with a salary that is honored per its legal contract which can support our family of 4 considering the cost of living in this state.

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough Testimony-NO PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1 message

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**Linsi Osland** <linsi.osland@k12.hi.us>  
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:09 PM

Aloha,

My name is Linsi Osland and I am a second year special education teacher at Kealakehe Elementary School. The purpose of this email is to address the direct impact teacher furloughs will have on myself, our school, and our community.

It has been extremely disappointing seeing education funding being viewed as the first resort to get us out of our current financial crisis. I received my undergraduate degree in a state that is nationally ranked for their support for public education, and I took a significant pay cut in order to teach in Hawaii. I love my job and my students, but I will not be able to survive on Hawaii island if our salary continues to decrease. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, special education teachers were finally feeling support and recognition with the differentials going into effect. Knowing that these could be taken away in addition to getting furloughed will force me to explore other career paths in order to afford to live here.

If I am having to work additional jobs in order to survive and continue to teach in Hawaii, this means that I will be taking jobs away from those in equal need in our community. It is also noteworthy to mention the extreme social-emotional distress COVID-19 has placed on our students due to the lack of stability and uncertainty at home. School is a "safe space" for many of our students, and continuing to decrease pay for teachers and remove school days not only hurts us, but directly hurts our students as well. With distance learning currently taking place, many community members have argued that our keiki need to go back to school in order to send parents back to work. How will furloughing teachers and eliminating school days alleviate this issue?

Ultimately, supporting our keiki and community needs to start with supporting education.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

--

Linsi Osland  
3rd Grade Special Education Teacher  
Kealakehe Elementary School

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**PLEASE**

1 message

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**Pamela Hurley** <hurleygirlie66@icloud.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Aloha,

Regarding furloughs:

I am a single mother. My senior is planning to attend college. I have never worked harder, had to be more flexible, or learned more, than teaching this school year. Take the money from elsewhere. Teachers are struggling financially as it is. I implore you. Our students are having a hard enough time learning virtually, less instructional days is the last thing they need.

This pandemic has caused enormous stress. Do not add to that with a new financial burden.

Sincerely,

Pamela Hurley

7th grade ELA

Kealakehe Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony on Furlough days

1 message

**Amber Riel** <a.riel@seariders.k12.hi.us>  
 To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

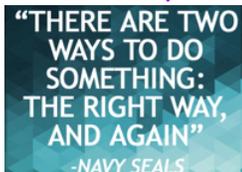
Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:11 PM

Good afternoon members of the Hawaii State BOE,

"Building the plane while we're flying it" has been the mantra echoed by my administrators since the beginning of this pandemic as a way to smooth over the frayed nerves and snuff out any inkling of discontent of teachers at my school, Waianae High School, as we have faced down one change after another and a severe lack of clarity and proactive planning. Teachers, by nature, are planners. Even in my first years of teaching about 15 years ago, I had the entire semester planned out before the students set foot in the classroom. We have transitioned from face-to-face learning to fully remote in March to hybrid at the beginning of this year to now hybrid with most students at home, which forces us to teach students online and in person concurrently. Every time the plan changed mid-flight, we regrouped, rallied, and rearranged our curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments. Every one of those changes and adjustments took time to create so that we could welcome our students into our physical and virtual classrooms the next day and ensure them that even though the outside world is chaotic right now, school is still a stable environment for them with adults who truly care about them, as well as their education.

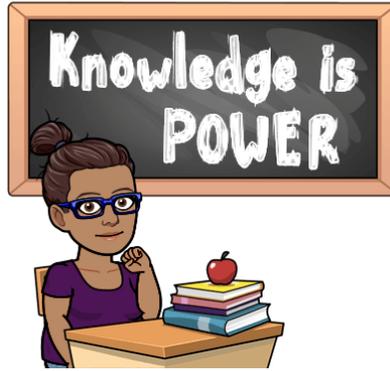
We all understand our state's economy is hurting just as we all are from this pandemic. We can see it as we drive around the island and see boarded up businesses who ran out of parts to build their planes while they flew. Money is tight. Money for teachers has always been tight. While I do not at all agree with the furloughs as an economic savior, I am more concerned right now with the fact that during the last week of this semester it was determined that our first furlough day would be our day between the semesters. This is a teacher work day that we have fought hard to have included in our contract. In a high school on a block schedule, like Waianae High School, that means creating curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments for a brand new course, for some up to 3 brand new courses. We needed 9 days to prepare for virtual learning at the beginning of this semester and we were still largely "building that plane as we flew it". Now, as we head into the spring semester, we don't even get the one day our contract allows. This final week of the semester is usually used to administer final exams and work with students to revise their work from the semester, before taking a much deserved winter break and returning fresh on the day between semesters to finalize grades and prepare for the new semester. With the recent announcement that we are being furloughed on that teacher work day, my colleagues and I will either be frantically trying to administer finals, help students revise work, finalize grades, and plan for all of the courses we will need Google Classrooms set up for in the spring this week or will end up surrendering a large portion of our winter break with our families to get these tasks done. Many of my colleagues will end up opting for working for free on that furlough day just to get the work done we know needs to happen. Without that day between the semester, we will all undoubtedly be back in that same plane frantically trying to put that plane together starting January 5, 2021 during every spare second while trying to also teach our students via Google Meets. While I'd rather not have any furlough days because we have already bent over backwards and put our lives on the line, both literally and financially, several times in support of our students, I especially am against giving up the day between semesters that we use to prepare for our students.

Without wax,



**Amber Riel**  
 Algebra 1 & 2 Teacher  
 Waianae High School  
 (812) 266-0451  
 a.riel@seariders.k12.hi.us

*Mathematics may not teach us how to add love or minus hate, but it gives us every reason to hope that every problem has a solution.*



Board of Education GBM December 17, 2020

Written Testimony submitted by Susan A. Pcola-Davis

**OPPOSE: V B** Presentation on questions regarding the DOE furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

As if the situation wasn't bad enough, let's cut salaries, let's furlough teachers, can't fix the unemployment system to improve the economy, that's a lost cause. So, yes, locals have to spend wisely. This is the domino effect of relying on tourism and education is ALWAYS at the bottom.

Hawaii is notorious for making hasty decisions with band aid solutions. The Department of Education budget cuts and furlough days are just two examples of how the state puts education first.

It is imperative that the Board understand that delaying these decisions made in haste, the effects of Ebenezer Scrooge economics (google it, and the Board's obligation to our state's Education system is negatively affecting the students, teachers, and families of Hawaii. The teachers should not have to testify to draw you the dismal picture. You are intelligent, you already know. Don't plead with teachers to testify to the effects of these actions because you need to HEAR them. They have been pleading with you for over 6 months. The Department still does it her way, regardless of what is heard at this meeting. A red flag should have gone up when the Board did not have a chance to provide input or comment on the submitted budget because it was ALREADY ON THE GOVERNOR'S DESK!

The Board must take a stance, alongside of HSTA, regardless of your appointment to the Board by the Governor. If not, the Board is part of the problem, "another brick in the wall."

It is a disgrace to the teaching profession that our Governor takes this position that education gets lumped in with other government entities to salvage our economy. Yet, he designates teachers as essential employees, forcing them to work and then ask for lowering their pay and furloughs. Other essential employees are protected BUT NOT OUR TEACHERS.

From the last meeting, the Board MUST, required by law, approve an Education budget, with zero input. The reluctant voting of "aye" from Board members is unacceptable. If the Board is required to approve the budget, then those members that did not want to, should have been able to vote their conscience.

The Board of Education has become a platform for discussions and testimonies that lead down the rabbit hole.

No amount of testimonies, written or oral, will have the action taken that is necessary to stand our ground in the face of this travesty.

Nothing should be stopping the Board for requesting a formal meeting with the Governor, yourselves, and AT LEAST plead your case. If you truly support the Department, then show it!

The community is losing faith in the Board of Education, please step up to the plate.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**(no subject)**

1 message

**Genevieve Gandy** <gengandy@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:12 PM

My name is Genevieve Gandy, I have been a Special Education teacher for 11 years. I taught my first year on Oahu before moving to the mainland for the past ten years, where I continued to teach Special Education before moving back to Hawaii to be closer to family. I am a single mom and I am barely managing. I am very concerned about the furloughs because many educators already live paycheck to paycheck. I absolutely love my job and the students I work with. I can't imagine doing anything else. Luckily I have a loving family that helps me take care of my son while I go to work.

&gt;

I am also concerned about my health and safety as my school had a positive case this month, yet as "essential workers" we are required to come into work. I am especially worried about bringing something home to my parents; both in their mid seventies, or to my son, I continue to come to work each day because I want to be there for my students. I am not aware of any other jobs cutting pay for "essential workers".

&gt;

Teachers and their families have been put at risk each day. We have been asked to completely alter our jobs to fit the restrictions of the pandemic. We have become technology experts, counselors, nurses, CDC guidelines experts and classroom cleaners. Most of these additional duties or tasks have been accomplished with no additional training or funding. We've taken these costs out of our own pockets in order to continue serving our students and communities. We have not asked for anything in return because we are here for our students and their families. However, we are now being targeted for furloughs that will hurt teachers, students and families during an already difficult time. Society getting back to normal rests heavily on teachers and schools. In order for families to go back to work, they need schools to function normally, yet furloughs will negatively impact that process.

Please consider serious efforts to find a more effective solution with less impact to teachers, students and families in our state. I strongly believe that further discussion and consideration of less impactful options should be vigorously pursued at this point. Certainly a "blanket" one size fits all furlough program for State employees is not the final answer nor the best answer. A more specific and targeted approach to solve the State's budget problems should be undertaken. Some possible areas to consider could be; a temporary salary cut back for any State employee with a six figure or higher per year income, not a "pay cut" disguised as a furlough program for Classroom teachers. Another avenue is a strenuous scrub of all State funded positions to identify and/or eliminate any funded but not filled positions. Eliminate outmoded or unused programs such as outdated computer programs, under served outreach programs. To lower maintenance and support costs, a system wide review to identify unused or excess equipment/supplies. Two specific examples might be unused musical instruments locked in closets at schools which no longer have a music program or art supplies that could be moved from schools which no longer have an art program to one that does. These could then be redistributed to other schools/districts. Also, maintenance, lunch room, or other physical support equipment could be moved from schools with dropping enrollment to schools with more students. These actions would all save money and not require using new funds or appropriations to purchase new supplies or equipment.

None of the above suggestions will solve all the DOE funding challenges nor the State's at large. However, given that we've yet to see our elected politicians at the local, county, or State Legislature members vote to take a total across the board pay cut, it is a bit frustrating to see that furloughing "essential worker" Classroom teachers is a first choice for saving the budget. Having these elected leaders set the example up front would certainly make accepting a furlough pay cut more believable if not acceptable.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Helena Costa** <keanuenue@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:16 PM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear Chair Payne and BOE,

I am writing in response to the proposed furloughs.

The issues here are manifold. However, educators- particularly locally-grown educators- do not have a nest egg. We are not well-paid, despite many of us holding multiple degrees, having many years of service, and continuously completing professional development to become more competent in our field. 9.6% of a significantly smaller salary than other state workers puts many of us straight into the alarming situation of not having enough money to cover bills, but still making too much to qualify for assistance. When we were asked to pivot and create a totally new form of instructional delivery, it did not come with many of the necessary programs- we have already spent a lot of money out of our own pockets trying to meet the educational needs of our students. It is already a financial struggle for me to meet the needs of my own family and my class.

The time, care and money we have poured into making this year work as best as we can is enormous. The vitriol that comes back at us from the public is disheartening to say the least. But we did not create this pandemic, and we are doing our best to keep the keiki and ourselves safe and educated.

The salt in the wound is taking the furlough days from our teacher prep days. One day is never enough to reflect, plan, complete grades, clean things up and get the room ready for another semester in a good year. This year, the work takes so much more time- creating digital content, delivering it through live instruction, responding to student work takes hours- far, far beyond our contracted hours, but many of us are doing it. Those days, to open a semester, to close the school for the year, are precious. We do a lot of work on our own time, and taking away the little time we are given is a slap in the face. Especially because we know that those duties will still be expected to be performed- so it is a pay cut. The workload is not lessened, you are just taking away the paid time to do it. Unlike other professions, because we care for children, we cannot just "make time"- most of our hours are completely dedicated to working with the children. The only way to complete those duties is to do it on our own time, which is already filled with all the other educational duties that we are expected to complete within an unreasonably short period of time.

Additionally, we are also being asked to prepare to switch models again. How are we expected to continuously shift and develop good content, which benefits the kids, with no time to do it?

If you are going to furlough us, at least treat us with the dignity the rest of the furloughed workers will receive, which is an adjustment in work in exchange for a pay cut, and protect the already insufficient preparation days we have. Take the days throughout the 6 months. Treat our students with respect by giving us enough time to prepare things for them properly. Or don't take them at all, and look for other means.

Mahalo for your time,  
Helena Costa



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony - Special Education Perspective

1 message

**Derek Govin** <derek.govin@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:16 PM

12/16/20

Dear Board Members,

My name is Derek Govin. I am a Special Education Teacher at Roosevelt High School (RHS) for our Community-Based Instruction Program. This program supports students with moderate to severe disabilities who are working towards a certificate of completion as opposed to a diploma. These students focus on functional academics, communication, problem solving skills, self-advocacy, and transition to post high school. Everything I say in this testimony are my own words, and not to be representative of Roosevelt High School or any of the other teachers of RHS faculty.

I write testimony today to oppose discussion item 5B:

[B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees](#)

I have been a Special Education Teacher in the HODOE for what will complete my fourth year at the close of the 20-21 school year. To say that this year has been difficult is an understatement. Upon working closely with 20 other Special Education Teachers for the past two months, it is quite evident that my story is one that resonates with MANY Special Education Teachers this year.

For the sake of being concise and transparent, I will share my responsibilities below in bullet form:

1. I am a teacher. My job is to teach. How?

- Virtual students - Design programs aligned to IEPs that can be delivered online. Not just teach these, but teach adult staff how to deliver instruction because I cannot be in not two, but THREE spaces at once. The other two spaces?
- Classroom #1 - Three students here, Monday through Friday, 8am-2pm.
- Classroom #2 - Two students here, Monday through Friday, 8am-2pm.

\* I would love to talk with anyone willing to listen why these classes are separated, as well as how much time I actually get with each student to teach them. All students with disabilities deserve a licensed, highly qualified special education teacher for their entire school day. This should go without saying. Look above and ask yourself how I could be expected to do this? Is this worth the \$10,000 differential?

Let's continue on with my responsibilities.

2. I am a special education teacher. My job is also to complete paperwork regarding compliance.

- IEPs - I have a caseload of 12 students. This is on the lower side. Absolutely. However, that being said, I have had nearly one revision per month for just one student. Entire team needs to be present, data review, preparation, graphing, then proposing revisions to the team at the formal meeting.

- Re-evaluations - This year, any student with a 1:1 instructional support that was contracted and we wanted to continue that service, those students needed to have a functional behavior assessment to consider the need. Great timing, considering nearly all of my students have a 1:1 instructional support due to their individualized needs.
- Contingency Plans - In case my classroom or the entire school closes down, have each student's contingency plan created, reviewed with the team, and have a meeting to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- Distance Learning Plans - For any student in the community based instruction program, it was evident that the Acellus program was not going to appropriately instruct students with severe disabilities. That being said, develop a distance learning plan for any student who signed up for distance learning for the 20-21 school year AND develop that curriculum to be delivered online. Hold a meeting, present to parents to ensure everyone is on the same page.
  - Be sure and complete another contingency plan from this to then say "what if the distance learning plan isn't working...how will we move forward?"
- COVID Impact Plans - Complete the Covid Impact Determination Sheet by each student's IEP objective and using data from Quarter 3, Quarter 4, and current progress, determine with the IEP team if any skills were lost, to what extent, and how we plan to get the student back up to where we left off in March 2020.
  - Oh, and after we pushed you to finish this by the end of Quarter 1, know that there is no place for you to upload this document in our official system of ECSSS. Wait, are you kidding me?
- Quarterly Progress Reports - Each student with an IEP gets a quarterly progress report on each IEP objective. Analyzing data, collaborating with service providers, all of this must occur before writing a data driven report to give to parents with updates on their children's educational program. The easy thing to do is simply push "progressing" on each student's objective and move on, but I'm not the special education teacher to "check boxes." **My students and their families deserve better than that.**

Can you imagine how many hours of planning, how many school team meetings, how many IEP team meetings, **HOW MUCH TIME** is given to try and figure out how to support our students with disabilities during a time when all we want to do is TEACH. To be clear, I can't just teach. As seen above, I have three separate spaces to keep track of. There is not one person who could do the job I was assigned to. It's not humanly possible, and it is unfair to the teacher, it is unfair to the assistants in the classroom who are being asked to do more than they are paid to do, and most importantly, it is unfair to the students who are missing out on the services that cannot be legally fulfilled.

This brings me back to the point. Why do I share this with you? Understand me when I say that I am in this profession because it is my spiritual calling. Having family members with severe special needs, I advocate for each and every child of mine because I remember when my family had to push for their students to have the services they deserved. Had I not had that connection as a part of my story, this profession would simply be a part of my history. That's sad, because **the HIDEOE is going to (and already has) lose highly qualified special education teachers as a result of asking them to do the impossible.**

In looking at the "furlough" dates given, it is clear that the focus was on instructional days not being taken away. However, from a special education teacher lens, consider my responsibilities I have shared with you above. When do you think I have the time to do these things? When considering the days to be taken off of our calendar, do you think that my responsibilities for those days also disappear? They absolutely do not! What will happen is we will be asked to do these at home on our own time (which has been told to me personally), or to do them during instructional time and have someone else "supervise" my students

(triggering word, my students deserve to be taught, not supervised like this is a daycare). Nonetheless, still get it done. Tell me, does that sound like a furlough to you, or a **pay cut** since responsibilities will still be expected to be completed?

If my performance this year is not adequate, it is because I have prioritized myself after drowning myself in my first three months of being a special education teacher for the 20-21 school year. **The demands that have been placed upon me, as well as every other special education teacher I have worked closely with over the past two months, are unrealistic, inconsistent, unfair, and unacceptable.** To then tell us to take a pay cut because everyone will be doing will be causing students with disabilities to again lose out on having a highly qualified special education teacher. Are we working for the system to improve, listening to our special education teachers, or are we “checking boxes”, asking the grassroots individuals to do more and more, take their money, then expect them to do the work for **free**? Oh, and let’s hope retention rates don’t drop.

BOE, ask yourselves if you are considering special education differently here, because it is time that the special education perspective is considered as opposed to lumping it with general education, yet again.

Respectfully,

Derek Govin  
Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**Lydia Haff** <lydia.haff@outlook.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:17 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Hello BOE,

I am a 3rd year licensed teacher. I've been working hard to make my way up the pay scale, so I can afford to stay here. I have earned a master's degree in the process to move up as soon as possible. If furloughs are imposed on Hawaii teachers, I will have to look at other options, more likely moving and teaching in another state. I will not be able to afford to stay here and teach.

The state's decision to cut the budget in the DOE AND impose furloughs on the teachers makes me realize that the state does not care about teachers here or their well-being. The decision to furlough on the days when we would plan and grade for students implies that they expect us to do these tasks on our own time, unpaid. I am seriously considering other careers because of this continued treatment by the state. And I am sure I am not the only one.

There will be several negative, long-lasting effects of this decision by the state. Many teachers will be leaving, either the profession or the state. The teacher shortage will become worse than it has been, and our students will be left to suffer. Our state will be more dependent on long-term subs and emergency hires, who are not trained or qualified to be teaching.

Please reconsider the decision to cut more funding from our schools and pay from our teachers,

Lydia Haff  
Waianae High School



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**Jose Nunez** <jnunez@lokelanischool.k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:22 PM

Hi HSTA and HBE,

My name is Jose Nunez and I've been working for the Department of Education since 2014, two of those years as a substitute teacher in about 6 different schools on Maui, and the rest permanently in three schools. I also have invested financially in my career with the department and plan to continue in this field for the rest of my life in Hawaii. I am a certified teacher currently working at Lokelani Intermediate in my second year, in the world language department.

I have been following very closely the events related to the position cuts because it will directly affect me since the school is planning to cut all the electives but PE and AVID for the SY 2021-2022. If an agreement cannot be reached, 100% of my income will be lost. I already lost my second job because of the economic situation we are in. My wife and daughter depends on me for health insurance, food, and other services. I hope the governor and the decision makers in the State can reach an agreement with the union, otherwise I will be unemployed. Thank you very much.

--

*Jose Nunez*  
**Spanish Teacher**  
**Lokelani Intermediate**





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Patty Gorski** <pgorski@kkhs.k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:23 PM

Aloha, I write to you today in regards to the furloughs slated to happen in January 2021.

First and foremost, this is unacceptable to cut the amount of instructional time our students receive (my own son included) while they have already been so impacted this school year due to COVID.

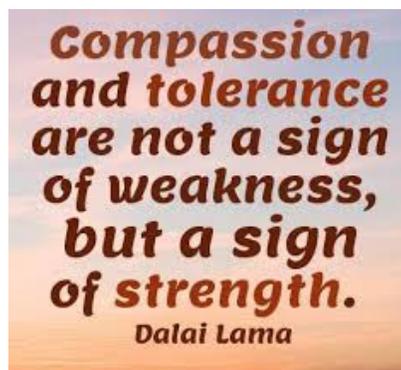
Cuts in pay will no doubt result in the retirement of teachers and teachers moving to the mainland (they may have had supplementary income impacted by the shutdowns and can no longer afford cost of living).

Class sizes will no doubt increase with the school and sped budgets being cut, which will further degrade quality of instruction as we are forced to do more with less.

Teacher burnout will send more teachers to the mainland or other occupations with all of these increased duties with cut pay.

Coupled with the possibility of losing the differentials, many teachers will quit entirely after such a blow to their pay, especially those like myself, who has worked so hard to reclassify as a class 7 teacher this year. I spent years of schooling and money to make it this far, and it is unreal that I could potentially be set back to where I was years ago. I will no doubt leave the classroom if the furloughs occur in conjunction with the ending of the differential pay. I will not be able to afford life. I know I am not alone in these sentiments.

Patty Gorski  
Special Education Teacher  
King Kekaulike HS  
11 & 12 Career and Life Planning





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for BOE meeting, Dec. 17**

1 message

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**Katherine Alarcio** <kgalarcio@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:25 PM

Aloha,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in regards to the possible furloughs for public workers, including Hawai`i public school employees.

First off, I understand that we are in financial hardship due to the pandemic and all the ways it has affected us as a state. However, I do not believe it should be on the backs of public employees and DOE employees, to maintain the financial stability of our state. As educators this year, we have already been asked to make changes to our entire curriculum practically overnight, teach online and in person at the same time, change our normal teaching line to something completely different, and endless more abnormalities. And though it has been hard, we have done it.

Educators are the first to say that we care for the wellbeing of our students over many things. But we also are taking a stand for our students by standing up for ourselves. With poor funding and furloughs, how are we able to take care of the students that are so dear to our hearts? How can I care and teach my students well, when I am burdened down with financial worries that furloughs and budget cuts bring? I am a young, 25 year old teacher, who already needs to plan and budget carefully, to live on my own. But with a significant cut to our pay due to furloughs, I am riddled with anxiety trying to figure out how I will be able to survive. And as a young, single person living on my own, I can only imagine how much harder it will be for those with families and children to take care of.

The state has asked us to take care of Hawai`i's keiki. And educators have gone so far above and beyond this year. And yet our state is saying they will not take care of us, as we take care of the keiki. We have put in countless hours, worked evenings, early mornings, and weekends, to ensure our students are given the best possible education in this pandemic. And yet our state is still sending us the contradictory message that we are "essential" yet unimportant at the same time.

So I ask you, to please go the extra mile for us, as we have gone the extra mile for our students and their families. I so dearly want to continue with this profession that I love. But I am forced to consider other options, if I am unable to take care of myself due to furloughs. I love my students and my career as a teacher, but how can I continue to survive in such a high cost of living area, with such small paychecks?

Educators love their students as their own children. But we cannot continue with that love and care if the state will not put in the work to support educators and families of Hawai`i. I am worried, and even that is an understatement. Worried for myself, my students, their families, and my fellow educators. We fight for our students. Please fight for us too.

Thank you for your time in reading this testimony.  
Katherine Alarcio



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony: Furlough Concerns

1 message

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**Melissa Padilla** <melissa\_a\_padilla@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:27 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Testimony: General Business Meeting Discussion Item V.B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

Aloha, Members of the Board of Education!

My name is Melissa A. Padilla. I am a teacher at James Campbell High School in Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony regarding the furloughs that will begin January 2021.

January 2021 will begin my 29th year as a public school teacher in Hawaii's Department of Education. And it saddens me that I must once again submit testimony to encourage this Board to support our long suffering educators and struggling youth.

We, educators and students, have worked diligently and persevered this school year in this time of a global pandemic. With multiple changes to how school will begin and schedules we are asked to juggle, educators and students have rolled and flexed to navigate the rough waters of school year 2020-2021.

However, the announcement of furloughs in an email sent after 9:30pm on December 14th was the smack in the face that drew blood. This will be worse than the furloughs under Gov. Lingle and the imposed contract under Gov. Abercrombie.

Educators have been working beyond their contractual hours to replica or reinvent lessons and units they now have to deliver (for many secondary educators) in a virtual format. Additionally, educators have been mindful and hyper aware of their students' social-emotional learning as the digital environment, for many of our students, makes it more difficult to "see" how students are doing. We are all feeling the stress of these difficult times.

Thus, the imposing of furloughs on faculties and staffs across the state on top of the deep budget cuts schools are also facing will have a devastating effect on our students. How are we going to continue to support our students with these significant reductions in public education funding? Will we begin to see a wider gap in our teacher shortage because of these unfair furloughs as teachers reconsider their options about staying in the profession or seeking better opportunities out of state?

We, public school teachers, would be grateful to the Board if you support looking for alternatives to balancing the state budget without detrimental furloughs and continuing to safeguard public education funding for our students.

Sincerely,  
Melissa A. Padilla  
National Board Certified Teacher  
AP English and Art History Teacher  
HSTA Faculty Representative  
James Campbell High School

~\*~\*~ Noblesse Oblige ~\*~\*~



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESOL requirement for Hawaii Teachers**

1 message

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**John Shim** <johnshim13@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:29 PM

Aloha,

I'm writing this email because of the unfair burdens being placed on Hawaii Teachers to receive TESOL sheltered instruction certification during a time where we face furloughs and budget cuts. Taking the courses to fulfill this requirement costs hundreds/thousands of dollars and significant investment of time. If this is so critical I would like to suggest HIDOE offer TESOL certification courses for free on the school's time. Mahalo.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Angela Sagisi** <angesagisi@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:40 PM

Hello, my name is Angela Sagisi and I am a grade 4 teacher at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I am testifying in regards to V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs. Including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

The proposed furloughs will not only impact all of the above, but it will also decrease my chances of staying in the profession. I just recently graduated with my master's degree in Curriculum Studies. I borrowed a substantial amount of money just to further my education and to move up in step. However, with the proposed furloughs, it doesn't seem like my pay is going to increase (like what was promised through reclassification). In fact, it's going to be less. Where will I get the money to pay my loan? My bills? Other essential expenses needed to survive? The thought of receiving less on my paycheck scares me. I honestly do not know what to do if this happens. Should I get another job? When will I sleep? Should I focus less on the students and more on surviving? I honestly don't know what to do. All I know is that I will drown, and I feel that there is no one able to help me.

So I ask you this, BOE and Governor Ige, I hope you reconsider your proposed furloughs and find another avenue to make up for Covid's loss. Otherwise, you will be losing yet another, highly qualified teacher who puts their whole heart and soul into these kids and their education.

Mahalo,  
Angela Sagisi



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Aoi Shinagawa** <aishinagawa@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:42 PM

To the Board of Education:

I am writing to submit my testimony regarding the illegally imposed furloughs. My name is Aoi Shinagawa and I am the music teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I am being impacted by the furloughs and possibly by the recent reduction of the DOE budget.

I am sure you do not need another person to tell you how furloughs are highly illogical, as [research by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) points out. I am sure you have already heard that this will cause a mass exodus of teachers who retire or quit to pursue other paths that will lead to a better source of income. I am sure you do not need to be reminded that qualified, passionate educators are necessary to ensure all students receive a high-quality and vigorous educational experience. I can throw dozens of numbers at you, citing many sources of research that show that these furloughs will hurt an already suffering system, leaving the most vulnerable population behind, while failing to accomplish what it is intended to do.

But I won't, because numbers don't paint the full picture - they feel cold, and statistics are easy to ignore. A number doesn't have a face, a family, a life - but people do. Instead of citing studies and statistics, I will tell you about a young educator, starting her career during a pandemic and seeing her life crumble around her. This is about what I have been through in order to become an educator.

I was raised by a single mother, who is also a teacher. She teaches in a low-income community that serves a large population of immigrant families. She sought out this position because of her passion for helping others. I watched her struggle to pay for our bills, working two to three jobs to get enough income to support her two children. When I woke up in the morning, she would be running out the door to get to her school. She came home 13 hours later, exhausted from teaching all day followed by providing in-home tutoring services to earn extra income. This was her Monday through Friday. On Saturdays during testing season, she would spend the morning with us and then leave to spend her afternoon at the local test prep center, coming home at 6 or 7pm.

Despite working long hours and having a salaried job with benefits, the teacher salary was so low that my mother was never able to save up a down-payment to purchase property. This was after former Gov. Lingle's furloughs but before Gov. Ige's illegally imposed furloughs. Because we didn't own the property and could never afford newly built rentals, we were "renovicted" (evicted due to the owners renovating) a total of three times in four years - something that I didn't realize caused my mother to take on huge amounts of debt. The day I turned 16 I got a work permit and offered to get a job to help out - my mother declined my offer, saying that I needed to focus on my studies so that I could get a scholarship for college. She reminded me that this was the only way I could go, as she didn't have the money to help me out. I asked her if she would consider getting a higher paying job - she told me about how much she loves teaching. She told me about how thankful the kids were to have someone who cared about them. I thought that was beautiful. She is a dedicated educator.

When I was applying for college, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer. Inspired by my mother's passion for teaching and serving underprivileged youth, I changed my mind at the last minute. I decided that I

wanted to follow the same path and go into education, hoping to find a place in a high-needs school. When I told my mom what I wanted to do, she was unable to hide her disappointment. At the time, I couldn't understand why. After all, she is a dedicated educator.

In the last month of high school, I began searching for my first job. Through a referral from a friend, I was able to get a job at my local Zippy's. Through the first year of my university, I worked about 30 hours a week, taking the shift from 4pm to midnight so that I could work after school. As I got used to the workload and gained experience, I moved around to different restaurants and began waiting tables. My day started at 7am and ended at midnight. I was always exhausted. Between school and working, I had exactly 0 days off every week. But I was a hard worker - such a hard worker that some of my managers asked if I would be willing to quit school, offering me full-time positions. I declined them all, even though they were very tempting and would instantly put me in a financially better position. But I am a dedicated educator, so I passed up these opportunities.

At the end of my college career, I began playing part-time with the Royal Hawaiian Band in addition to working in the restaurants. I was well-liked by my colleagues in the band, and was asked by them what my plans were after graduation. Would I consider going full-time with the band? They said I should ask to apply, and although not guaranteed, it was possible that I could fill the vacant flute spot. I declined, saying that I really wanted to be a teacher. Many musicians wait their entire lives for an audition. But I am a dedicated educator, so I passed up this opportunity.

After graduating, I secured my first teaching position as the music teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. I was elated. I was able to quit restaurants. I maintained my part-time position with the Royal Hawaiian Band to supplement the starting teacher salary, as it was quite low. I still had to work 7 days a week, but I knew that there was so much good I could do in education. For the first time in what felt like forever, I was truly satisfied with my life. The pay was low, but there was room to grow and the stability that comes with being on salary. The job was tiring, but it was endlessly rewarding. It felt like all of my struggles were finally worth it.

But now, with the state budget being balanced on the back of public education, I realize that this is unsustainable. You may be wondering - I thought you were a dedicated educator? What do you mean this is unsustainable? The fact is, I cannot afford to be paid less than I already am. Pre-pandemic, I was working 7 days a week to make ends meet. With teacher furloughs, how am I supposed to make up for this loss? There are not enough hours in the week for me to do this. Therefore, I have no choice but to leave the profession.

Why am I sharing this? To show you the kind of people public education is losing. I am not the only one with a story like this. There are hundreds of others. Please take into consideration how important it is to keep passionate educators in the profession. How can we have public education without teachers? How can we say we appreciate and value educators when we treat them as disposable?

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Aoi Shinagawa  
(808)439-5093



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony from a Moloka'i teacher**

1 message

**Lokelani Han** <dlokelani.han@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:44 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I love my job as a teacher. I love working with my fellow teachers to provide a meaningful education experience to my 'ohana - both immediate and extended, hānau and hānai.

I put the health and welfare of my own family at risk every day that I come to school because of this pandemic. But I do it because I recognize my kuleana to mālama all our keiki and give them some semblance of a school that they deserve. I am the only person in my home employed at this time and not unlike many others, I have costs like mortgage, food, medicine, utilities and clothing, car payments, fuel, insurance, dental costs..... and the list goes on!

I know I cannot afford to leave "my" kids without a safe place to learn and grow but I definitely cannot afford to survive with a 10% pay cut.

**FIND SOME OTHER SOLUTION TO BALANCE THE STATE BUDGET THAN PUTTING IT ON THE BACKS OF OUR TEACHERS!**

na'u,

na Lokelani Han

Kumu, Kula Kaiapuni o Kualapu'u, Moloka'i



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**S475-Ian French** <s475-ian.french@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:49 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I believe furloughs are a terrible idea, this is because teachers need to make money on their abysmal paychecks, and teachers getting unpaid leave puts them in a bad situation just because the local government isnt flexible enough to make money that isnt mostly from tourism. The board of education or state government should make budget cuts to different services etc. because during a pandemic you have to make big decisions and cutting teacher pay probably isnt the best option.

This is a student email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. The contents of this email are governed by the laws of the state and the board policies of the school district.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**S475-Koa Curley** <s475-koa.curley@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:56 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I think that the additional off days would be beneficial. However, I think that younger kids should not be out of school very much. as they are still developing and need a lot of grooming.

This is a student email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. The contents of this email are governed by the laws of the state and the board policies of the school district.



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129  
email: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)  
December 17, 2020

**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*  
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander  
Ms. Sara Alimoot  
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta  
Ms. Virginia Beringer  
Ms. Mary Brogan  
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman  
Ms. Annette Cooper  
Mr. Mark Disher  
Dr. Kurt Humphrey  
Ms. Tina King  
Ms. Bernadette Lane  
Ms. Sarah Man  
Ms. Dale Matsuura  
Ms. Cheryl Matthews  
Ms. Kaili Murbach  
Ms. Kiele Pennington  
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto  
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos  
Ms. Rosie Rowe  
Dr. David Royer  
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair  
Mr. James Street  
Mr. Francis Tael  
Mr. Steven Vannatta  
Ms. Lisa Vegas  
Ms. Paula Whitaker  
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to  
the Superintendent*  
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to  
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff  
Susan Rocco, Staff

Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: V. B. Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Department's December 14th notification to employees that it will be implementing furloughs beginning January 4th, 2021. The Department's actions are in response to Governor Ige's direction to State Departments to implement furloughs as a cost-saving measure, given the current and forecasted budgetary shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SEAC fully supports the Board's action to get more clarity regarding the impending furloughs. Once the true costs of furloughs are brought to light, it will hopefully spur policy makers and legislators to first engage in creative and thoughtful problem-solving before taking such Draconian actions that will create lasting hardships for teachers and students alike.

History has demonstrated that furloughs are much costlier than the short-term savings they yield. The Furlough Fridays imposed by Governor Lingle in the 2009-10 School Year not only contributed to poor academic outcomes for students with disabilities due to a reduction in instructional days by approximately 10%. It also exacerbated the chronic shortage of qualified special education teachers by lowering the retention rate of trained teachers and negatively impacting teacher recruitment in the years following the furloughs.

Additionally, Hawaii's furloughs sparked two class action lawsuits on behalf of students with disabilities prompting the *NY Times* to publish an editorial commenting on the furloughs entitled "Hawaii's Children,



Left Behind.” (October 30, 2009). It included comments by then Secretary of Education Arne Duncan who found it “inconceivable” that furlough Fridays were the best solution to Hawaii’s school-budget woes. While the class action suits failed to halt the imposition of furloughs, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit noted in *N.D. v State of Hawaii* that furloughs involving special education students could result in “a material failure to implement the IEP,” thereby raising the spectre of multiple costly lawsuits.

SEAC is very concerned that a combination of proposed special education teacher reductions plus fewer instructional days brought about by furloughs may jeopardize a free appropriate public education for many students with complex academic and behavioral needs. These harsh measures will likely set back the recent progress made in special education teacher recruitment and retention and place far too many students with IEPs at risk of academic failure that will impact their future ability to lead successful lives.

Rather than risk a multi-year cycle of educational erosion by imposing furloughs, SEAC advises a more proactive and thoughtful approach to protect the quality of public education in Hawaii. The Legislature must seek out new revenue streams to maintain supports to vulnerable students and classroom teachers or reprioritize available funds, so that we protect students at highest risk of disproportionate harm.

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our views. SEAC stands ready to work collaboratively with the Department and the Board to find creative solutions to the delivery of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair

# Testimony

Inbox

Meetings/December 17, 2020



**J <hmoselle@gmail.com>**

Tue, Dec 15, 1:13 PM (1 day ago)

to me

12/17/20, GBM  
Agenda Item V. B.  
Comment

Dear Board Members and Chairperson Payne,

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony. The scheduled furloughs are absolutely devastating and demoralizing to our educators. Hawaiian Education is mandated by law, yet we see Hawaiiana and Pasifika educators disproportionately impacted by these budget cuts. As a public school parent who is relatively new here, I have to say the way educators are being treated in the Hawaii public school system is deeply disheartening. Many other industries receive bonuses around Christmas time (perhaps not this year, understandably), but **teachers get furloughs in their inbox for Christmas.**

It is reported that DOE Superintendents make **three times as much as teachers.** The leadership and ability to handle criticism required for the Superintendent position is no doubt a case of heavy-lies-the-crown- I respect that. Though I disagree with how certain situations are handled, I do respect that Superintendent Kishimoto has a very difficult job. But this is a huge disparity in pay. Additionally, Civil Beat reported that about \$2.8 million was spent on Acellus, which is basically a virtual paperweight now and out-of-commission by the end of the school year due to well-published students' rights violations and lack of rigor. DOE's risk assessment office was looking into recourse to recoup funds, according to DOE official Kalani back in October. These funds could be allocated to offset a portion of the furloughs. **Where is the follow-up?** I'm no math whiz, but if one teacher line is approx. 70k, then **even if only 1 million is recovered, that's 14 educators who keep their jobs, or approx. 28,000 teaching hours.** Please take care of our teachers, because they are taking care of our kids. Thank you for considering my testimony and for your service to the public.

Respectfully,  
Heather Moselle

Aloha Board Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education.

Mahalo for your myriad of questions within Discussion Agenda Item B - Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

Might I add a few more for your consideration?

- The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word contract as a binding agreement between two or more persons or parties; *especially*: one legally enforceable. The cover page of the HSTA Collective Bargaining Agreement clearly states Agreement between the Hawaii State Teachers Association and the State of Hawaii Board of Education July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2021.
  - Why does the Department get to decide to break this contract which has not expired?
    - The Department is unilaterally implementing on January 4 and February 12. Are the remaining proposed dates at the discretion of the Board? Shouldn't the discretion of the Board be either for all dates or no dates in the Department's implementation plan?
  - What contingency is there to make up for the irreparable harm to students if and when a court of law adjudicates that furlough implementation is an illegal breach of contracts? Even legislators are publicly stating that this will not hold up in court.
  - When the Department discussed its "concept" (not a proposal) at an informational session between HSTA and the employer group on November 5, 2020, was the Board briefed by the Superintendent?
  - Is the Department not direct dealing with employees by sending out a mass email containing their furlough implementation plan after 9pm rather than making a formal proposal to their exclusive representative?
- The governor has declared that different state employees will contribute various levels of pay adjustments towards the cost sharing to make up for revenue shortfalls.
  - Essential state workers will contribute nothing in terms of reduction in work or pay. Is education not one of the most fundamental and essential operations of a society?
  - What will the actual pay reduction amounts/percentages be?
    - Are all affected employees taking a 9.2% pay cut?
    - Will pay cuts be only reflective of furloughed days not worked?
    - Will pay cuts be spread across all remaining paychecks during the contract period or applied only to the paychecks during the pay periods which contain furloughs?
      - If the pay cuts are being spread across all remaining paychecks, then why is there a need for furloughs on January 4 and February 12 to be unilaterally implemented?
      - If the pay cuts are not being spread across all remaining paychecks, would 12-month teachers would see 3/11 (27%) of their June 16-30 paycheck reduced as they are projected to be furloughed on June 18, June 25, and June 28?
  - If pay is being reduced by only the number of furlough days being implemented, 12-month teachers would take a disproportionately larger hit than their 10-month colleagues which will contribute to a reduced morale among the workforce.
    - Is this a condoned practice?
    - Why aren't the cuts being distributed evenly among those who work together?

- What about vice-principals who are 11-month employees?
    - If disproportionate cuts are acceptable, why isn't the leadership team taking 12 furlough days instead of 10 to be in line with others at the state management level?
    - Is the work of a 12-month employee valued less than that of a 10-month employee?
  - If the target of the administration is to reduce affected employee pay by 9.2% and 6 days of furloughs for 10-month teachers does not reduce pay by 9.2%, will more days in subsequent semesters be expected to be taken by the same employees to account for the shortfall?
- The employer group recommenced COVID-related impact bargaining with HSTA on December 4, 2020 after delaying more than two months since the previous session on October 2, 2020.
  - Was the Board briefed by the Superintendent on the proposal for teachers to return to work without additional pay on 5 of the following 6 days?
    - One (1) workday during Winter Break, December 21-31, 2020; One (1) workday between semesters, January 4, 2021; One (1) workday during Teacher Institute Week February 8-12, 2021; One (1) workday during Spring Break, March 15-19, 2021; Good Friday, April 2, 2021; One (1) workday at the end of the school year, June 1, 2021
    - How would teachers return to work on any of those days without agreement from other bargaining units?
    - What other employees are being told to work on traditional holidays?
    - When would parents be notified that the Department expected students to have school on any of those dates?
    - Does this not reflect poorly on how the Department continues to handle things?
- The Hawaii State Board of Education ("Board") shall have the power, as provided by law, to formulate policy and to exercise control over the public school system and public library system through its executive officers, the superintendent of education and the state librarian, both of whom shall be appointed by the board; except that the board shall have jurisdiction in a manner consistent with general laws. (Reference: Constitution of the State of Hawaii, Article X, Section 3; Act 150, SLH 1981).
  - How are the powers of the Board of Education being exercised in relation to charter schools and possible furlough implementation plans?
- Does the Department recognize that reducing state employee pay has a direct correlation to economic stimulus in our community?

Mahalo for your willingness to hear from those on the ground in recent meetings. The situation is dire and you are truly the only check and balance on this department.

Aloha,  
 Osa Tui  
 McKinley High School  
 HSTA Vice President