



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Cynthia W. Levy <cwlevy67@gmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:15 PM

Reply-To: "Cynthia W. Levy" <cwlevy67@gmail.com>

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

I am sharing how devastating furloughs would be for the educators as well as students. This would make it difficult to work when your income is being lowered. We are the lowest paid profession already. Don't lower our income with these furloughs . Our students will also be affected due to less instructional hours.It is already difficult with the distance learning platform which the majority of our students are not showing up for class. Please reconsider your decision!!!!

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

carol esquibel <carolesquibel@yahoo.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:19 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm not to pleased to be furloughed, I have been teaching FSC this whole time face 2 face. I'm a little disappointed that Gov Ige would do this to students that lose out when there is a 2-day weekend, recoupment can take up to 2 days. Then to add another is like starting over then what about their min in there IEPs, speech and OT will be hindered. On top of that the state of Hawaii Dept of Education could face legal cases against it, IEPs are legal documents like contracts.

On top of that in Sept my husband and I bought a condo my income helps pay the mortgage along with paying his insurance.

On Dec 11 I was phoned that I have to do follow up tests for an exam I had the day before. The potential for cancer is real, so that will be another expense.

I think there are other ways to recap a budget. I would say opening the state savings might help but punishing essential workers is wrong!!!

Stressed for My Students and Myself

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Arlyn Sagadraca <arlyns@hawaii.edu>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:31 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

This my testimony in why I believe teachers should not be furloughed. Cutting my pay as a teacher will give hardship and affect me and my family of five. This will cause struggles to pay bills and pit enough food on the table including paying our bills. Any amount of percent cut will affect my living expenses. Teachers already don't make enough to live here in Hawaii and we are being put out there to get less than what we deserve. This has really made me think real hard to look into another profession. We are short on teachers here in the islands and allowing these furloughs will not hurt our teachers, but they will hurt our children's future as well. Stop the consideration of furloughs. Teachers are essential and deserve to be treated like we matter.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough concerns.

1 message

chrissy2277@hotmail.com <chrissy2277@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:32 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, I am begging you folks not to pass the furlough. I am a single mom. I teach at a Charter School. As a single parent, it is hard already sometimes to make ends meet. Last year I had to Uber and tutor on the side to provide milk for my children. This year, I have to tutor. I don't have enough hours in the day to make up the money that would be lost. Proposing a 9.2 percent pay reduction would be catastrophic to a lot of teachers. Mahalo

Christine Roberts
8083898577

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jeri Tokumoto <jeri_tokumoto@yahoo.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:36 PM

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

I am submitting testimony on 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 work at Palisades Elementary as the Student Services Coordinator, the furloughs will definitely impact me personally. However, I am more concerned about the impending cuts to special education funding. A small school like ours can potentially be losing positions that are vital to be able to meet the needs of our students with disabilities. The state's focus on inclusion rate being at 80% or higher can only happen if we have enough staff. If we are forced to cut Educational Assistant positions it will be very difficult to meet this percentage.

During this pandemic we have operated short 1 SPED teacher because they took leave for the year. The responsibility fell on our 3 other SPED teachers to write IEPs and myself and 4 EAs to help provide services for our students with disabilities. It has been a difficult year with multiple meetings to hold for all students with disabilities besides the normal annual IEPs. Cutting our budget will impact not only the teachers but also the students in the end.

There must be better places to cut money from within the DOE budget than our students with disabilities.

thank you,
Jeri Tokumoto
SSC Palisades Elementary



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs: Cannot afford another cut

1 message

DW Ab <dabuel247@gmail.com>
 To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 3:54 PM

Aloha:

I would like to submit for testimony. My name is Dwayne Abuel, Highlands Intermediate, Technology Coordinator and Teacher of Tech. I will make a bullet list to keep my testimonial somewhat on track.

- How will furloughs affect you personally?
 - My wife was working for an elementary school and now she is laid off based on whom they want to bring back. As I heard from others at that school (I use to work there), the principal will not bringing certain people back and my wife is on that list. Not because she doesn't do well at work, quite the opposite. The cuts are in the budget for the school and the principal wants to save teachers. Me having the only income, for now, do not make enough money for the both of us. Unemployment rejected my wife's claim and stated she is unqualified. So we have been on one income living on savings that will run out eventually. This makes it hard for us to retire eventually. There are so many things that need to be paid and this furlough will just drive the steak through the heart so to speak. Up keep of things is just another thing to add to it all. Plus it doesn't help when stores raise prices to needed items.
- Are you considering resigning if furloughs happen?
 - If the state would just allow me to use my leave that I have and give a good incentive package I would leave just to help the younger teachers and help the budget in that way.
- Taking another job?
 - I have strongly considered leaving but with my wife not working, this just makes things so hard, even taking another job. I am stuck in a catch 22.
- Do you know fellow teachers who are already resigning during winter break?
 - I do know of many teachers, like me, who always get notices from Administration that electives will be cut if there is no budget. Hard part is, this is like cutting your soldiers on a battlefield. In this time and age, my position is really important and very little could fill that position and it is even hard to fill in many other schools. Not many of people with my experience in technology with a teaching license. Cut your soldiers, lose the war. Who's going to fill the positions after we get cut? The generals (superintendent and law makers)?
- How will these losses affect your students?
 - If teachers begin leaving knowing their jobs are going to get cut anyway, remaining teachers will have a huge increase in class sizes, enough to make any teacher, even the best, go crazy. A teacher in that situation will not be able to give special attention to needy students and will not be able to manage a classroom, especially with behavior problems (where the parents have a delusion of grandeur about their own child - the child can do no harm).
- Is another member in your family already out of work or dealing with reduced work hours because of the pandemic? Is your family surviving on your one income?
 - As previously mentioned. It is a struggle for us.
- Did your principal already inform your school that some positions will be eliminated next school year because of pending budget cuts? How will these position cuts affect your school and your students?
 - Again, as previously mentioned, there will be major cuts. We are not a Title 1 school, meaning we have no extra funds to spend. These students will have the lack of knowledge other students were able to gain through electives and through extra help (tutoring). I feel bad for those students. Amongst these students are my nieces and nephews. My heart just breaks knowing they will come out of all this missing pieces of their rightful education.

Bottomline is, if we are essential and so many of our leaders give us hard time in staying safe, especially with me having underlying conditions, we cannot stay in a safe place and work. If we are essential then why are some of us being cut? I have done nothing but be the best worker I can be, loyal dog to my boss as many of us are. Really?! There is no other solution?! Why do I pay taxes, just for our leaders to just give up and say, no hope here?! I feel like no one is fighting for us! No one seems to be fighting to keep us safe! No one looks like they are working to protect us all! All the top side got good paying jobs with no cuts. So all the generals are sitting pretty while they cut the troops who is fighting the real battle. This will be a losing war. I suppose the generals will have to come down to the school level and teach.

Thank you for your time!

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|<----- Greetings ----->|

Mahalo,

Dwayne Abuel

Life in this world is limited. Never be in the least bit afraid!

"The Proof of the Lotus Sutra" (WND, 1109)

A person, who no matter how desperate the situation,
gives others hope, is a true leader.

- Daisaku Ikeda

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|<----- Greetings ----->|



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Furloughs

1 message

Lisa Ruggiero <lbruggiero77@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:05 PM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing regarding 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.](#)

My name is Lisa Ruggiero and I am a second-year social studies teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate school. I absolutely love my job. I love my students, and I am so honored to have the opportunity to teach them.

I moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Maui in July of 2019 and this is a place I could see myself long term. Despite loving my job and loving the privilege it is to live on Maui, I will have to leave at the end of the school year if these furloughs go through. Hawaii's cost of living is simply too high for me to live here with a decrease in my pay. If I do have to leave at the end of the year, it would be a direct result of the furloughs. We always hear about the teacher shortage in Hawaii. Schools on the mainland have better pay, more chances to get increases in pay (increases every year without having to do additional PD paid for from our own pockets), and lower costs of living. There is no benefit to myself to stay here if my pay is reduced.

I seriously implore you to look for other places to make cuts. I understand the economic situation, but this is a short-sighted decision. Furloughing teachers is bad for the teachers, obviously, but it is also bad for the students. Students have had so much inconsistency this year, and this is showing students that their education doesn't really matter. It is the absolute worst thing you can do for our students in the long term. You claim thank and respect teachers: prove it. You claim to care about our keiki: prove it and put your money where your mouth is.

Respectfully,
Lisa Ruggiero



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

(Kalelani Ogata) <kaleko76@aol.com>
Reply-To: "(Kalelani Ogata)" <kaleko76@aol.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:09 PM

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOE

RE: Furloughs

THURSDAY, December 17, 2020

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 Board of Education,

I am a 20 plus year teacher in preschool special education. I have been fighting for what is right and owed to teachers from SPED differentials to Salary Compression – all of which has and still affects me and my family. Teachers should not have to be fighting this hard for something that is owed to us, was taken away, and now threatened to be taken away again in the form of furloughs. Teachers should not have to worry about their pay, their livelihoods, their families, their healthcare and should be able to just do their jobs knowing that our State, DOE, and BOE support us. Please show your support by not allowing furloughs to happen. I only have this one job but with bills piling up, cost of living and health care rising, my kids in college, and I'm in college as well (to advance my degree to be a better teacher for my students and to get better pay) I don't know how I will make it work. I was already looking to leave this profession before the differential was put in place and then remained because of the differential. I don't even know what is happening with the differential. My position and economic status have not changed yet the governor wants to take away more. I haven't even recovered from the last furlough and making ends meet was already a struggle. Teachers are always getting the short end of the stick. "They'll do it for the kids." That's what's always said. Well, yes, I do what I can for the kids but there comes a point when I can't do any more and now, with the lack of support from our government and the government threatening to take more from me, I don't want to do any more. Yes, teachers will suffer and thus the kids will suffer in not having the education they need and deserve. When you don't support teachers by cutting their pay, not providing what they are owed (differentials and compensate for salary compression), and now trying to impose furloughs that just tells me our government does not care. So why should I? My job is not getting any easier and I am in fact being expected to do more – distance learning and face to face learning hybrid, student count rising (this year is the most preschoolers I have had and there are more coming in with no support), and student needs are

greater and more involved. A teacher's job is not a "clock in, clock out" kind of job. We are physically and mentally "on the job" the entire school day. This is draining. When most people leave their jobs and return home teachers are still doing work at home, thinking about school and planning. It's really a 24/7 job. And we don't get over time like other state workers do.

Please continue to support teachers. Do not allow pay cuts or furloughs. Make sure SPED and the other hard to staff areas continue to have their differentials. Maybe something can be done about the salary compression but my faith in all that is waning. By not supporting us you WILL lose us.

Thank you for your time.

a 20+ years of service preschool SPED teacher who is tired of all of this



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Anjelica Ayers <aiayers@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:10 PM

Testimony for **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 Board of Education members,

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 disappointed that the State would implement furloughs to cut budget costs. The pandemic has shown us that education is central to our community and economy. Teachers and school staff are under extreme pressure during this school year. Not only are we working harder and longer hours than ever before, dealing with the traumatic effects this pandemic has had on ourselves and our students, scrambling to keep our schools functioning because the state failed to provide us with proper guidance, we are RISKING our lives in unsafe environments to support our students. The state is showing us that the economy and tourism industry are more important than our keiki and kumu. In place of getting hazard pay, our livelihood is being jeopardize with the threat of furloughs.

I am a teacher at Queen Ka'ahumanu School. I love my community; I love my kids; I love being an educator. Cutting my salary by 9.2% will drive me out of this state. I already struggle to live in Hawaii as a teacher. My rent is 50% of my income. I have other bills and students loans to pay monthly. With furloughs, I will have to leave this beautiful state that I've called home for 6 years. The state is already not properly funding schools and paying teachers which is having a harmful impact in Hawaii's long term health. With furloughs and additional education budget cuts, the impacts will be felt for generations. Education is the foundation to a healthy economy.

Budget cuts and furloughs have already eliminated extracurricular positions and EL support at my school. Our students will be negatively impacted in various ways. They will have larger class sizes, reducing their individualized instruction. They will have little to no extracurricular specials that stimulate their love of learning. They will not be able to go on field trips and have enriched learning experiences due to budget cuts. They will lose their teachers to other states and other professions.

I implore you to communicate with the governor and the state. Tell them that this plan to save money will do more harm beyond the scope of saving money. It will have lasting negative effects on Hawaii's children and schools.

Humbly,
Anjelica Ayers



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE Furlough Teacher Testimony

1 message

Natalia Kotula <nataliaannakotula@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:26 PM

To whom this may concern,

I am writing as a fourth-year teacher with Hawaii Public Schools; my eighth year as an educator as a whole.

In the four years that I have been an educator in Hawaii, I have yet to earn the same income that I was being paid with Chicago Public Schools (a city, I'm sure you are aware, that is expensive to live in but not nearly as costly as Hawaii). I took the pay cut happily, at the prospect of making a better life in this state. And when I arrived, I loved my job and my students all the same. My commitment to my job never wavered; in fact I was named my school's teacher of the year last year.

That being said, the threat that the governor is making on our livelihoods, one that is ill-advised by many economists, one that is clearly without any plan or foresight, and one that is without any mercy or thoughtfulness whatsoever given that it was announced mere weeks before Christmas and less than a month before is planned to take into effect - a timeline that leaves families no opportunity to prepare - is also one that we knew was coming... eventually. The governor, without any knowledge yet as to how this pandemic would affect the state, announced that furloughs and pay cuts were "on the table" while we were still in just the first weeks of understanding this virus And it's potential impact on our local economy. Balancing the budget on the backs of his hardest-working people was his intention from the very moment it was conceivable that he could do it. We have been aware of how little respect he actually has for us since April. This comes as no surprise to anyone but is incredibly painful nonetheless.

I am approaching a decade in my career. I thought I was doing everything right. Yet somehow I stand to lose income before I've even had a chance to earn a livable wage... after **nearly a decade**. Over the summer, I gave birth to my first son. With him, my husband, and two dogs, we live in a 500 square foot studio apartment in one of the most unsafe, littered, frankly disgusting, areas in Honolulu, near the university. We have lived here since we moved from Chicago, thinking it was temporary. Just last month we were excited at the thought that we might have the finances to move, finally to a place where we could maybe safely take a walk as a family to a nearby park. But unfortunately now we will not be able to afford the "luxury" of more room and better community for our child.

We will be leaving Hawaii. A coworker of mine, who also just recently welcomed twins, has already informed me of his intention to leave as well. I will not be bullied into the well-loved finger-pointing at teachers "abandoning students" when their pay is in question. I was content making personal sacrifices because of an unlivable wage before when I had only myself to care for; now that I have a child of my own to feed and take care of, an **unsurvivable** wage is not "on the table" for us.

The governor, DOE, and principals can be rest assured that come August there will be no need to have hard conversations about eliminating positions - possibly something they will be thrilled to hear. Those positions will be gone and they will not soon return, especially given that the governor has signaled that these cuts will be indefinite. Substitute teachers will not be able to help the very sad situation Hawaii's keiki are facing.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No to furloughs!

1 message

Melvin Ramos <melvin.ramos2010@yahoo.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:28 PM

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

To the Hawaii Board of Education,

My wife and I are both teachers, so that means both our paychecks will be lessened to the point where we will have to find other ways to make ends meet. We are already one of the lowest paid professions in the nation, and Hawaii teachers are on the lower end of this spectrum. We have enough to deal with in trying create and teach lessons that will be engaging to our students because we have to compete with internet entertainment. These lessons take up much of our time and energy, and now we have to add in the fact that we need to find other ways to make more income to fill in the gap that will be present when these furloughs take effect. How will my wife and I have time to create quality lessons for our students when we are busy working extra jobs and taking care of our own families? Please fight for us. These furloughs will do nothing good for our students and teachers. That further means that the future for these students as well as the community is in danger. A poorly educated population is the root of societal decline and poverty.

-Mel Ramos
Teacher,
Lehua Elementary School.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Greg Wines <gknwines@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:45 PM

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.](#)

My name is Kathleen Wines, and I am a teacher at Connections Public Charter School. This is my 15th year teaching at Connections. I have a B.A. in Linguistics from UH Hilo and a M.Ed from UH Hilo.

The potential furloughs will have a considerable, personal impact. The cost of living in Hawai'i is high, and the loss of income will greatly affect my family. With the contracted raises, it felt like I was finally getting to a wage where we were able to pull ahead. With a furlough, the loss of wages will put us back. Having the wages to buy food, pay bills, electricity, and basic necessities is vital. As a teacher, I work hard. Through this pandemic I have been teaching in-person and online students. This in itself is an impossible task, and now my wages will be reduced? That is like a slap in the face. I only hope that we can make ends meet. I'm not sure.

I am not yet at retirement age, but I am considering it with a furlough and lack of respect for teachers. What will a furlough do to my retirement? I hear of other teachers who are considering resigning or retirement because of a furlough. I am also considering getting a second job to supplement income. This should not be so. We are already stretched thin. Teachers in Hawai'i are already among the lowest paid teachers in the country. A furlough only puts us further behind.

This school year has already been so difficult for teachers and students. Furloughs will only add to the pain for both teachers, students and their families. A furlough sends the message that education of our keiki is not important when the education of our keiki is actually vital. Quality education of our keiki is how our State is going to pull ahead. Furloughs with teachers resigning and less instructional days will weaken our education system.

A furlough sends the message that teachers and students don't matter. Please do not furlough teachers. The impact is too great. Furloughs will leave a lasting, negative impact. Our school is already talking about less positions for the next school year. That means less support in the classroom. The message that should be sent is that teachers are respected and keiki are cherished. Our keiki need a hope and a future, not furloughs. I realize with COVID-19 that these are very trying times, but there must be other ways to balance the budget than on the backs of teachers, their families, keiki and their education and families.

Put teachers and keiki first by not having furloughs.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jim OBrien <jobrien@kkhs.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:50 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jim OBrien and I am a teacher on Maui at King Kekaulike High. I have been a teacher since 2006 and worked through the last furlough. The impact of furloughs has a serious and negative impact. It affects student achievement and undermines the effectiveness of the teachers role in the classroom.

I highly recommend the state retaining all teacher positions and solving this crisis without furloughing educators. Please remember we are responsible for giving our keiki the best chance of succeeding in life and keeping Hawaii "No Ka Oi".

Thank you

Sincerely Jim OBrien



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Shawna Sale <salefamily_msbd@hotmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 4:52 PM

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.**

If furloughs are implemented, I will exit the profession of teaching in Hawaii until the state gets its priorities back on track as far as valuing essential employees In not only education, but health care related fields as well.

It was already abominable that the governor pit the teachers union against the unions of first responders when he Spoke of a 20% pay cut back in May for teachers and a 10% cut for first responders.

Last, but not least, in our current situation, there has already been so many mental health issues, childcare issues, and economy woes – the last thing the children of Hawaii and the parents of those children need, is to have less school days.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jeni Baird <jeni.baird@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:02 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 to the BOE and all listening,

I've been concerned this day would come. I am a teacher at Sunset Beach Elementary School (SBES). Since joining SBES, I've been teaching special education and love our SBES community. Our current working environment is a reduced classroom sizes of 13-16 students. This year I am blessed to teach a full inclusion 5th grade class with students with special education needs. To understand where the rest of my perspective comes from, previously in my life I spent 15 years in Human Resources for an aerospace company, I was the director of a nonprofit to help adults with disabilities, and have been on humanitarian boards. I have never loved a job more than teaching but what I am about to share comes from all parts of my professional background.

Adverse Personal Life Impact

This year my job titles are: 1) General Education Teacher, 2) Special Education Teacher, and 3) IEP Care Coordinator. My regular schedule since August has been to work on campus from 7:50-4:00 PM, come home, eat, attend to personal family and other relationships as possible, and maybe exercise. I then go back to working from 7:00 PM-11:45 PM. Then I do it all again the next day. Sadly I also lost my second income because the covid impact resulted in the small business shutting down. I have never worked harder for less income and I have worked many 70-80 hour workweeks in my life. I spent all of Fall Break going into the school to catch up. I'm still trying to catch up to helping my students and their families find joy in learning and public education. With special education, each student has a unique home life and many situations to manage to ensure IEPs are met with validity. It has been hard! I have gained 15 lbs. My back has gone out. I need to see a dentist and my vision is going due to all the time in front of a computer. And while I pay for healthcare, I am not sure how to pay for the greater needs than a basic copay when I have to pay rent and other mandatory bills. I am hesitant to find a second source of income because I can't keep up with the workload for my classroom and would be unable to carry out IEPs with validity. As of now, the best option I may have is to look at moving out of state, especially as I am unable to find the time to enjoy the many reasons I live in Hawaii. In all honesty, many other states are looking more attractive as we are beginning to ask "How can we do more with less?"

Adverse Professional Life Impact

Our school has always been strong when it comes to the value of "unity". This year is quite different. Teaching opinions and best practices have been torn apart by consistently confusing political decisions. Teachers love to plan and they love to talk. As we have re-chartered our course time and time again, this caused a fault line on campuses based on personal opinions. Speaking as a person caught in the middle of special education and general education, last year we had another really confusing message. Hard to fill positions received a pay differential. Shortly after, our school's funding was cut roughly \$400K. The SpED differential has also caused a rift because the general education teachers do not understand the extra job title a SpEd teacher holds as IEP Care Coordinator and also saw it correlate with a loss of funds. We need and deserve the money

but I'd almost rather see **all** of educators get a fair boost. Any general education teacher who must participate in the IEP process should also be compensated for it. This year, we have 7 people who have been told they will not have a job next year and other programs such as SpEd Pre-K and G/T have been cut. The anger and division amongst our teachers is real. We don't have money for classroom supplies let alone curriculum (either online or textbook), EAs, PPTs, etc. From what I understand (*from those who have been with the school over 15+ years*), this division is unlike what they have ever seen, and it comes from the stress of budget cuts and unfair pay as it makes people compare their role to someone else's.

My Stance & Solutions

I do believe it's time to look outside of our classrooms and outside of our state's education model to find a way to stop funding positions and activities outside of the classroom or school campuses. As one who has sat in executive boards rooms and made "reduction-in-force" decisions, I understand when there is simply no money and personnel is expensive. However, I think the furlough would best be implemented with those not directly working with students but those at the district and state levels (*my apologies to any of you reading this*). Funding for Professional Development or other programs can also be put on hold or furloughed because there are great teachers within each campus that can turn campus environments back into effective and academically stable places. Is there a way to reduce retirement matching funds in order to allow take home pay to fall within cost of living? Is there also a way to ask landlords to reduce rent for furloughed employees to match the 9.2% lost? I acknowledge the time for decisions is quickly inching towards deadlines but there is a need to get more creative at solving our funding problems.

If anything I've written has an impact it would be for you to know how our young elementary students are finally getting back into their "new normal" routine. Please do not take this away from them. Please do not add more stress to their parents who have changed their work schedules too many times to count to drop off / pick up whatever (or whoever) they need to. The students are the ones who take the hit when teachers are not emotionally and physically at their best. It is like the analogy of putting on your oxygen mask on an airplane. Teachers need to feel supported because we all know that when they do, they will go above and beyond their 7:50-2:50 contracted hours to make the futures of their students possible. Please acknowledge that in many situations, school is a form of child care -- the best child care possible! It is one where a child learns who and what they want to be when they grow up. Let's make it happen together.

Mahalo for reading and hearing my words as if I was in front of you. Be safe and may your holiday season reflect on the good that your impact can make to so many.

Jeni Baird



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:08 PM

Name: Richard Stange

School: Mililani Middle School

To Superintendent Kishimoto and the Hawaii Board of Education,

The governor's intended furlough on public school teachers will have a financial effect on me which will devastated multiple tiers of my personal and professional life.

Back in March through May, one of my relatives was furloughed from their full time retail occupation. The result was my family having a very difficult time keeping up with the high cost of living in Hawaii. Since then, our renter's lease expired, and we signed a new one. As expected whenever a lease is renewed, the cost of the rent increases.

If we should be subjected to the governor's illegal furloughs (as he is attempting to circumvent our collective bargaining rights guaranteed to us in the Hawaii State Constitution), there is a real possibility that I may need to look for a second job to try to make up for what I would be losing.

I love my school, and I love what I do so much that I volunteer to participate in two school/community related organizations and facilitate two after-school clubs for students. None of these activities are compensated. This weekend, I spent six uncompensated hours on assessing student work and planning.

If I should have to seek a second job to make up for the financial losses of a furlough, that will potentially have a direct impact on those extra curricular uncompensated activities in which I participate in. That would be absolutely devastating.

Beyond just myself personally, a furlough will have long term negative impacts on public education and the local economy.

We are in the middle of a legally binding contract. The governor should not have the authority to breach such documents at will. COVID-19 has had an economical impact on the State of Hawaii; however, the governor also has access to Cares Act and other federal assistance program money. Why is the governor trying to impose an illegal breach of contract when he has options of federal aid?

In the end, it is our students who will wind up being short changed by the economical domino effect that this furlough will have on teachers and our ohana. COVID-19 has not changed the fact that

Hawaii public school teachers are still the lowest paid public school teachers in the country after adjusting for cost of living. COVID-19 does not change the fact that we still have about 1,000 classrooms without highly qualified licensed teachers. COVID-19 does not change the fact that about half of those classrooms are special education classrooms, an issue which has already cost the department millions. Hawaii had issues prior to COVID-19, and they certainly did not go away. This furlough will make each and every one of those issues exponentially worse.

Back in August, the Hawaii Board of Education debated as to whether or not we should all open our classrooms back up full time and push all teachers and students into overpopulated COVID-19 ridden classrooms. Particular board members voted on reopening full time despite the looming health threat, and the argument was, "Look at how much the students have already lost." Well, look at what they will lose if we get furloughed.

The state recently issued restaurant cards to those who previously applied for unemployment during the business shutdown. The idea was to help local restaurants stay in business. That initiative will be cancelled out if these furloughs are imposed on public workers, because people will be dining out a lot less if they are making less. The more people earn, the more they spend. The less people earn, the less they spend.

I hope that you not only consider the local economy, not only consider teachers and our ohana, but consider students as well.

Thank you for considering my point of view.

--

Sincerely,
Richard Stange



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Sherrilyn Sampaia <sherri.sampaia@icloud.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:09 PM

I'm an elementary school teacher in Hilo and I hope you reconsider furloughs for teachers and other public school employees. Everyone in a school works together for the support of the children. I have never felt so upset and disrespected as a teacher in the state of Hawaii. We are required to have a bachelor's degree at the least and complete a state approved teacher education program yet get paid less than most professions requiring a bachelors degree or even no degree at all. A cut to our pay will make this divide even worse. I'm tired of people thinking teachers go into the profession because they want to make a difference... not because of the pay. That's not particularly true. I love teaching and spend my own money and personal time trying to be and do my best for my students because they deserve a quality education. I also expect to be compensated for it. It'll be hard for me to leave teaching because it's who I am but it's very enticing to find a higher paying teaching job elsewhere in this country where I'll definitely be more supported as well. I'll be able to teach my students more effectively and help prepare them for a better future. It's always been in the back of my mind and I'd hate for Hawaii to lose more effective and experienced teachers due to furloughs.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:10 PM

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

Dear BOE: It's time for our salaries to be trued up from years ago. No furloughs. Not after all our hard work during this crisis! Implementing furloughs will lead to a huge teacher shortage or a strike. Thanks, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

1 message

Elle K <ellekay317@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:14 PM

Dear Board Members,

I am submitting testimony regarding 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 understand that the deficit in budget for the state is great right now, but we should not be trying to fix it at the expense of our keiki and our teachers.

Please know that furloughs will further impact our education system, because students have already lost so much instructional time as a result of the school closures and the pandemic. At my school, I have heard that several teachers' positions will be cut for the upcoming school year as it is. This includes special education teachers. I have heard this to be the case for other schools as well. Losing teacher positions on top of having furloughs only negatively impacts the students' instruction, because the higher student-to-teacher ratio means less support students with less instructional hours.

As a Special Education resource teacher, I have both students in-person and students who join me synchronously online. I already have students who need more support than their general education peers, but sometimes having both types of instruction at the same time does mean we move even slower than we would if I just had in-person students or if I just had online students since instructions or how students complete their work may be different depending on the mode in which they are participating in my class. Furloughs means cutting even more instructional time for my students with IEPs when they are already "behind."

Additionally, I know teachers are worried about being displaced from their schools and not knowing where/whether positions will be available. I have recently become tenured and transferred schools after my previous school did not have a position for me. Every year until this year, I have been in a position where I could have been displaced from my school and not knowing where I would end up. I can speak from personal experience that this is a truly unnerving position to be in. This alone may make teachers want to leave the profession.

I am fortunate to be at a place where I can manage if needed with the furloughs. However, I do know of other teachers and their families who will be negatively impacted, such as teachers who are close to retirement and are worried about how furloughs would impact their retirement pay or teachers that need have families to take care of. I am planning on starting a family at some point, and having a cut to my pay through furloughs is discouraging, even if I am currently at a place where my husband and I are financially okay. Already, the teaching profession is difficult enough as it is, and with putting this financial strain on many teachers, I am worried about what the furloughs and budget cuts to schools will do to the education system.

Please look into other ways to keep positions and to keep instructional time for students and teachers.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

dorisa pelletier <dsurf73@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:19 PM

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

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.**

Dear BOE: It's time for our salaries to be trued up from years ago. No furloughs. Not after all our hard work during this crisis! Implementing furloughs will lead to a huge teacher shortage or a strike. Many of us already lost our second job due to Covid and will not be able to support ourselves and our families. Thanks, Dorisa Pelletier-Yamasaki / King Kamehameha III School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough testimony

1 message

Shannon Salomon <spks1277@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:20 PM

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

As Hawaii embarks on recovering from the Coronavirus and the state now looks to cut funding to education and furlough teachers, it's just mind boggling how no solution on how to GENERATE income to fund education has been proposed from the time we had furlough Fridays. Why is it that when the state doesn't have money, the first thing is to cut funding. Why aren't we looking at ways to fund education? I know there was legislation that was voted down the past couple of years.

Is hawaii looking at other states and how they are handling the lost in state revenue? Here, we get between 3.3-3.5% raise each year, then we get slapped with a 9% cut? So, working our butts off for the past three years gets whipped away in an instant.

I already work a second job and now with the furlough, might need to increase hours for that. It's just sad how Hawaii treats education.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Rachael S <rachael.schultz88@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:41 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rachael Schultz, and I teach English at Maui High School. I am submitting written testimony for 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 feel I do not need to list all of the challenges brought on by the pandemic this year. We have all been effected: lost jobs, financial hardship, and constant uncertainty about the future. Public servants were called to go above and beyond, at first we were praised for our efforts, then the grumbings started but still we teachers persevered. We persevered, as we always been called to do, for the children. But now, all of our extra hours, efforts to transition to a unfamiliar teaching platform, and our dedication to show up and be present for our struggling students, is being thrown back in our face with the illegal declaration of furloughs beginning in a matter of weeks.

We have barely had time to breathe this year. We all have been struggling with constant fatigue, with financial hardship, and stress-related health issues. Kishimoto's announcement of Ige's plans to implement furloughs, spitting on our established contract, left all of us demoralized and cold. Many teachers, myself included, feel disrespected and disregarded. Why is it always the teachers who are expected to sacrifice their personal lives for the sake of the community? How can we believe what we do has value when we are shown through actions how easily we are beaten down "for the good of the many"?

I am a single woman, living alone. I avoid public places, I wear a mask, and take the prescribed precautions for myself and for my at-risk nephew. With the Return to Learn plan requiring teachers to return to campus and adapt to hybrid teaching, I will need to be extra cautious to keep my bubble small. The workload and expectations will change again in January. So how can I be expected to find supplemental income, keep my bubble small, and maintain the absolutely basic lifestyle I lead in such an expensive state?

A possible 9% cut to my paycheck will derail me. I have put in twice the amount of hours this year compared to previous ones. I have not worked a second job in food service since March. Even with some places opening back up, I do not feel comfortable putting myself at risk for contracting Covid-19. We are not immune, the virus is real, and the vaccine is not yet available. I look at my budget, at my prospective income for 2021, and I wonder: is it worth it?

For many teachers this holiday season, the answer is a simple, heartbroken, "No."

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Rachael Schultz



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jennifer Jo <jomama1012@icloud.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 5:57 PM

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Education,

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 beyond disgusted with Governor Ige's decision to announce furloughs for State of Hawaii workers just in time for the holidays. As if this year has not been emotionally and physically draining enough, we now get to enter what we thought of as a new year of redemption in 2021 ruined before it has even started.

On your agenda you mention that Governor Ige's implementation of furloughs comes as no surprise. You are correct in this statement because in April, he already wanted to take the easy road to balance his budget by sending a proposal of a 20% pay cut for State Workers. Throughout this pandemic he has taken the easy road and never the hard road. His emergency proclamation was for the health and safety of our community during this pandemic. Yes, he has great power with his emergency proclamation, but he should use it with Aloha and respect for all of the teachers who have worked endless hours to find ways to educate our students during these unprecedented times.

This is the WORST way to end what has already been the most stressful year in our careers.

We have lost so much time from our Keiki and now we will lose even more time from them. We spend so much out of pocket to support our students and these pay cuts will impact our ability to provide for our Keiki in the classroom. Our Keiki deserve better than education cuts. We have to find a better solution than slashing our Education budget.

I read an article where our amazing Finance Chair Sylvia Luke, refuted Governor Ige's proposed furloughs, and she said there are other ways to balance our budget, and furloughs will only save \$130 Million which is far less than his calculations.

I am hopeful that the BOE, HSTA and our State Legislators will be able to find a way right the wrongs of this truly detrimental decision.

With much appreciation,

Jennifer Jo



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Rachael S <rachael.schultz88@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 6:04 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rachael Schultz, and I teach English at Maui High School. I am submitting written testimony for 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 feel I do not need to list all of the challenges brought on by the pandemic this year. We have all been effected: lost jobs, financial hardship, and constant uncertainty about the future. Public servants were called to go above and beyond. At first, we were praised for our efforts, then the grumblings started but still we teachers persevered. We persevered, as we always been called to do, for the children. But now, all of our extra hours, efforts to transition to a unfamiliar teaching platform, and our dedication to show up and be present for our struggling students, is being thrown back in our face with the illegal declaration of furloughs beginning in a matter of weeks.

We have barely had time to breathe this year. We all have been struggling with constant fatigue, with financial hardship, and stress-related health issues. Kishimoto's announcement of Ige's plans to implement furloughs, spitting on our established contract, left all of us demoralized and cold. Many teachers, myself included, feel disrespected and disregarded. Why is it always the teachers who are expected to sacrifice their personal lives for the sake of the community? How can we believe what we do has value when we are shown through actions how easily we are beaten down "for the good of the many"?

I am a single woman, living alone. I avoid public places, I wear a mask, and take the prescribed precautions for myself and for my at-risk nephew. With the Return to Learn plan requiring teachers to return to campus and adapt to hybrid teaching, I will need to be extra cautious to keep my bubble small. The workload and expectations will change again in January. So how can I be expected to find supplemental income, keep my bubble small, and maintain the absolutely basic lifestyle I lead in such an expensive state?

A possible 9% cut to my paycheck will derail me. I have put in twice the amount of hours this year compared to previous ones. I have not worked a second job in food service since March. Even with some places opening back up, I feel anxious at the possibility of contracting Covid-19 for a secondary income. A secondary income which should not be required for teachers to continue in their chosen profession. We are not immune, the virus is real, and the vaccine is not yet available. I look at my budget, at my prospective income for 2021, and I wonder: is it worth it?

For many teachers this holiday season, the answer is a simple, heartbroken, "No."

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Rachael Schultz



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Lauren Fuchigami <laurenfuchigami@gmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 6:24 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am Lauren Fuchigami and I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item against furloughs of teachers starting Jan. 1, 2021.

Furloughs will impact EVERYONE, regardless if teacher or not, but here is why I, including all other teachers NEED to keep my salary.

I am currently in my 3rd year of teaching and will be tenured next May. I am also only 25 years old, if I get furloughed I will stick around until the end of the school year and WILL NOT return the following school year. I simply can't afford to start my life on the salary I am making.

I am also currently a graduate student (also because that is the only way I can make a higher salary in this system) and in a year and a half, I will be left with 2 student loans (graduate and undergraduate). I am also planning on moving out of my parents home and into an affordable housing unit in Ward that me and my boyfriend purchased 2 years ago. The development should be finished either in the summer or early fall of next year and will start to have a mortgage to pay. Since only half of my graduate credits will classify, I will only move up 1 step in salary. The reduction in salary will cost me an ENTIRE weeks of paycheck just on my half of the rent. This does not include my end of maintenance fees, bills, or parking on top of the salary. 3/4 of my monthly pay will go strictly to bills which will not leave me money to pay my car loan or student loans.

On top of that, my boyfriends company is also laying people off in his department starting next year which means we are unsure if he will have a job as well. If my salary is reduced and he loses his job, not only will I lose my house that I've worked 2 years for (summer jobs included) and my boyfriend has worked 55 hour weeks for years, but I will be in ridiculous amounts of student loans that I can't pay off. I would then need to quit school and won't ever move up the salary scale. With all of this, I would have to leave teaching and find a job that can give me what I am making now.

It seems like a few hundreds of dollars, but the salary I currently having is just enough to get me by. To pay for my house and everything else. I've found a manageable amount to comfortably pay everything without worry currently. I am a young, hard worker who doesn't complain about a second job, but no one will hire me for 2 Fridays a month and make up the salary that I have lost. These furloughs will be horrendous of teachers. Yes, everyone will mention how it will ruin students but I have managed to keep a 95% attendance rate of students since August on DISTANCE LEARNING. My students never complain about school and everyone is making progress. I don't think I am an amazing teacher but I get those students learning. I've had multiple students who dealt with loss of family members of severe cases of COVID within their families and still they show up to school because my class gives them a sense of relief from what is going on. A lot of great teachers will leave of these furloughs.

Thank you,
-Lauren Fuchigami



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony- DOE Furloughs

1 message

Keita Jo <keita.jo@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 6:27 PM

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

Honorable Catherine Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regard to the General Business Meeting discussion item: V.B.: Presentation on questions regarding DOE Furloughs.

While the pandemic has presented some of the most unforeseen financial challenges in our nation's history, these pale in comparison to the challenges that education in Hawaii has endured over the course of the last few months and years. Our educators have worked tirelessly to ensure educational continuity during these challenging times. The loss of pay through furloughs would be salt in the wound and a step in the wrong direction resulting in greater attrition and loss of qualified teachers for our keiki. We should not be making sacrifices on the backs of our most vulnerable population at a time when they need it most. Additional efforts are a must and we must not take ten steps back as a result of what is an easy decision of a furlough that requires no foresight, or out-of-the-box thinking by the Ige administration to really find solutions.

In particular, our special education program and the teachers that serve this important segment of our society deserve much better than this. As expressed by Superintendent Kishimoto in the past, CARES act funds have been identified for expenditure at the DOE in a effort to mitigate the financial costs associated with distance learning, including the supplanting of funds which would ordinarily come under the purview of the Department's typical funding cycle. Included within this funding are additional federal funds typically provided for Hawaii's SpEd enrollment and the DOE at large.

We are capable of much more than what this agenda item represents and view this as low hanging financial fruit by the Ige administration. We owe it to the more than 10% of children within the special education program and their teachers. We owe it the our general education teachers as well. Most important, we owe it to all of our keiki.

This decision to oppose Ige's below the belt attack on education is an easy decision. However, we really need to critically think about the broader impact furloughs will have on our keiki and their teachers. Along with this thought, the impact that furloughs will have on the economy at large. Past studies have concluded that the furloughs of the past only exacerbated what was a very difficult time for our state.

Sincerely,

Keita Jo



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jen Sarpi <jensarpi@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 6:34 PM

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing this letter to testify about the negative impact that the proposed furloughs are having/and will have on my school and my family.

My principal has already shared that he will be cutting 7 positions next school year to help balance the school budget. This means that the class sizes at our school will increase and the support staff will be charged with extra responsibilities. I am currently a 12-month SSC, and I will be switched to 10-month next school year. I will be asked to take on more responsibilities as well for less pay.

Increase in class size, decrease in available support staff are already a bleak picture for our students next school year. But to add insult to injury the governor now also plays to have furloughs to further reduce the time that we have to complete our work and the time that students have to learn in school. The already difficult task that teachers have to attempt to make up for lost time is quickly becoming an impossibility.

On a personal level, I am discouraged. I have a Master's Degree and 15 years of experience in my field, and I am still worried about whether I will have enough money to both pay my bills and feed my children next school year. I feel that my profession is undervalued. It is difficult to be the best version of myself at my school while I am burdened with these worries and fears.

Teachers deserve fair compensation for the work that they do and students need to attend school to make academic gains. Please continue to support teachers and help us to avoid the pending furloughs and budget cuts.

Jen Sarpi



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony about Furlough

1 message

Damian Nash <damian.nash@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 6:39 PM

Aloha HSTA and HI BOE representatives.

Thank you for working to find real solutions in these difficult times. I am an Academic Coach at Kaimuki High School. This is my eighth year teaching in Hawaii and my 26th year in education. I believe the proposed furloughs are a good solution, and there are others that are even better. The teachers I have talked to about furloughs remember the last time the state imposed 4-day school weeks, just before I arrived. They think it had strong positive effects on the overall quality of education.

Right now our students are stressed and our teachers are stressed, both to the point of exhaustion. Two extra non-paid days per month would increase the opportunity for teachers to plan and grade, then still be able to relax and enjoy a weekend. It would also allow students time to complete big assignments and still be able to relax and enjoy a weekend. Please know that weekends and holidays in Hawaii are the big draw for mainland teachers, even more than salaries, which barely cover cost of living expenses.

I have worked very hard to move up the salary schedule over the past eight years. Despite that, I don't ever expect to be able to purchase real estate in Hawaii and will eventually have to retire elsewhere. But as long-term renters, my wife and I have been able to save a little money this year because of COVID. With very few opportunities to travel or go out, we have stayed home, watched a lot of Netflix, swum in the ocean, and spent little money. I foresee that we will do the same thing in 2021, and will continue to survive with the anticipated 8% cut in pay.

There are big-picture solutions that the State of Hawaii seriously needs to pursue. For example, the highly effective way of gaining school funding through recreational taxes in my home state of Colorado. Also examining state departments where employees are receiving huge overtime bonuses during COVID while teachers are expected to work harder and longer with no overtime. But, I know that big picture solutions are not the purpose of this meeting. So for now, I want to register one teacher voice in favor of the proposed furloughs as a temporary stopgap solution - until the State is ready to look seriously at bigger and better solutions.

Mahalo for remembering that the needs of our students come first.

Damian Nash

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Alison Higa <alisonchiga@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 7:28 PM

To the Board of Education, 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.**

My name is Alison Yee from Lehua Elementary School. For me, I don't know how I'm gonna make ends meet if we are furloughed. Currently, we are surviving on a single income because my husband is out of work, he is a wedding videographer and the wedding industry has been hit very badly due to the pandemic. We just had a baby in January so it is imperative that I continue to work/maintain my income to support my family all the while trying to be super safe and keep my ohana healthy. My family is relying on me to keep us afloat. Please, no furloughs, it would be a definite hardship for me.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Autumn Cranwell <autumntucker@hotmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 7:34 PM

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

To whom it may concern:

Aloha, I am writing about the furloughs impacting teachers, students, and others. I am 100% against it, let me tell you why. I am a teacher here on Hawaii Island. I have taught here for 15 years. I went through the furloughs a decade ago and just recently felt like I was recovering economically. Until the pandemic hit, I knew it was going to be rough again and it is. My family's safety money had to be used due to my husband being furloughed for a couple months due to tourism shutdown, Thank goodness he was able to go back, but it's tough because when he makes too much commission, he gets pay cuts and he was brought back at a lower salary. He could be cut at any time dependent on tourism and also local economy. If Hawaii residents don't have money, we can't give back and we all lose. We have a house mortgage, student loans, 2 car payments, daily expenses, 2 children, and my parents living with us. We support them all. There is no way I can support us on my current income, let alone with a pay cut. I'm worried. What's worse is I'm starting to lose my fight to be a teacher in Hawaii. It has been a fight since I started here, but I stayed and fought every day. I emailed governor Ige to express my dismay at this hasty decision. I told him about how Christmas will be cut way down for my family, but I know he does not care. My kids don't deserve this. None of our kids deserve this. Why would you even say this at this time, what a terribly insensitive human. I can't even fathom the school time my children are going to lose. We've already lost so much instructional time, the answer isn't to cut more time and drive great teachers out of the profession. I know I'm headed that way and several other educators as well. We simply cannot keep fighting. I have at least 20 more years to teach, why would I do this to myself-everyday is a fight to prove ourselves and no one to back us up. It takes a toll on your mental, emotional, and physical health. Our students are the ones that are going to fail though, it's not my sob story, it's my students who should be heard and cared for in Hawaii. Shame on Ige for believing otherwise and not doing what is best for our keiki, our future. Shame on him for always targeting us. Shame on him for his lack of leadership and inability to problem solve in an effective manner. We should not suffer over his shortcomings. We as teachers did nothing but work daily to keep our keiki and their families as normal as can in this high stress pandemic. Why are we continuously targeted? Why! Please help us, listen to our cries!

Sincerely,
Autumn Cranwell
Teacher

Sent from my iPad



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tiffany O <tiffanytam46@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 7:35 PM

I am submitting my 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.**

A furlough would deeply cut my already low salary. We don't have any family here in Hawaii and have no one to watch my young daughter while both my husband and I work. We pay over \$2,000 per month for child care alone. We also have a mortgage and other bills to pay. A furlough would force me to quit my job so that I can provide child care for my daughter in order to save 2,000 dollars in child care.

I feel offended in the fact that everyone is saying that a student's education is so important but if it is truly so important, then the teachers need to be taken care of. I don't understand how a furlough will help with a student's education. If you don't have any teachers then you will not have anyone to teach the keiki. Hawaii already had a teacher shortage. With the furlough the teacher shortage will increase even more.

I personally love to teach and don't want to be forced out of teaching for financial reasons.

Thank you,
Tiffany
Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Adrienne Pulu <adriennelavalea@icloud.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 7:54 PM

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,

I am a Maui middle school teacher and have major concerns about proposed furloughs.

1. I have been working toward a Master's degree in Education to grow my mindset to better serve my haumana and also move up the pay scale. Knowing that my salary would increase I would be able to make payments toward my degree, but furloughs will affect that. I'll have to put my education on hold, and most likely defer payments causing my loan to increase.

2. I worked a second job at our after school program, but have lost that income since the closure of school in March. With furloughs, my income will decrease even more, possibly causing me to default on financial obligations and or consider bankruptcy.

3. I have four children in school that will be affected by this furlough. What is your solution for their lost instructional time?

4. What was learned about the last teacher furlough? Was that a positive outcome for the state as projected? What about the affects on our haumana, ohana and kumu?

5. Furloughs will cause a snowball effect for even more families in addition to those affected by the shut down. Unemployment and food/loan programs were offered to those affected during the shutdown. Where will our help come from? How do you plan to bring us out of that?

6. Our school is being pushed to return to face to face instruction. When a teacher becomes sick with covid19 with less pay, who will pay for the medical bills and additional time out of work?

Thank you for your time!

Mahalo,

Adrienne Pulu



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tammy Criscuolo Gamble <tammy_gamble@baldwin.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 7:57 PM

Aloha, my name is Tammy Gamble and I am a special education teacher at Baldwin High school. The furloughs will impact myself and my retired husband because our bills don't change. Even more so, the furloughs will impact our students who have already miss so much school. I do not understand how anyone can justify having students miss Two weeks of school per semester! Our students need our support right now and we are taking away the one structure in their lives that they can count on I'm going to school and getting a quality education.

I am totally on board with the distant learning as we are protecting our students and we are protecting ourselves and everyone's families. But to take away two weeks of education from our students in a semester is disgraceful. These are future learners were taking from them and that's just shameful. My husband and I can reduce our luxuries but I students can't make up their learning.

Please do not go ahead with these furloughs. People say teachers are very important but yet they're not treated that way here in Hawaii. Otherwise the government would not furlough teachers. Find another way!

--

Tammy Criscuolo Gamble, Ed.S. H.P. Baldwin High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough impacting students and teachers

1 message

Celia Frost <celiafrost@gmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 8:21 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I teach 7-9th graders on the Big Island. Currently, our team is managing to meet with each of our blended learning core and elective classes twice each week. We see our remote students once each week, and are able to schedule extra help and study hall sessions in the afternoons.

Furloughs will affect our students directly, in that they will cut our direct contact hours on the furlough weeks. Which students do we choose to not see? Do we drop our support for remote students and leave them on their own? Do we pile on extra independent work to try to make up the lack of teacher contact time? Do we just cut the amount of academics our students are expected to do? Do we cut the amount of home communication and extra help? Does our home visit team not go out on weeks with directed leave?

Students will miss out on 6-10 more days of their academics in 2020 if we are forced to take leave without pay. Some are already struggling, and if they lose 6-10 days of the team's focus, they may drop off the edge.

Like many of my colleagues, I put in a 6 day week. If I am given leave without pay for 6 days Jan-May, I will not be working those "furlough" days, which means my students will not be assigned work that I have to plan for or grade. I am tired of the state taking advantage of my professionalism and dedication, assuming I will buy supplies for my classroom and assuming that I will work without pay.

Student progress will be negatively impacted by furloughs. Morale for teachers *and* students will be negatively impacted by the Governor's and BOE decision to go ahead with directed leave without pay. Don't do it.

Sincerely,
Celia Frost
Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher furlough

1 message

Emily Bradshaw <bradshaw.e@gmail.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 8:32 PM

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

I remember several years ago when teachers were furloughed and I was worried about the school my children were missing and how underpaid teachers would survive a pay cut. It is amazing how much more dire the situation is now and how again, the state is asking teachers to be the shock absorbers of the system. Teachers have worked over time and changed teaching styles and risked infection, but the state is cutting pay in return. Also, losing teacher time is going to negatively affect students. I see the deterioration of work stamina and the sportiness of content delivery, even from good teachers. In a currently hard-hit system, why is the state further chopping at the legs of a teetering stool? Please reconsider the teacher furlough for the sake of both teachers and students. We owe teachers a debt of gratitude and are giving them a gratitude of imposed debts. If the justification is that the teachers can just give online work on those days, those thinking in this direction have no real understanding of online education. Charles Graham is a leader in the field of online education, and he has published that online classes are successful only when best pedagogical practices are used. Don't furlough teachers and sacrifice pedagogy. I am an instructional designer. Don't furlough teachers. I am a mom. Don't furlough teachers.

Emily Bradshaw



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

augustwest <augustwest9999@yahoo.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 8:34 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whole it concerns:

I am a teacher at alvah Scott elementary. I have been teaching for 15 years. I thought by the time I made it this long in a career and in my 40s I would have some comfort in my life. I thought I could live it little easier without stressing every day about how I will pay my bills. Living in Hawaii has proved all that wrong. Hawaii is extremely expensive. No matter where you live whether it's in a wealthy area, a middle class area, or even a poor area you are going to struggle. Rent is crazy. Food is crazy. Utilities are crazy. Taxes are crazy. And as a result poverty continues to grow. Also, it's far worse as a single person in Hawaii. You are pretty much doomed to struggle here.

I struggle every day. The pay for teachers is not enough. I barely make my ends meet now, so I have no idea how I will do it with furloughs and a pay cuts.

My options are limited. Get a second job even though I'm completely exhausted by the end of each school day.... or move. Move to where teachers can survive and make some ground with each year of experience. Hawaii continues to prove this is not the place to make ground. Only a place to slip and fall further behind. When the government continues to turn their backs on the people, then I think the best choice is to leave and not come back. There's better places out there. Especially for teachers.

-george scondras

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Christina Tarumi <christina.tarumi@hawks.k12.hi.us>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 9:40 PM

Regarding: **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 name is Christina Tarumi and I teach 7th grade at Nanakuli High and Intermediate. I have been teaching for 22 years and have been through a strike and the previous furlough. I don't know what else to say except I don't know how people can say they value teachers and yet cut their pay to show appreciation. Furloughs and pay cuts would personally be devastating to my household since my husband works in tourism and is furloughed. We have no choice but to make due on my income. If I could find another job, I would. If I could retire, I would. I don't know why anyone who can retire now would stay on in the face of furloughs for an undetermined amount of time. Teacher's daily lives are unpredictable by nature...

Please don't add more uncertainty.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

wendy wells <plumeria7201@yahoo.com>

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 9:46 PM

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

Testimony

Dear Sir or Madam,

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 seriously concerned and upset about the Governor's decision to furlough teachers and the Superintendent's possible plan to use paid holidays as our furlough days. While I do not want to lose any further educational days with our students then we already have, using paid holidays as furloughs are just a pay cut, so let's just be honest about that one. The whole thing is a slap in the face to teachers who have bent over backwards to accommodate teaching and learning in this unpredictable COVID pandemic.

I am in my 16th year of teaching in Hilo on Hawaii island. I have endured furloughs, LWOPS (pay cuts), lack of step increases for years of service, and constant changes to curriculum & testing requirements. I teach Mathematics to 8th grade students. I am constantly under pressure to ensure that students are meeting standards, making growth, and doing well on the SBA at the end of the year. I regularly attend any professional development opportunities I can to ensure I am doing the best possible job I can for our students. I have served as Team Leader, Department Head, 8th Grade Advisor, and HSTA Head Representative. I have watched as outside providers, such as Edison, America's Choice, Catapult, and BERC group have been paid millions of dollars by the Department of Education to restructure, reform, and "improve" schools with no real measurable results. I have watched teachers be criticized, coached, reformed, managed, made to teach using scripts, and all other types of things that has resulted in extremely low morale, high teacher turnover, high teacher shortages, long term substitutes teaching who are not qualified in the subject area, burn-out, life-threatening health issues due to stress, and resignation to a career in which we are not valued and respected as the hard-working professionals we are. I thought I had seen it all until COVID hit.

Now, we are juggling teaching students virtually with programs we just learned to use this year, without any added time to learn it with since the DOE thought it best to bombard us with videos and added requirements the first 2 weeks of school that did NOT assist us in any way with the job that lay in front of us this year, as if to "punish" us for our concerns of having students return to school as cases were rising. We are also teaching our vulnerable students in person, doing private and group tutoring, re-writing I.E.P.'s, meeting with parents, endless phone calls, doing professional development, collecting data, testing, dealing with budget cuts, and it goes on and on. Amazingly we do it with a smile because we love our students. Otherwise, what sane person would do this job???? Just when I thought it was as crazy as it could get comes the news of the furloughs.

My husband and I are both teachers. We both have Master's degrees. I am at the top of the pay scale at Class VII so I cannot go any further. My husband has been a teacher for 5 years so he has worked a 2nd job in a restaurant to make ends meet, but lost it because of COVID. We have 4 grown children that we help as much as we can (which is not much, being teachers). We also have a daughter still at home. We are juggling childcare since we both have to work and she is not attending in-person school. A 9% pay cut, which is what these furloughs are if they occur on paid holidays, would be devastating to us. We are already struggling to pay off debt incurred this last year, stay on top of our mortgage, put money away for our daughter's college, pay on our school loans (over \$100,000), and still have money for food and clothing. The pay cuts for us will be a loss of about \$900 a month and I just don't see how we can weather that. We are considering filing for bankruptcy if that happens and we can't find second jobs to make up the difference.

Several teachers at my husband's school are quitting at the end of this year and 1 even next semester. Many of my co-workers and myself are considering other options, especially since there is such a demand for online teaching through various companies worldwide.

Both of our schools are losing positions due to the cuts in the WSF and SPED. We already had cuts to WSF this year that nobody talked about, which I believe went to funding the additional \$10,000 differential so our Superintendent could still have the better looking numbers since its part of her evaluation. I may be wrong on that assumption, but we were cut at

the beginning of the school year and again now. We are not sure how many positions will be lost for sure, but we were already operating on a shoe-string budget this year and we are a large school.

All of this is going to cumulate in reduced opportunities and services for Hawaii's keiki, who are already suffering and barely hanging in during this pandemic, which just straight up sucks. I'm sorry, but its b[REDACTED]t. They are the last ones who should be bearing the brunt of our economic situation. Students in Hawaii are already dealing with isolation, lack of social interaction, money stresses at home, and worse. They should be our first priority, not our last. There has to be a better way.

One suggestion: let's trim the fat. Let's take a look at the top heavy DOE and the numerous district positions there are. What do these positions really do? Do we really need that many? What results are we actually getting from having so many of those non-classroom teacher positions? Also, any money going to outside providers should be immediately stopped. I am not advocating for anyone to lose their job, BUT classroom teachers should be the absolute LAST positions to look at cutting or furloughing or pay-cutting. WE are the frontlines, WE are the direct contact to our children, WE are the ones who spend 8 hours a day with them, WE are the ones who often sacrifice time with our own families so WE can help our students and their families, WE are the ones who listen to students about their friend drama, WE are the ones that help them to believe in themselves and their ability to succeed, WE are the ones who give them a growth mindset to know they can achieve their heart's desire, WE are the ones they remember as adults who sometimes were the only person who refused to give up on them, WE are classroom teachers!! AND WE DESERVE BETTER!!!

Sincerely,
Wendy Wells



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony about school days

1 message

David Brown <hidbro@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 10:08 PM

Dear BOE,

I know that since Hawaii is controlled by Democrats and Democrats always say they love public school teachers, you will support teachers and not cut anybody's salary.

Thank you,
David Brown
Lahaina

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Latarsha Lawy <latarsl@msn.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Dec 13, 2020 at 11:05 PM

I feel awful confused and afraid, a national pandemic plus furlough equals financial and mental depression. As a teacher we (I speak for the entire profession) are financially behind/ depressed when compared to doctors, athletes, lawyers, actors, and politicians. Children that aspire to be come through our classrooms. However, we love and have a passion for our call of duty as teachers. We are not given an equal or fair share financially within our community to buy homes or stay equipped with a safe haven of savings. We look forward to a retirement that may or may not be waiting for us.

I speak for myself when I say that I am not able to get sick or even pay my rent if I miss one week out of the month. I had a second- part time job and because of covid have reduced pay and now am without Unemployment.

I returned to work in this pandemic because my vulnerable students deserved an ongoing chance. I had no other choice but to work for my pay check to survive. Furlough is a slap in the face when my school is already short teachers. I fulfilled a double duty position. I don't have a savings pot to go into to live comfortably . My contract had to begin with a probation status because I returned late due to having to quarantine. I was without pay and medical due to a 14 day quarantine.

We take risks and allow certain sanctions to roll over us in an attempt to maintain our passion call of duty and employment. The education salary or budget should never be affected by whether a tourist enters our community for relaxing, not in a community where people pay rent and mortgage to live and raise their own families. There are plenty of other government avenues to fund the education system that educates our own children being raised within our own community. As teachers we either take pay cuts or pay cut. Teachers take a cut in pay or a pay cut. I personally cannot afford either! It leaves me feeling afraid, and confused to think I can end up homeless.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Pay cut may mean leaving the profession

1 message

Stephen Majzun <stephen.majzun@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 12:05 AM

Aloha All,

The potential furloughs and pay cuts are cause for concern for the teachers whose pay is about to be reduced and the education of our keiki. And this is coming from a teacher who works a second job so that I can continue to teach. These are some thoughts that have been running through my mind. . . .

Teachers didn't sign up for a 9 - 5, but to change lives. And technically our 9-5 ends at 3, but our work doesn't. It's 11:53 on a Sunday night and I'm grading student work and replying to this email.

Teachers don't teach for money, but we do have bills to pay. And most of us are barely getting by. I work a second job so that I can keep teaching. I will have no choice, but to work five nights a week. And that is time taken away from students.

If you haven't figured it out, teachers don't teach to get rich in the bank, but we do teach to get rich in our lives. And we are far wealthier than anyone on a billionaires list. That's why we're all still here. But if you continue to disrespect our positions, we will leave. We can make far more money in the private sector.

I made more in 1999 than I do as a teacher in 2020. How does that make sense to anyone? I'm doing something that I love. But this furlough/pay cut nonsense is making me consider leaving teaching. I do hope that the state will pull it's collective head out of it's rear and make this right.

Mahalo,
Steve Majzun
Kaimuki Middle School
7th & 8th Grade Social Studies

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Cid Chun <cidchun@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 3:51 AM

TESTIMONY

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, and communications with families and employees

Furloughs will hugely affect me personally. I am the sole income earner in our household. My husband was a banquet guest services manager for a major hotel and has been out of work since March. More recently his position was terminated and beginning next month we will be switching our health insurance coverage to my State benefits. We have never used these before because the hotel industry is much more generous with its employees than the State of Hawaii. For the last three decades our health insurance was covered 100% by my husband's hotel benefits. Beginning in January we will be paying \$600 a month for coverage that is only 80/20. We are close to retirement and are already devastated to have less insurance for huge costs with only one income earner. Banquet departments will not be opening in any hotels for a long time, and at 57 years old, my husband will have to change careers in order to find employment. I do not know how we will survive financially. Although I should be able to retire in three years, we have used our saving to survive and are now now using our credit card. It will take some time to get back to where we were a year ago financially.

Furloughs will hugely affect the quality of education for my students. They missed 4th quarter last year, what with the Superintendent requiring that DL (distance learning) be "enrichment only:" they came to the 8th grade a bit out of practice. They have been troopers as we slogged through disappointing training and support for DL, and just when they were in that groove, our school moved to hybrid and they had to readjust all over again. Now that I am not online on their days home, they are not as connected and we work EXTREMELY HARD to reach out to the students and their families to keep them on track. I have been an educator for over 20 years. I have never worked this hard or as long hours as I have this semester. I get up at 4 AM and put in a couple hours before I get ready for work. I stay till 5 or later most days. I am a 63 year old who is also a cancer survivor with an autoimmune disease. Balancing what my students need with taking care of myself is already extremely difficult.

My principal has already announced cuts. She will be short 100's of 1000's of dollars. She is cutting an English position (among other positions being cut) in a very small school. She is talking of teachers working 7 of 8 periods (versus the 6 of 8 currently). So class sizes will be bigger and teachers will lose a prep period.

I love what I do and I am really good at it. But this is too much. These are my core values:

1. Health
2. Family
3. Work

Before I was diagnosed with cancer in 2006, I was a teacher at Kapolei High in its beginning years. I took on being Department Head, Team Lead, getting my Masters, and passing my National Boards. And I got sick. Having survived cancer, chemo, and radiation, I readjusted my core values and put my health and my family first. I have let this slip during the pandemic and have gone all in to put my students first; however, there is a breaking point and we are at that point.

In order for my husband and I to survive financially, I will need to pour more of myself into a side job. In order to not get sick, I will need to pace myself as a teacher. I will do what I can from 7:30 am to 3 pm and what I cannot do I will not worry about and will not let it affect my health. I will not feel guilty because it will not be me that undervalues the education of the public school students of Hawaii. Please. Say no to furloughs. Say no to teacher pay cuts. I have also been a mentor teacher and I love working with the young, new teachers. Young teachers are coming to us with much higher student debt, and that they choose public education is such a blessing. We will lose many young teachers with these cuts. Please show that educators and public school students. show your support by saying no to furloughs and to pay cuts. With the huge budget reductions coming down, that should be enough.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Chun

8TH Grade English Language Arts

Waiialua High and Intermediate School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

BRANDI MAHUNA <bmahuna@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 5:06 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

This furlough will cause many teachers to make decisions that they don't or fear today. I already contemplated so many times from the start of this pandemic till now, considered leaving my job. If a furlough gets put in place I will be leaving my job as a teacher to find work in another state and have to relocate my family. Teachers are already underpaid and I struggle to keep my family afloat living off of the tiny amount I have left after my mortgage and monthly bills are paid for. We already lost crucial days in our school year due to start up set backs and students are already behind, yet you stress teachers out when you still want the keiki of Hawaii to participate and take the SBA, something in which part of our pay is determined.

Some of us are on the front line dealing with students and families face to face on campus not because we have to but because we love our job and our students, while most of you are in the safety and comfort of your own home, teleworking. It is not fair for our teachers to take a payout, especially in a time like this where teachers are working extra hard to meet the need of the students at home and on campus. There are so many veteran teachers whom I know of are retiring at the end of this month because they are disgusted with the system and not the job itself. This furlough will only push more teachers to resign and relocate to teach in other places where their service is valued and appreciated.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Carina Morgan <carinamorganhpe@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 5:17 AM

My husband and I are both state employees so the governor's furlough days are a tremendous financial burden on our household. Especially this being the 2nd time experiencing this in the state of Hawaii.

Furthermore, I question the superintendent's plan to use substitutes for our furlough day to keep students in the classroom. Why not utilize that substitute pay to go towards teacher salaries. I imagine that many teachers would rather stay in the classroom with their students for reduced pay than need to prepare sub plans for a forced leave day unpaid.

I am a veteran teacher and have been with the district for 11 years, but I am now looking at other options due to this financial burden being placed on my family.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

jillianlani@gmail.com <jillianlani@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:23 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

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 impending furloughs will be devastating for my family. My other half recently lost his job and we are now living off of my teacher salary. This salary is considered low income. We have a two year old and a 9 month old. My income is now used to cover our living expenses, food, basic necessities, and preschool for my 2 year old. Over the years I have worked very hard to earn the pay that I am making now. I have taken various professional development classes as well as received my National Board Certification in Early childhood which will all be undone with these impending furloughs.

Next month my family will already feel the affects of a reduction in my pay check because I had to add my children on to my medical plan because they are no longer covered by my other half.

So many of my colleagues are feeling the same affects. One of my colleagues was forced to take leave this school year because her children are doing distance learning and she has no one to support them in this but her. So she's been making 1/3 her regular paycheck. What will her pay be after the furloughs?? It is so disheartening as educators we pour everything we have into educating our students. We spend countless hours at home and at work planning lessons, communicating with parents, and receiving professional development. We are basically working around the clock as we grade papers, answer parent emails, and plan and execute in class and online instruction for our students.

What does all of this hard work get us? A 9.2% pay reduction? Why should we stay in this profession if we can't cover the costs of living and provide for our families? So many teachers already have two jobs. We could be making more doing something else like driving a garage truck and at the end of the day we wouldn't have work to do! We do this job because we LOVE our STUDENTS and care about their families.

So for our sacrifice you reward us with taking away our pay. As the government officials in charge of making this decision. I hope you take a good look at yourself in the mirror and realize that what you are doing is unfair. You the government officials should also be taking a pay cut alongside us- the governor, Mayor, and those in your cabinet. If you did- you wouldn't have to take 9.2% from teachers who are already in the low income category. If you did your part then we would truly all be in this TOGETHER and this would mean taking a pay cut too especially since you decided to give yourselves raises during the start of the pandemic.

The future of our students depends on the education that they receive- the teachers they form bonds with that inspire them. You will see more and more good teachers leaving the profession and because of that you will see more students dropping out of school- joining gangs - the loss of good teachers has a ripple effect. If you want to see productive citizens in the future- you need to invest in the people who invest in our students.

Concerned Teacher,
Jillian Przygodzinski

12/14/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Grade 1 Teacher
Ali'iolani Elementary
Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Daryle Fleming <daryle.fleming@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:10 AM

Sirs,

I am a math teacher at Waipahu Intermediate school. Open the schools. My sister-in-law can't work because she must stay home and watch the kids during distance learning. My students have parents, aunties, uncles staying home to watch them. The CDC says children are more likely to die from the flu than COVID. As far as furloughs goes, my family will be okay, we are good with our money and prepare ahead. I am starting an additional career as a notary public to add to our income. Teacher pay is sad for Hawaii.

--

vr,
Daryle Fleming

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Ellen Farnsworth <ellenfarn80011@yahoo.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:27 AM

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

Aloha

I am a teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate School on the Big Island. Furloughs and pay cuts are definitely going to affect my ability to live in Hawaii as well as my school and students. Living in Hawaii is very expensive and it takes my entire paycheck just to exist here. A 9% pay cut would probably mean that I could no longer eat out at a restaurant which in turn hurts their business. I would not be able to enjoy the recreation that is available here in Hawaii because I could not afford the gas to get to those places. When a person has no out to relax and get away a little from the daily grind of work, it can cause one to become more emotionally inept at handling their everyday work. Students would suffer because teachers are more on edge.

Our principal told of us on Friday of the impending cuts for next year. Our school alone is scheduled to lose 11 teaching positions. This will truly impact our students and the teachers as class sizes will have to be larger and some programs will have to be cut.

I understand, the state is undergoing a significant loss in revenue, but cutting teachers, who are essential to the future of our keiki is not the way to save money.

Sincerely

Ellen Farnsworth



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furlough comment

1 message

Michael Hurst <michaelwhurst@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:58 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I moved to Kaua'i to teach from Costa Rica and Thailand last year; I am a veteran teacher with multiple degrees in education. It was a pay cut taking a job in Hawai'i compared to other places I might have chosen. I chose Kaua'i for its rich diversity of cultures and learning needs. My partner became unemployed as COVID pandemic rolled over our island, we are struggling to survive on one paycheck, a furlough would be painful.

My background in educational technology is a valuable skill in supporting my students; they have suffered tremendous loss in instructional time already due to a late beginning and the challenges of learning in a new environment. Losing more instructional time this late in the year will just reinforce the chaos of last year and the negative perception the public is building about the ability of education to meet the needs of 21st Century learning.

--

~Dr. Michael W. Hurst, Ed.D.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Michael Hurst <michaelwhurst@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:59 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony

I moved to Kaua'i to teach from Costa Rica and Thailand last year; I am a veteran teacher with multiple degrees in education. It was a pay cut taking a job in Hawai'i compared to other places I might have chosen. I chose Kaua'i for its rich diversity of cultures and learning needs. My partner became unemployed as COVID pandemic rolled over our island, we are struggling to survive on one paycheck, a furlough would be painful.

My background in educational technology is a valuable skill in supporting my students; they have suffered tremendous loss in instructional time already due to a late beginning and the challenges of learning in a new environment. Losing more instructional time this late in the year will just reinforce the chaos of last year and the negative perception the public is building about the ability of education to meet the needs of 21st Century learning.

--

~Dr. Michael W. Hurst, Ed.D.



"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kerry Gudmunson <kjgudmunson@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:16 AM

Aloha

I serve as the Curriculum Coordinator at Lokelani Intermediate School on Maui.

My husband has worked as a Substitute teacher for the last seven years.

Because of the pandemic, he has worked fewer days than usual this year.

Our principal has informed our staff that there will be a number of teaching positions cut next school year. His employment has already been affected by the virtual learning platforms our school district has implemented. More staffing cuts will mean fewer opportunities for him to work. If I am faced with furloughs or a pay cut, we will no longer be able to afford to live on Maui and will be moving out of state at the end of the school year.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Furlough hurt students

1 message

Lucky McCullough <beth_mccullough@baldwin.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:20 AM

Aloha,

I'm an English teacher at Baldwin High School on Maui.

If you implement furloughs, some teachers will quit, then students will be left with substitute teachers.

Furloughs would be reduced pay. You don't pay us enough to live here on a regular salary. All of the teachers I know, including me, have multiple jobs. With Covid, my side jobs dried up, leaving me with my teaching job. If you cut my pay, it will make it even more challenging to pay the bills, which will result in teachers leaving the islands to find an affordable place to live on the mainland.

Without enough full time teachers, students' education will suffer greatly. Students don't learn much of anything when there's a substitute teacher.

Thank you for hearing me.

Beth McCullough
Teacher at Baldwin High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

David Tanaka <david.tanaka@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:22 AM

Hello,

I have little confidence that this will be heard, as it seems like this is just a habitual decision that is made whenever there seems to be a budget conflict. Still, for my own peace of mind I need to share my thoughts.

I began teaching here in Hawaii in 2007. Just in time for the Great Recession. The state's remedy for their budget problems was the same, pay cuts and furlough Fridays. It took me years before I made it back to the same amount of money as when I started, and longer to get a "raise." Why is it that the state refuses to look into other sources of revenue and cuts, and instead always seems to balance their budget on the backs of hardworking citizens who have chosen a life of service to the community they live in.

Teachers, like other state workers do not make a lot of money. Most teachers have to take on student loans (I myself have taken out over 100,000 in student debt for my own education) in order to become qualified to become a teacher. We understand that we will not become millionaires in our profession, no one goes into teaching for the money. We work for the love of our community, and wanting to make our world a better place. Unfortunately, with the rising cost of living here, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make a living on a teacher's salary. My wife and I are both teachers, and after years of saving we finally were able to buy a house recently. Like everything else we looked at in our price range there is a TON of work to be done to make it liveable. With these 9 percent paycuts, that is looking a little less doable for us, as we have a mortgage payment plus all of the cost of repairs to think of. I don't know how we are going to make it. I personally knew two teachers at my school who were living out of their cars because they could not find a place they could afford to live on a single teacher's salary.

Teachers don't want to be rich. We just want to be able to afford to live in the communities we serve. These furloughs are going to make that very difficult for all, and impossible for some.

The pandemic has already decimated education in Hawaii. Teachers and students are under enormous strain in trying to cope with restrictions, distance learning, hybrid learning, risks from exposure, etc. We hate it. This is a terrible year, for myself and just about every other person (teacher or student) that I talk to. But we keep showing up. For our students, for our community. Education is the foundation of a thriving society. Yet Hawaii constantly undervalues this important institution. The decision to furlough teachers is yet another example of the state taking the quick fix, easy way out. I understand that the budget needs to be balanced, and the state is trying to make up for lost revenue. But why are you punishing the people who have been working so hard to support so many during this trying time?

Shame on you. I hope that none of you were educators in a previous life, because that would make the shame so much worse.

I am disheartened, frustrated, and ready to look for a new job.

David Tanaka

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Mike Holt <michaelbryanholt@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:31 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I moved here to take this job. Losing this job will affect my family financially, but even more so the school as pressure will be added to my coworkers to keep up with bigger caseloads. I am considering leaving at winter break and almost certainly before the school year is up if a more stable situation arises. I know several coworkers who feel the same way. --

Mike Holt





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Laura Farris <laura.farris@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:35 AM

Aloha-

I am a veteran teacher and teach special education and also have highly qualified credentials in Math (all grade levels) and all subjects in Elementary Ed. I have a doctorate and teach as an adjunct professor at Chaminade trying to teach and recruit people to teach Special Education in DOE.

Well, NO LONGER!!!

I am recently single and can barely afford my home payment now. After pay cuts.... NOT!!!! I will move back to Washington State where I taught for 20 years and will be actually able to afford to live and be a teacher which I love to do. I will sell my home and move after teaching and giving 18 years of my life to DOE, for nothing apparently. There is no one looking out for teachers or children of our state. We are the first to go!!!! What about the corrupt police ???? How much do they steal and take??? **The state of Hawaii has no commitment to education.** I was here for Furlough Fridays and that was a national embarrassment and joke too.

Can someone with a long term brain please make competent decisions for our state????

I am so sad and disappointed that there are not better qualified people in our state making these terrible and life rendering decisions for others.

I could barely make a living with the cost of living and I have worked hours and hours of more than contract hours. Obviously, it doesn't matter what an individual matters.... nor children.

Thank you for hearing and hopefully understanding,

Dr. Laura A. Farris
Kaimuki Middle School
[REDACTED]

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Lawrence Frank <lawrence.frank@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:38 AM

Aloha BOE,

My name is Bo Frank. I am a 22-year veteran teacher in the Hawaii DOE, the last 20 years in various roles at Radford High School. My partner is also a teacher with nearly 20 years in the DOE. We already don't get paid what we deserve due to a compressed salary schedule from past pay cuts and furloughs imposed by the state during our tenure. Today I am testifying on the general business meeting discussion item: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

Our family will be devastated with both my partner and I being furloughed. We both already work two jobs to make ends meet, and now with both of us being furloughed, we are left with no choice but to look for other employment to survive and provide for our three children. We have already applied for work in other states just in case and outside of the profession. We both are graduates of Hawaii public schools, we both have master's degrees, and I am a Ph.D. candidate. What other careers can you think of where professionals with the education my partner and I have must work two jobs to get by. There isn't, and we all know that! The continued slap in the face by the state to balance the budget on the back of the education of Hawaii Keiki is too much to handle. Our government leaders need to think outside the box. There are so many other ways to balance the budget than to cut from education, which is the bedrock of the State of Hawaii's future. I hope we can avoid furloughs so that our children can also become proud graduates of Hawaii public schools, but at this point, that reality appears to be just a dream.

We have been left with no choice; we can't work three jobs, there aren't enough hours in the day for that, so our only option is to hopefully gain employment somewhere else, somewhere we won't be forced into homelessness or have our children go hungry! It is a sad day when teachers who are devoted to educating, nurturing, and molding the future leaders of Hawaii are forced to leave the profession they love!

If we proceed with furloughs, our education system will never recover, and our keiki will be left without opportunities for success! I urge leaders to think outside the box for ways to be less reliant on tourism so that the children of Hawaii don't keep getting shortchanged with cuts to their education to balance the state budget. Furloughs right now are genuinely the breaking point for so many, be creative and save our schools, our teachers, and our keiki. BOE, please fight the furloughs for all of our futures; we have a contract until the end of this school year, be pono, do what is right by the people you serve!

Mahalo,

Bo Frank

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Laura Farris <laura.farris@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:44 AM

Aloha-

I can no longer afford to work and live in Hawaii and be a public school special education teacher. The salary before the cuts now were barely liveable. I will move back to Washington state where I took a 30% cut in pay from there due to your lowest of low salary schedule, to move here, 18 years ago. I have a doctorate and teach at Chaminade also as an adjunct professor am constantly trying to recruit students to become special education teachers. Well, NO MORE!!!! Are you nuts??? Why would I encourage people to care about others when YOU DON'T. The state decision makers are at a sad state of affairs picking on the students and children of DOE who have no voice.

Shame on you and all the poor decisions you are making.

Dr. Laura Farris
Kaimuki Middle School


Honolulu, HI

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Thoughts

1 message

Michelle Marr <hawaiiiteacher808@yahoo.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:48 AM

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

Aloha,

I have emailed Governor Ige on this topic and thought I would share what I said to him:

I understand the state is in a financial crisis, every business and family has been hit hard during this pandemic. I also understand that to run a business, which is what the state is, cuts and arrangements must be made to balance the budget.

Schools always seem to take the largest hit when it comes to these cuts. We are the last to be considered when contract negotiations are in process and get the short end of the stick when it comes to pay. This does not mean that we are not empathetic to the difficulties of a budget. Schools are at this moment dealing with lower than usual enrollment and a major budget cut. We are forced to let teachers go for the SY2021-2022 in order to just balance our working budget, let alone try to find any surplus to pay for things like xerox contracts and toilet paper. The loss of teachers adds stress of trying to keep class sizes small to accommodate the 6ft distance. It is a no win situation.

My thoughts on this furlough is, if you insist on furloughing us, instead of disrupting an already fragile school schedule, take those furlough days and add them to breaks already on the calendar. Put an extra week on winter, spring, and fall break. That will give the state 15 days, and it will cause minimal disruption to school schedules.

Children are just coming back to face to face learning and many schools need to have a rotation schedule in order to follow the 6ft distance guidance from BOH. Creating furlough Fridays at this point in the year will really disrupt the rotation schedules that schools worked on for months. Basically we would have to adjust all our students for the rest of the year.

Please consider this as an alternative for something we know will happen whether we want it to or not.

Sincerely,
Michelle C.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Proposed furloughs for 2021

1 message

Bea Arendale <hanabay17@yahoo.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:08 AM

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

Aloha All,

I have been an English teacher in the public schools of Hawai'i since 1997. I have survived the 3 week strike in 2001 and the furloughs in 2009 just as my daughter was graduating from high school. I was looking forward to having her receive the HSTA scholarship for college awarded to students of teachers only to hear that the HSTA didn't have enough money to fund this scholarship because of the impact of furloughs. Here I am again, two years prior to my retirement having to face yet another slap in the face by our Hawai'i government leaders.

Where did all the tourist revenue go when prior to COVID-19 when there were 70,000 tourists on Maui every day? Obviously, I am faced with difficult choices. Do I endure yet another four years of furloughs or do I retire early? Or do I teach at a private school for the rest of my career although I believe in a public school education?

Please ask our governor to not furlough state workers because it will negatively impact the future generations of Maui residents. Furthermore, if state workers are furloughed, the economy will suffer because these workers will not be spending money to support our local businesses.

Respectfully,

Beate Arendale
King Kekaulike High School
AP Literature teacher and senior English teacher
Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education 1994
Master's Degree in the Art of Teaching 2012



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Susan Kukahiko <honunhoku@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:09 AM

I understand the loss in revenue needs to be replaced but education cuts are not the way. Our teachers were just gaining some ground before the pandemic and we need to continue this for our students. We cannot expect our students to take any further disruption of their education. They have sacrificed so much already. Find a way that allows our student population the opportunities they deserve.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Mara Carlson <mcarlson@kkhs.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:11 AM

Aloha,

My name is Mara Carlson and this is my sixth year teaching at King Kekaulike High School. The thought of a furlough happening scares me so much. I am 34 years old and waited to start a family once I had all my "ducks in a row", including having been financially responsible enough to provide for a child. In December my husband and I decided to start a family and I got off the pill, to then get pregnant in May. I am now 31 weeks pregnant and due in February. As excited as we are to bring our son into this world we are also worried about keeping a roof over our heads as my husband was laid off from his job due to Covid. Covid has brought on individual struggles for all. For us in our mid 30's with stable careers we did not anticipate there being a struggle to feed and keep the lights on in order to have a baby. We waited and waited to pull the trigger on having a family, being as responsible as possible, now with bills piling up, student loans, rent, gas and the basic expense of life, we wonder how we will make it if even one dollar is taken away from my salary as I am the sole provider. I am not sure as to what we will do if furloughs happen, I try not to think about it to keep my stress levels down while pregnant. I did want to take this time to share my personal concern as to what is going on in my life and the fear of the unknown as to what a furlough would have an effect on our livelihood.

Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration,

Mara Carlson

--

Mara Carlson

9th Grade English Special Education
King Kekaulike High School
[121 Kula Highway](#)
Pukalani, 96768



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Susan Kukahiko <susan.kukahiko@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

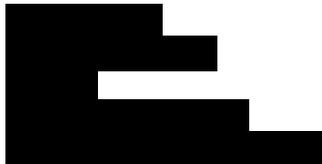
Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:12 AM

I understand the loss in revenue needs to be replaced but education cuts are not the way. Our teachers were just gaining some ground before the pandemic and we need to continue this for our students. We cannot expect our students to take any further disruption of their education. They have sacrificed so much already. Find a way that allows our student population the opportunities they deserve.

--

Susan Kukahiko

Physical Education Teacher
Princess Nahi'ena'ena E.S.



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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Courtney Lau <ckleclau@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:13 AM

I am writing to share how the proposed furloughs will negatively impact not only myself, but my students.

My family, like many other families across the state, faced loss of work and income throughout the pandemic, resulting in our reliance on unemployment. We are already struggling and the implementation of furloughs and loss of pay for teachers will make it even more difficult for families like mine to survive in this state.

With teachers' already low pay, plus the high cost of insurance, I am already bringing home a very small paycheck. I am barely breaking even financially with the cost of insurance, gas, and childcare required for me to work. **Leaving the profession for something with a fair salary crosses my mind daily.**

The statistics of children in our state who are already underserved with unqualified teachers is tremendously high. How does the state think that they will be able to attract and retain teachers with an additional loss of pay? Those children and more will continue to be underserved with these furloughs.

Thank you for your time,
general education teacher at Waikiki School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

aurene padilla <aurenecp@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:20 AM

Board of Education,

My name is Aurene Padilla and I am a 25 year veteran of the Hawaii Department of Education. I am the daughter of two retired educators and the only job I have ever wanted was to be was a teacher. I have 3 college degrees and I am at the highest pay scale in both steps and classes (as a matter of fact I have a surplus of credits that would move me to higher classes if there were any) that my employer will afford me. I am also a single mother to two teenage children. We live with my parents, My car has 120,000 miles and we don't take trips to the mainland.

In my teaching career I have gone on strike, faced Furlough Fridays, have seen pay raises that didn't keep up with the rising cost of my insurance, and have recently learned that I am at the same Step on the pay scale as teachers who have been teaching 10 years less than me. Now I am being told that as a 12 month employee I will be taking directed leave without pay for 10 days to balance the state budget.

It is clear to me that in times of prosperity my employer thinks that I am not worth being paid a salary that reflects my loyalty to my company and the professional development that I put into myself to be the best teacher that I can be and that when times are tough my colleagues and I will always be the first people to give up our salary for the good of Hawaii but asked to continue to work over time to help our keiki succeed.

Throughout the past year I have seen my colleagues working tirelessly giving their students their all. My children's teachers have been excellent, working with my kids and myself during the school day, after the school day, weekends and holidays to provide extra help and answer questions. As a mentor to beginning teachers I have seen my brand new teachers doing their best to provide hybrid learning to students in their classroom and online. As a coordinator of the Induction and Mentoring Program I have been learning new tools and applications to provide support to mentors and teachers after work hours, weekends and holidays. Teachers are working harder and spending a lot of their personal time and resources to educate our keiki. We have pivoted with every new mandate, we continue to work harder with less.

The Governor's announcement that the education budget will take a 10% pay cut and in addition will be furloughed is a blow to our well-being. How can we continue to do our important work if we know that any time there is a crises we will be asked to give up our pay and time with our students? In 25 years I have never seen financial stability or saved enough money to purchase a home for my children and I. My kids ask me all the time why I work so hard and don't get paid what I deserve. How do I tell them that education is not a priority of our state even though I keep telling them to study hard and do well in school? Hawaii is my home but I cannot live here and make ends meet. All through 2020 I have done my part to support local businesses and stay safe, when will the state of Hawaii decide that my family's well-being is important because I educate our keiki who are our future?

Time and time again different governors have told me that my work is not a priority that I am not deserving of a salary that can support my family. It is heart breaking. Should we continue down this path for a third decade I am not sure who will want to be a teacher. I am not sure how we will be able to keep career educators doing this work. I beg of you to show Hawaii that education is important and to stop furloughs and cuts to education. It is time for the state of Hawaii to do what educators have been doing all along, to think out of the box and find a way to do the work with less. Pay our teachers.

Aurene Padilla

Teacher

Leilehua Mililani Waialua Complex Area



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Chani Matsui <cckmatsui@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:22 AM

Aloha,

I'd like to testify on item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding DOE furloughs. I am in my 7th year teaching in the state of Hawaii. My family has always lived here and I would very much like to stay. But if my pay is cut too severely, I will no longer be able to afford living here. I know of several teachers who will struggle even more financially than I will, as they have recently started families, bought new homes, and have made other financial decisions related to the pay they expected to have for the 2020-2021 school year. I understand that the pandemic was not something we could have anticipated and that we will all need to make sacrifices going forward, but implementing furloughs starting in January 2021, when we expected to make a particular salary for the whole school year, places a burden on teachers that is unfair.

We have been notified by our principal that we will have an anticipated \$730,000 shortfall next school year. We were asked to brainstorm ways to cut costs across the school. In our department, we thought about simpler things to cut like subscriptions and textbooks. But when we looked at the facts, we haven't bought textbooks in the time I've been here, and I even supply my own room with dry erase markers and basic supplies for the students like folder paper and pens. So cutting these things from the budget will do us no good because the school already wasn't paying for them. That leaves us with cutting positions. As a full inclusion school, we are already struggling to provide every student with the level of support that will make him/her excel. The newer teachers on campus tend to be SPED, so that means cutting some of the support that the SPED teachers provide, if we cut by seniority. That leaves us at risk for law suits for not meeting the needs of all of our learners. If we cut by "non-core" positions, that leaves us with students who are not well-rounded and do not have a sense of what else lies out there besides books and school.

As I said earlier, I understand that we will need to make difficult decisions, but on the one hand touting teachers for their "amazing work" and "sacrifice" and then in the next breath furloughing us feels like a slap in the face. And this is all without mentioning the toll this will take on the students if they need to stay at home for more school days, and lose out on even more opportunities because of the pandemic.

Are there other creative solutions the DOE can come up with to make up the shortfall? Are there ways for schools to raise some revenue to help?

Mahalo,
Chani Matsui
Kaimuki High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furloughs

1 message

Eman Al-misky <eman.al-misky@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:28 AM

I know the state needs to save money but furloughing teachers is never the best answer! Keiki should be our number one priority. If teachers must be furloughed it should be a working day and not during our breaks. Otherwise, it is considered a pay cut and not a furlough. Also, it wouldn't be equitable between teachers that teach 10 months and teachers that are 12 months because 10-month teachers are not paid during the summer.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Gerianne Fujihara <gerianne.fujihara@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:31 AM

Implementing a Furlough in addition to job positions already being cut is a disservice to our students. Students will have larger class sizes, less electives to choose from, and now less days of school. This is depressing and sad for everyone in Hawaii. Our DOE and state need to seek other solutions. Crime is already a problem because too many people are suffering financially.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs 2021

1 message

Deanna Kackley <dkackley@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:44 AM

Rush to judgment is always discouraged. Governor Ige does not have a complete picture from the Biden administration, which may preclude the need to furlough. Waiting until after Jan 21st is strongly advised.

In addition, the control of the US Senate is not-yet known. Until we know these pieces, the rush to judgement is ill advised. The governor should wait for this critical decision.

In light of the historical pattern of furloughs on the teaching community and most especially because the governor full-well knows the *long term economic impact of lost wages over time*, this email urges restraint in this decision. The governor must show patience until such time that the Biden administration makes clear what supports for the states are being planned - and whether or not the Democrats control the Senate.

a couple more weeks to wait on this decision is encouraged.

--

Deanna J.K. Kackley





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Elise Anderson <eliseanderson13@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 11:05 AM

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.](#)

My name is Elise Anderson, I am a first grade general education teacher at Wahiawa Elementary School and this is my 6th year teaching. I moved from the mainland in 2013 to get my Masters in Elementary Education at HPU and shortly after obtained my job here at WES. My job, the keiki, my co workers and the community, in general, of Wahiawa is the reason why I have yet to move back home to my family in the mainland- Colorado. I am in my late 20s and am single and over the past 6 years have found it extremely difficult to pay my rent and my bills, continue making payments on my student loans (both graduate and undergraduate), and to make ends meet in general.

A pay cut will **DRASTICALLY** affect my well-being, my level of stress, and my ability to be able to afford and survive the Hawaiian lifestyle. Since I am not married, I am making ends meet completely on my own and find it nearly impossible to be able to do this if I am furloughed even if it is only 2 days a month.

Enough about me, LET'S THINK ABOUT OUR POOR KEIKI AND HOW MUCH THIS WILL DRASTICALLY AFFECT THEM!!

- 1) They already missed all of 4th quarter during the 19-20 school year!!
- 2) They missed the 1st 3 weeks of quarter 1 this school year!!!
- 3) They already miss out every single week 2-3 days due to the blended learning schedule and only coming to school on their assigned days.

If we take away two more school days a month, our kids will just fall further and further behind. Is that what we want for our future leaders and future generations???? Come on Hawaii, let's get it together, OR I can promise you our department of education will plummet.

Mahalo for your time and understanding, and please please think about how detrimental this will be for our babies,

Elise Anderson
1st grade general education
Wahiawa Elementary



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Danica Walsh <hokulani19@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 11:13 AM

Aloha,

I am a 1st grade Special Education teacher in the Baldwin Kekaulike complex. I am heartbroken to hear about the furloughs and possible position cuts for our teachers/school faculty.

I personally am already stretched thin with my finances, as a single mother, and cannot imagine taking a pay cut. I was overjoyed when I found I would be receiving the Sped differential pay and now to hear that not only will that be taken away but I will also be losing more of my paycheck?? I know bartenders who make more money than I do and I have a Masters degree in Special Education.

My students have just returned to learning in late September and already are showing so much growth, now that they are face to face learning and coming 5 days a week. To take a day away from them, will only set them back!

There must be a better option than taking money from education! Teachers are already spread so thin and doing the unthinkable during these hard times. We should not be asked to sacrifice any more! I know of 2 teachers personally who are choosing to retire/quit due to the stress they are under from this year. There will be many more.

Danica Walsh
1st gr Sped Teacher
BKM Maui



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Janet Hunter <srfpig@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 11:33 AM

Aloha

I am a tenured teacher who is counting the days to retire. I am highly disgusted at the lack of common sense in the DOE which is an acronym that is an oxymoron. One of the oldest professions in the world and yet we still are not educated ourselves.

This furlough comes at a time in which we just got to a point of being competitive amongst other DOE around this country. Yet we still are one of the lowest paid. We have so many areas to make cuts. Why do we need academic coaches, mentor programs that use many employees in one office, and etc. we are far to top heavy.

Our teachers use many of their own hours and money to keep our classrooms competitive.

You will lose many teachers due to this lazy way out. Think hard and be creative. Not take out the ones who make students educated.

Mahalo
Janet Hunter

iPhone sent on behalf of J.H.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Liko Rogers <liko.rogers@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 11:52 AM

Aloha BOE Members,

My name is Liko Rogers. I am a Hawaiian Immersion teacher at Princess Nāhi'ena'ena. I have a few questions for the board to ponder as you make your decisions regarding furloughs. Has education not been hurt enough by the Pandemic? Have our students and teachers not suffered enough? Even if the idea was to implement furlough days on non instructional days, the students will still lose out. They will lose out in terms of their teachers being less prepared to help them due to lack of time to implement professional development.

I am also concerned about taking yet another hit to my pay. Many years ago when the state was in a recession the teachers were furloughed. It has taken me all these years to get back to where I was before those furloughs and now the state is looking at doing it all over again.

It seems that teachers and education is not a priority to the state as time and time again we are targeted for budget cuts during a shortfall.

I ask that the board strongly reject the state's idea of furloughing education employees and encourage the state to look elsewhere to balance the budget.

Mahalo,

Liko Rogers

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Against Proposed Teacher Furloughs

1 message

John Van Ornum <john_vanorum@molokai.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 11:52 AM

Dear Board of Education members:

I have taught in Hawaii Public Schools for the past 26 years. I have gone through the past furloughs, the strike, and continuing with the Payroll Lag. I am a "highly qualified teacher" certified in Science, and PE/Health. I have earned three degrees and teach at Molokai High School classified as a "hard to fill" school for new teacher recruits.

Every time there is a perceived shortfall in state revenues teachers pay for it. I would continue to work for 4 more years, but current conditions do not support that decision. I have an EdD and can pick up work online from colleges and universities. Terminating my employment with the DOE would free up my schedule for other opportunities.

Currently there is a shortage of certified teachers and teacher candidates matriculating through college/university education programs. In addition, college and university enrollments are down. An experienced/ certified person like me will become a valuable commodity. This COVID crisis has created a gap in the educational systems in the USA. Reducing Hawaii teacher pay will have devastating long term consequences for the Hawaii economy now and in the future.

Please consider your decision carefully.

John Van Ornum EdD
Molokai High School

Testimony

Inbox



Ronald Steben <ronald.steben@mauihigh.org>

12:06 PM (1
hour ago)

to testimony.BOE

To whom it may concern:

My name is Ronald Steben I am a teacher at Maui High School. I am not supporting the furloughs. I am a single father with 2 children. I have a mortgage and have expenses. I am currently living paycheck to paycheck. It is a tough situation for me. I need a new automobile and was planning to purchase one as my current vehicle is not running well and is a 2000 Toyota Echo with over 260,000 miles on it. Now with this threat, I will have more issues.

Also, I believe that the Department of Education should pay and have the COVID 19 vaccinations and bring these vaccinations to the school staff as we are putting our lives on the line. I have a breathing problem called asthma. If I get covid I may die. If we are losing income at least have the decency to make this vaccination available to all school staff as soon as possible before the start of the third quarter as students are returning.

Thank you

Ronald Steben
Maui High School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Pending Budget Cuts to the DOE

1 message

Erin Mendelson <emendelson10@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 12:12 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear BOE,

I appreciate your time and hope that we can find better solutions to our budget woes. My concerns relate to the pending budget cuts. Most schools will need to let go of their newest hires. Hawaii currently struggles to hire certified special education teachers. In my complex area, we have 118 Year 1 and Year 2 teachers. There are 46 special education teachers, and only 39% of these new special education teachers are certified.

We will continue to have this shortage and lack of certified entry level teachers if we do not treat our new aspiring teachers with more support and care. Many of these professionals are en route to certificates; however, may be deterred if they are kicked out of their current schools.

Please consider cutting in other areas besides our schools' budgets.

Thank you,
Erin Mendelson
Student Support Resource Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Furloughs

1 message

Elissa Gathman <el.gathman@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 12:28 PM

Aloha,

I am a Kindergarten teacher at Kahakai Elementary School. 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 writing to share the detrimental impact these furloughs will have on me and my students.

First, I am extremely concerned for all our students. In addition to the instructional days we already missed due to COVID-19, many students are struggling with virtual learning. They need MORE time learning with a teacher, not less! Furloughs that take away more instructional days will lead to even more learning loss, even more struggling kids, and an even greater achievement gap.

Secondly, I am concerned for us as teachers. Whether the furloughs fall on instructional days or are somehow worked into teacher work days - our ability to be effective will be diminished as we will have less time with students, and less time to prepare to teach. Additionally, the pay loss - which equates to taking THOUSANDS of dollars right out of our pockets - will be incredibly difficult on us. I am the head of household for my family, we have a little one and would love for her to have a sibling...but now we aren't sure if we can do that given these circumstances. My spouse has been out of work in the tourism industry due to COVID, and now with this additional pay cut...how will we pay our bills? Am I a responsible parent if I continue with teaching here in Hawaii? I now have to question this decision and consider moving where I will be able to take care of my family.

There has been extra government help for those un- and under-employed due to COVID-19. Furloughing us teachers will make us under-employed. Will we then qualify for extra government help, as others have?

Finally, I would like to request that if these furloughs do come to fruition, please don't make them random days! We need consistency. Please make them on the same day, twice a month, as originally announced, so that we can plan and potentially look into regular, part-time work to supplement the huge income gap we will be faced with.

Thank you for considering what is best for our Keiki and communities.

Best,
Elissa Fiedler



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

munekatajud@gmail.com <munekatajud@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 12:52 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I will probably have to move due to furloughs. It is already way too expensive to live in Hawaii. Along with Biden taking away our tax cuts and a high amount of my salary being cut due to furloughs it makes an already really tough situation being a single mom and grandma and staying in Hawaii impossible where as in another state I can make more salary as a special ed or regular ed teacher and the cost of living is so much cheaper. It saddens me and my family to have to make a choice like this one.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

DOE Furloughs

1 message

Dennis O'brien <dennis.o'brien@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 12:52 PM

On behalf of our school community, we wish to implore the BOE to reconsider imposing furloughs for this school year. HSTA and HGEA have spoken a great deal about the negative impact of the furloughs on DOE staff. Also negatively impacted is the larger community. As DOE employees absorb the weight of income lost due to the furloughs they will no doubt spend less money in our community--which exacerbates the gloomy economic forecast for our state. We suggest that the DOE reserve the enforcement of furloughs until later in this school year. Doing so would allow our staff an opportunity to weather the worst projected impacts of C-19 and be in a better position to take a financial loss given more time to plan accordingly.

Respectfully Yours,

Dennis R. O'Brien - Principal
E.B. deSilva Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Say NO to furloughs

1 message

Noah Myers <noah.myers@campbell.k12.hi.us>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 1:14 PM

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

My name is Noah Myers and I am a teacher at James Campbell High. I urge the Board of Education to say no to furloughs.

Teacher recruitment is already an issue in Hawaii, as I've seen year after year at Campbell. Every year, we're filling vacancies across our campus with emergency hires, and imposing furloughs will only worsen that situation. If you want to attract and retain qualified, quality teachers, then furloughs is the *opposite* direction.

I strongly suggest that our legislators explore other options to compensate for the situation. Rather than cutting our pay, which also hurts our local economy, they should look for other options to generate the missing revenue.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you keep our teachers, and thus our keiki, in mind.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Cynthia Broc <cindyb108@msn.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 1:21 PM

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

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Cynthia Broc and I am the Student Services Coordinator at Laie Elementary School on the island of Oahu. As a 12-month teacher I am deeply concerned about the proposed furloughs. I have been at Laie Elementary School for over 20 years and have survived furlough Fridays and the teacher strike. I am one of those educators whose salary has lagged with no step increases for years while my insurance premiums continued to rise. If these furloughs are imposed, I will be considering early retirement and leaving the island as the economic strain will be too much for my family to endure- this includes my 96-year-old mother-in-law whom I care for. My son, who lives with my family, will also be affected by this furlough as he is a DOE employee as well. I am the primary source of income for my family. This was not my plan; I had planned to continue to stay at my school for at least another 4 years and I had planned to stay in Hawaii after my retirement to continue to provide support for my school in the special education department. This year has been the most stressful year for myself and my fellow educators. I am very concerned for the future of our children in the state of Hawaii and for the health and well-being of our educators if these furloughs are imposed. Please try to find another way to fund this economic crisis and support public education for the future of our keiki. Thank you for your time- Cynthia Broc



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough days

1 message

Kimberly Camacho <kimberly.camacho@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 1:44 PM

Aloha, I'm a kinder teacher here in Lahaina and I have not been able to rest since I heard you were going to be cutting our pay. I am the primary bread winner for the house and if you cut our wages I will not be able to remain in my current situation. This is very important to me especially at this time as my son is having surgery and will not be able to return to full duty until March 20-21. Please reconsider your decision. Just this year I was able to pay my bills and eat without worry. It has been a very stressful 8 years, I do not want to go hungry again.

--

*Mahalo & Aloho Nui Loa,
Ms. Kimberly Camacho, Kindergarten
Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary*

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony against furloughs

1 message

Matt O'Brien <mattobrien324@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 1:53 PM

A furlough would be a disaster for my wife and I. She is disabled so we are a one income family living in Maui, where everything costs much more than on the mainland. We are barely making it paycheck to paycheck.

I have spent countless hours completing professional development courses, which can cost up to \$250.00, in order to increase my salary so that we can continue to live in Hawaii and I can continue to help shape the minds of our children. It seems every time my salary goes up, something comes along (ie. past furloughs and the proposed 9.2% wage decrease occurring now) to drag my salary back down.

My wife and I have had to have the difficult discussion concerning whether we can afford to live in Hawaii on a teacher's salary or if I might have to think about a new career or moving back to the mainland. Both are sobering thoughts. I love being a teacher as do so many of my peers. I have spoken to many other teachers that are talking about making the same difficult decisions I may have to make. Hawaii is in danger of losing many dedicated teachers and of compromising an already struggling educational system.

Teacher's will be more susceptible to the Covid 19 than most people living and working in Hawaii because of contact with so many students. Personally, my wife has a compromised immune system so I will be risking her life every time I come home from work. It seems immoral to cut the pay of the people most susceptible to this virus. I feel this way about the front line state employees as well. These people are risking their lives and saving lives every day.

The DOE is in danger of losing many committed, dedicated and talented teachers because of this furlough. It is getting harder and harder to live in this economy as a teacher. The prices keep going up and the salary keeps going down. This is not a tenable situation.

This feels like our hard earned money is being stolen. We keep working harder and jumping through more hoops and taking on more responsibilities as teachers today. These furloughs are wrong.

Every educated American knows there is wasted government money in other areas that could be allocated to help rescue Hawaii's economy. Why not work on the budget to use some of that money to help with Hawaii's financial crisis. Why are state worker such as politicians not being targeted. There are many state jobs that pay more than teachers and first responders and are not in so much danger of contracting the virus that are not being impacted. As usual big government is picking on the little guy.

Sincerely,
Matt O'Brien



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Against Furloughs & Budget Cuts

1 message

Justin Allen <allenjc511@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 5:22 PM

Dear BOE,

Hello, my name is Justin Allen and I am a licensed secondary mathematics teacher on the island of Maui. My wife is a licensed K-3 teacher here as well. I want to give you a brief background to our story. We moved here in June of 2018. This is our third year of teaching and living in Maui. We struggled through getting acquainted with the culture and working hard to get our colleagues, administrators, and community members to see that we were here to learn and make a positive impact on the Maui community. We love Maui and the community so much that we purchased a townhome on the island. We thought we were going to begin to plant roots and stay on this lovely island with some of the kindest people we have ever met. In March of 2019, we decided that we wanted to try to have a child. However, I quickly realized that we could not afford childcare here on our salaries. The mortgage payment, high cost of living, etc, made me realize that if my wife and I wanted to grow our family I would either need to get a second job or find a way to increase our yearly teacher salary. Fortunately, through teacher reclassification (PD credits), there was a way to increase our yearly salary. My wife and I knew that taking PD classes would not only increase our salary but more importantly allow us to grow as professionals for the benefit of our students. Therefore, we enrolled in our Master's degree program and each earned our Master's in the matter of one year. We started our master's in March and were pregnant by May. This means my wife worked on and completed her Master's degree while being pregnant. She actually gave birth the day her capstone class began! To me, that shows the dedication and drive my wife and I have to make us being positive community contributors on Maui a possibility.

We could have chosen to move to the mainland where there is a lower cost of living and where she could have been a stay at home mom, however, we chose Maui and dedicated ourselves to working hard to stay over here. We had our son, COVID hit and we adapted to life on Maui with no family and being quarantined. We persevered in these difficult times as many other teachers and community members have and continue to do.

Governor Ige said a lot of alarming statements on 12/9/2020. In my opinion, the most notable statement was made from the 30:00-32:00 minute mark of his press conference. He was asked a question regarding Federal funds not able to be appropriated for shortfalls, etc. He stated that "late in the game, November" Congress told states that they may take CARES funding and apply \$500/student in the public education fund. Ige then stated by November Hawaii had already appropriated the CARES funds and they could not overturn their appropriations. A quick Google search tells us there are 174,704 students enrolled in public schools in Hawaii. $\$500 \times 174,704 \text{ students} = \$87,352,000$. That's 87 Million dollars the Dept. of Education lost out on because Gov. Ige among other officials appropriated CARES funds before they absolutely needed to. Where was the CARES money appropriated to?

Additionally, my wife was informed last week that she would no longer have a job at her current school after this year due to the 10% pay cut to the WSF. She has earned a "distinguished" in all of her EES evaluations. So, now we are looking at not only a 10% furlough pay cut but the chance that my wife is going to be

displaced at her job OR not even have a job at all on Maui. My wife and I have already had hard conversations among ourselves and with our colleagues that have led us to understand 1 thing: We choose the Department of Education and teaching on Maui in uncertain times in our life. But, Ige did not choose us when he appropriated the CARES funding before he needed to which ultimately has led to furloughs and cuts to budgets.

Let me be clear, if these furloughs and pay cuts happen my wife and I won't have a choice or a say in the matter of living here in Hawaii any longer. We won't have a voice because we won't be able to afford to live here. We will have to resign and move to the mainland. Two highly qualified teachers with their master's degree, that have only one child won't be able to afford to live in Maui. So, when someone asks me to submit testimony regarding this topic, I must say it is simple. If these cuts and furloughs happen, many highly qualified (HQ) teachers will leave the HDOE, few HQ teachers will move to Hawaii for a very long time, and the STUDENTS will be people that are impacted the most.

Yes, we must all work together and there have to be sacrifices for the loss of tourism revenue due to COVID19. I understand that. However, I don't think this is the answer. They say history repeats itself. Luckily, we don't have to look too far back (2009-2010) to see the impact of furloughs on the education system in Hawaii. Please, Board of Education Members, take a stand for the students in the public school system in Hawaii and take a stand for the teachers that have adapted and overcame from day 1 of this pandemic and still have the success of their students on the forefront of their minds. Don't allow these furloughs and do not allow the 10% cut to the WSF. Do all you can to oppose these actions!

Sincerely,
Justin Allen



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Chantale Cacho <chantale.cacho@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 5:27 PM

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.**

My name is Chantale Cacho. I am a second grade teacher at Mauka Lani Elementary School. This is my eighth year teaching and the most difficult financial year yet. I am the sole provider of our family of two. I am already struggling to pay my mortgage and cutting back on unnecessary expenses. A month ago, I was short \$300 to pay my mortgage. I just recently maxed out one of my two credit cards, which I solely use for food only. I'm dipping into my savings and retirement accounts to help keep me afloat in paying my bills. I cannot continue doing this. I've recently applied for the state's financial assistance program and SNAP program. I know that I more than likely will not qualify, but I'm trying every avenue I can to survive in living in this state. I've tried applying to other jobs, being my third job, to supplement my income, but this pandemic limited my options. I'm afraid of losing everything I have built to save for being gone. Why am I working so hard to be teaching in Hawaii, when I can't be taken care of?

Furloughs will be the tipping point of my survival in living on our own in Hawaii. I'm already considering selling or renting out my home to live with my already overcrowded family home. I have thought about moving to the mainland or leaving the profession all together.

None of my options are ideal. The greatest loss will be for the students. I'm already limiting my instructional time with a blended rotational schedule and working multiple jobs to make ends meet. How can I be expected to help students with their academic, behavior, and emotional needs when I cannot fulfill my own needs to survive?



Chantale Cacho

Email | chantale.cacho@gmail.com





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Angelita laea <a.iaea@mililaniwaena.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:01 PM

To the Hawaii Board of Education Members:

I, Angie laea with Mililani Waena Elementary, 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 still feeling the long term effects of the 2001 teachers strike and the 2010 furloughs till this day as a single parent. Just when I thought I would be compensated fairly according to what I should be paid as the negotiations to address teachers' pay who are affected by the compression, COVID-19 happened. Thus, **I continue to be paid approximately \$15,000 below what I should be paid as a result of the compression.** Now, if another furlough were to occur, I will **NOT BE ABLE** to break even in my monthly bills, out of pocket medical expenses for my college-age children, bi-annual car insurances and other necessities. My budget is already extremely limited allowing myself only \$125 a week for groceries, gas, home necessities, children's clothing and personal items. Due keep in mind **my monthly salary will only be able cover monthly bills, nothing more WITH ANOTHER FURLOUGH!** Additionally, my ability to help pay for my daughter's continued college expenses will be **IMPOSSIBLE** as she wants to pursue her Masters in college after she graduates in May 2021. A furlough will affect the economy indirectly in the long run as education is tampered with for children, teenagers and young adults.

I have been in education for over 23 years. If an early retirement package is going to be offered to teachers who are near retirement, **I would highly CONSIDERATE IT.** This will then allow me to pursue another full time employment to supplement my retirement salary. Although my children work part time, financial responsibilities come out of my sole income.

Our principal already informed the school that the budget is very tight for next year and necessary changes will be made as needed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Angie laea
Mililani Waena Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough testimony

1 message

Nancy De Leeuw <ntdeleeuw@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:03 PM

I am hoping that the budget can be worked out without furloughs. My husband lost his job in April and due to his health condition he will not be able to return to work. I am the only one bringing money into our family. We have had to refine our budget to only the priorities. Even with us cutting back to basic on our cable, internet, phones (which I need for my job) we still have had to dip into our savings. We cannot go but a couple months more. I will not be able to pay our bills with the lack of funds.

You (the state) want me to keep giving above 100% and keep pouring my heart into my kids and smile knowing I am drowning....

Nancy Deleeuw
Kahakai Elementary
Kailua Kona

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

New teacher

1 message

Janese Swanson <janese.swanson@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:10 PM

It cost me \$9,000 to move to Maui. Thank you for the moving allotment I received in my third paycheck but I'm still paying back credit cards from my move as the normal rate is 3x more from the movers/shipping company who moved my one bedroom apt to my new home.

I also came to teach taking a huge pay cut from my California teaching job. I'm augmenting my salary with my small retirement check. My sacrifice to move to beautiful Maui. I'm grateful to be working.

My husband is not working as he was furloughed. We are hoping I stay employed teaching. Furlough days will cut my paycheck about 10%. My take home paycheck is not very much as only five years were allowed on the pay scale. Sadly, I may need to consider taking on a second job. My masters and doctorate degrees in education did not help me earn more than the local movers hourly rate, local Handyman or retail manager's salary.

Thank you for your consideration.

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



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

kawika ho <kawika632@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:27 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

- How will furloughs affect you personally? Are you already struggling to pay your bills such as rent, mortgage, electricity, food, student loans, and/or college tuition for your children? Explain how furloughs will affect your ability to survive financially.

The furlough will have a massive impact on my family's finances. Paired with the high cost of living, my family has been struggling to make our monthly payments (i.e. mortgage, utility bills). We either break even or dip a little into savings every month. We are only able to save if my wife and I are able to get extra income outside of our careers. We can't save for my son's college. At this point, we're not even able to send him to preschool with the way things are going.

- Are you considering resigning if furloughs happen? Are you thinking of moving away from Hawaii? Taking another job? Do you know fellow teachers who are already resigning during winter break? How will these losses affect your students?

I do not plan on resigning because I love teaching. I do know several teachers who said they may resign due to the furloughs. These losses will be devastating to our students. We are already understaffed as it is.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs/ Pay Cuts

1 message

Tracy Brojakowski <tracy.brojakowski@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:01 PM

BOE:

My name is Tracy Brojakowski, I am in my 21st year of teaching Special Education at Lahainaluna High School. When I first started my teaching career at Lahainaluna in 1999 we had initiated a strike to get the attention of the State due to the poor teaching terms and conditions. We have been through furloughs, not having a suitable contract due to State lack of commitment to education throughout the past two decades. On top of all this we are considered one of the lowest-paid teaching communities in the United States, when figuring the cost of living.

Personally I have worked two jobs to pay back my student loans and continue to survive on the current teacher salary. I lost my second job in the service industry due to the COVID-19 outbreak and it leaves me in a desperate situation.

Teachers are considered essential workers during this pandemic. I have worked from home setting up digital classrooms, correspondence with my students and their families, taking part in on-going communication all day & night with other staff members to meet students' needs. This is a critical time for most families that do not have a support system. We as educators are there for these families to give them strength and hope during these difficult times.

It would be an atrocity to take this life raft down when needed the most. Please back us up and support all State employees.

Thank you,
Tracy Brojakowski
Special Education Teacher, Lahainaluna High School

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



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

1 message

Cindy Martin <cinm1970@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:16 PM

Dear Board of Education:

I am testifying regarding the furloughs. I have been teaching here on the Big Island of Hawaii for three years now. I moved here from the mainland and have had to struggle paying my bills ever since. I have had to take on as many as seven roommates just to pay my rent. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic I felt that the Board of Education was actually moving in the right direction with supporting it's employees. I felt as if things were looking up. I was hopeful that with the next contract bargaining Hawaii teachers may no longer be one of the lowest paid. I would no longer have to have roommates and struggle to pay my bills.

Then came Covid-19 and the pandemic that has not only wrecked Hawaii's economy but our Nation. I know something has to be done to balance the budget, however, I do not believe it should be put on the backs of the employees. The state needs to look at other ways of raising revenue. One way in which many other states do this is through taxes to not only support the state but public education. Let the many help support the state and public education, not the few. Everytime there is some sort of shortcoming the state enforces furloughs on it's employees. Enough is enough! The state needs to come up with a way to fund itself other than tourism. You cannot base all our revenue on tourism as we have so tragically seen. You must find another way to support public education.

I do not want to be forced to move back to the mainland, but this very well may be my last year here. On the mainland teaching jobs pay more and the cost of living is less. Some districts (North Carolina) even got pay increases during this pandemic. I urge you to reconsider the furloughs and funding to schools.

Thank You,
Cindy Martin
Special Education Teacher



Reply

Forward



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony- General Business Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years

1 message

Renee Goff <goffren@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:27 PM

Aloha Board of Education,

The furlough will affect me personally as a single person household. Although it's been a blessing to have received my salary through the COVID pandemic I will struggle to pay my bills (rent, food, student loans).

As a teacher my salary has not significantly increased in the past five years. It has occurred to me that I may need to consider resigning and or taking another job.

I know furlough will only increase the inequities me and my students are already experiencing. I am upset that we are still holding teachers and students to the same academic expectations without actual changes to social emotional well being, and access to technology. I have a privilege class of students whose families chose to do 100% Distance Learning. That recognized, I have found it difficult to tow the line of capitalism and tenderness of healing within my class for myself, Learners and their families.

Our principal at Iroquois Point Elementary School has communicated that ~7 positions will be cut from our staff and faculty. I think the challenge is this year has brought up "defund police", without any consideration but when it comes to defunding education it feels like a first option. I believe this will affect our already tense relationships within the workplace, increase class size, and still maintain the same expectations within a smaller timeframe.

I can't speak for my colleagues but honestly I'm already tired and thread bare. I'm sad at the idea that our union continually advocates for higher living wages yet we've never recovered from the last furlough.

Okay. Till that advocacy plays out for funding for education.

Reneé Goff (Kindergarten Teacher)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Testimony

1 message

roeleno@juno.com <roeleno@juno.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 7:50 PM

Aloha BOE,

My name is Romeo Eleno and I'm a teacher at Lanai High & Elementary School. I'm testifying on general business meeting discussion on 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 a nation, we have been through one of the worst pandemics that's taken so many lives. With the possible furloughs/pay cuts to education, it will kill the livelihood of our educational system and continue the difficult road to recovery for the keiki of Hawaii academically and for teachers financially.

On the Island of Lanai, we are already paying the highest prices for groceries with the added tax hike by Young Brothers that brings our produce to the Island. In addition, we are now paying the highest cost of gasoline at \$5.19 per gallon. As a single teacher, I am struggling to pay for a mortgage payment, rent, utilities, and the basic necessities to survive. If I cannot take care of myself, how can I take care of the 95 students that I am currently teaching via distance learning?

The students have been demoralized and stressed out in not being able to come to school and get an education face-to-face. I know they are trying their best with the situation we are in temporarily; however, when furloughs/pay cuts are put into the equation during these unprecedented times, Hawaii will be seeing more and more teachers retiring and leaving the profession. This in turn will make it that much more difficult to provide quality education to the students statewide.

I am asking that the BOE find creative ways to help balance the state budget and avoid any "takeaways" from the teachers.

Sincerely,
Romeo Eleno
Lanai City, HI



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Dale Olive <scienceguyme@yahoo.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:06 PM

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

Testimony 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.

Aloha,

My name is Dale Olive and I am finishing up my 35th year of teaching in the DOE. I currently teach two levels of physics and two different engineering courses I personally developed here at Waiakea High School in Hilo, Hawaii. With school support and over \$100,000 in grant support over the last few years from the Hawaii Community Foundation and TMT I have purchased, maintained and put into students hands 15 3-d printers, numerous tools, drones, iPads, robots and more. I am proud to inform you we have put over 200 students into engineering and other STEM programs in college since starting in 2003.

I'm writing to inform you of the effect furloughs will have on me and others in the DOE who have the ability to retire instead of taking what amounts to a \$425 cut per paycheck. My retirement check is already estimated to be near my current net pay so any cut will mean that it won't make sense to stay in the DOE and I will retire at the end of this school year. You need to understand that there are a number of teachers, counselors and administrators in the same situation as me. Most are like me and enjoy what they do every day and would have otherwise stayed in the DOE for several more years were it not for such a severe cut in pay. What you will be losing instantly are the most experienced teachers, counselors and administrators all at once. With the current teacher shortage can you imagine trying to fill all those positions alone not to mention the experience you will be losing at each school. As an anchor and founder of the engineering academy here at Waiakea there will not be enough time to train a replacement and much of what I have built and acquired in such a unique program will most likely end. I can only imagine how many other programs will suffer.

One thing I teach my students in Science is "cause and effect". I understand there are budget problems in the State but to think you can treat every State employee the same, which you have already made exceptions for first responders and others, is not wise. You need to understand that you leave 1000 or more of your most experienced teachers, counselors and administrators with no option but to leave the profession and in a manner none of us wanted to leave in. I would hope that instead of touching anything that directly impacts what we do in the classroom that other areas could be cut instead. Programs, travel for meetings, Complex area and State personnel who have no direct contact with students should be cut before you impact anything that directly involves students in the classroom. As a teacher of 35 years I can tell you I rarely if ever have any contact with anyone from the State or complex area DOE. The number of positions along with secretaries and support staff in State and complex area offices should be eliminated in times like this if not permanently. I have always thought we, classroom teachers, should be made aware of who these people are and have a thumbs up or thumbs down for whether that position stays or not. They would truly then serve and support the people they should be helping. Its frustrating to see the alphabet soup of DOE offices and wonder how much is spent inefficiently.

Again, cutting across the board like this may seem like a solution but you have to understand the effect this will cause in the DOE. Good luck finding enough teachers to fill classrooms to start the school year next year. You may find a "warm body" in a long term sub but I can imagine how upset parents will be when they find their child does not have a highly qualified teacher because so many veterans have left. Good luck when parents find programs have been cut or eliminated because teachers have left under circumstances like this. Good luck finding experienced leadership to run the schools and programs within them when your most veteran administrators and teachers have left. Good luck hearing from parents as the furloughs begin next semester while we are already struggling to maintain a level of academic excellence with remote teaching. Missing six more days will mean even less instruction. It will be impossible to deliver enough content to make up for the loss. I for one will be less inclined to put in 11-12 hours days I currently do being pushed out of the DOE in this manner. Cause and effect!

Dale Olive

12/15/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Science Teacher / Robotics coach / Engineering Academy instructor

Waiakea High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Debbie Olive <readinggirlme@yahoo.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:40 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>, Office of the Governor <officeofthegovernor@hawaii.gov>, "senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov" <senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov" <senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov" <sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "enkanuha@capitol.hawaii.gov" <enkanuha@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov" <senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "sensenbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov" <sensenbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov>, "repilagan@Capitol.hawaii.gov" <repilagan@capitol.hawaii.gov>

[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,

I am a second grade teacher at Kea'au Elementary. I am writing to suggest another solution to the governor's call to cut state worker pay - particularly in the DOE - due to the budget crisis. These are definitely unprecedented times; who could have imagined the loss of personal freedoms and financial insecurity caused by the coronavirus? In some ways though this is a blessing in disguise.

How? One benefit for me as a teacher has been my need to develop more solid personal relationships with my students and colleagues; social isolation has been the driving force behind this. Another benefit has been my being forced to do distance learning these past two quarters. This has created for me an opportunity to upgrade my technical skills and to figure out new ways of teaching through online platforms. In retrospect, the Covid pandemic had some positive outcomes for me as a teacher.

Likewise, the current budget crisis is a wake-up call to the governor, the BOE, and Dr. Kishimoto that a major overhaul of the state complex and district office personnel, including some school-level personnel are necessary. For too long, the DOE has accumulated these positions that do not have direct impact upon students.

Therefore, this is my solution - all direct student contact DOE positions should be deemed "essential" and not be subject to any furlough or pay cut; all DOE positions that are not direct student contact should be considered "non-essential" and subject to the furlough or pay cuts. This will eliminate the need to cut more student instructional days and lessen the threat of losing teachers in direct student contact positions.

If the governor, BOE and DOE are serious in their claims that "students come first", then show it. Quick fix across the board furloughs for all DOE personnel is not in the best interest of our students.

Sincerely,
Deborah Olive



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

It's the future, stu [REDACTED].

1 message

STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <stephenieblakemore@sbcglobal.net>
Reply-To: STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <kndlve22@gmail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:45 PM

Can't we tell it like it is? Furloughs are a cowardly move, just like the BOE saying they didn't want to, but did go ahead anyway and approved that DOE budget. Enough is enough. How the legislature, governor and the BOE address money shortages will be proof enough of whether or not these guys can put the money where their mouths are. The families, the keiki, admin and teachers know a liar when we see their votes. PRIORITIZE EDUCATION. It's the future stu [REDACTED]

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Lani Gokan <marmugs808@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 8:59 PM

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Lani Gokan and I am a Kindergarten Teacher, in the midst of my 27th year of teaching, at Wilcox Elementary School on Kauai.

I am testifying on general business 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 furlough that our Governor is planning to implement in January 2021, will be devastating to my family and me. My husband and I have 2 sons (one in college and one in high school), as we are already living paycheck to paycheck, trying to be very creative in order to "stay afloat". If furlough does go into effect, my son may need to withdraw from college AND we WILL need to forego payment on multiple utility bills. It is so disheartening to think I have given my 110% to this teaching profession for more than 20 years, and yet as a result, my already low pay may be cut so drastically that my son would need to drop out of college.

I have never felt so invaluable as a teacher. As a profession, we are expected to focus so much on our students, yet upon implementing a furlough, the Governor does not seem to consider the ramifications this would have for our own children at home.

I understand that in your capacity as board members, you are in between a rock and a hard place. However, I beg you to do everything in your power to prevent this furlough from happening.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Lani Gokan



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Cari Yamfuji <cariyamafuji@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:37 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Furloughs are a detriment to our students. The furloughs will take away 10% more of their education. Covid has already taken so much from them, how can taking more be the only solution.

Taking 10% from the teachers and our children proves again, that the state of Hawaii does not prioritize education.

We will forever be one of the worst in the Nation.

I am considering moving. I am a special education teacher that loves my job, loves my students, and know I am needed here. But staying in a state where you are not respected is not for me.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Damien Silva <dsilva34@hotmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:46 PM

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

Aloha! My name is Damien Silva and I am a newly hired Special Education Teacher here at Hilo Intermediate School. I am also a proud product of our Hawaii Public School system. Growing up, I have never seen a more selfless, dedicated, and caring group of public servants like those of our Hawaii Public School Teachers.

Unfortunately,



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

SM Yahoo <sierramahin@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:46 PM

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Sierra Mahin and I was born and raised on Maui. I have been a teacher in the state of Hawaii for 20 years. I understand that budget cuts need to be made but I do not believe that furloughs are the answer. Our students have already lost out on learning in the past eight months. I am currently a kindergarten teacher at Waikoloa School on the Big Island. My students just came back to school in-person last week. My class is too large to have all of my students attend school at the same time so I have two groups. Each child is coming to school for two days at 3 1/2 hours a day which is only seven hours a week. They are getting 2 half days instead of five full days. One day per week they are learning online. Furloughs would further decrease the hours of learning time. It's already lacking by way too much and it would be very unfortunate for the children of Hawaii if we decreased their educational hours even more!

On a personal note, I was finally feeling somewhat compensated financially for being a teacher. In 2013, I quit teaching for three years to pursue a career in real estate. After three years I realize that I truly missed being a teacher and I returned to the classroom. I have been back teaching for three years. I was thankful for a \$5000 differential as well as credits for professional development. I was also tutoring after school at my school. I have never been able to buy a home and I was finally feeling that my income was high enough that I might be able to finally afford a small home. With the pay decrease there will be no way that I could ever afford a home in Hawaii. I am a single mother and I was hoping to finally own a tiny piece of property to call my own. If we are furloughed and our pay is decreased I'm definitely considering quitting and pursuing my real estate career again. This is been the most stressful year of teaching in my 20 years and the fact that we will get a pay decrease is a slap in the face. I am an excellent teacher. I just can't do this anymore for such little pay. It's not fair and it's not right. You are going to lose many wonderful teachers. Our children are our future. We need to do what is right!

Thank you,

Sierra Mahin

Sent from my iPhone

TESTIMONY to the HAWAI‘I BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, and communications with families and employees.

Aloha mai e Chair Payne and the Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Rebecca Kapolei Kiili, a public school teacher in Kula Kaiapuni for the past 16 years and a member of the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association (HSTA). I currently work at King Kekaulike High School on Maui. Instituting furloughs as early as January 2021 is a breach of our current contract with the state of Hawai‘i. As you all may know, there are a lot of unanswered questions surrounding the governor’s plans for furloughing state workers in the HiDOE. Because of this, I urge all of you to act with compassion and clarity before allowing decisions like furloughs to impact our students, teachers, and schools. Please do not rush conversations amongst yourselves, the HiDOE leaders, and our government leaders. Rushing only causes more confusion, heartache, and frustration amongst those of us who have to live through the decisions of our leaders.

I was born and raised here in Maui and I plan to die here too. I am committed to public education because it has been vital to my own growth, development, and achievements in my life. I wholeheartedly believe in the “power and promise of public education” because I am a proud graduate of public school in Hawai‘i and a product of the school system like many others. I do not foresee myself leaving this noble profession because it is where I believe my life’s work will be and where I believe I can make the biggest impact on our future--with our keiki and ‘ōpio as well as with our families. I have worked hard to earn my way through the system despite the odds of high teacher turnover and burnout. Sixteen years later, I am still here, still committed as I have ever been and all my hardwork feels like it’s slipping away. Having to potentially be furloughed **yet again** in my short tenure as a public school teacher feels really, really, really unfair and discouraging.

How am I supposed to look forward to owning a home one day if I cannot count on being financially stable enough to own a home? Although I have strong teacher credentials, the teacher salary in Hawai‘i is one of the lowest in the nation making this goal feel even further from my reach than I anticipated. In Hawai‘i, we boast about how hard work pays off, but facing furloughs and budget cuts completely contradicts the value we hold so high. I feel like working

hard when you are a teacher only gets you furloughed in Hawai'i. Where is the equity for people like me who have no other financial means but my own? Education always takes the biggest cuts and it really is time for our leadership to step up and value education more than ever. Without teachers, we will not have a thriving society or economy. Don't take furloughs lightly please. The impacts are insurmountable.

At my school today, we went over the budget cuts together to get a better understanding of how these cuts will impact schools directly. Basically, we have to cut staff and faculty positions to balance our budgets for the next school years to come. Being asked to think about the positions that our school could do without in the coming years was the toughest pill to swallow. Every position and every staff member at our school works hard in their roles to keep our school running. It is unfathomable to think that we will have to lose anyone because we are all just making do as best as we can with the positions and people we have now. Our Principal was fair and asked us for our input, but in all honesty, I couldn't bring myself to offer any suggestions because in the end the impact of these budget cuts is greater than we can really understand at this moment.

I have bills like everyone else, but I rely solely on my own income as I do not have a second income to depend upon. My financial stability is my own responsibility and I do not have any other support aside from my current salary to ensure that I can pay for my living expenses that include rent, utilities, food, student loans, and college tuition. I live paycheck to paycheck like many other teachers and many other essential workers on the frontline. I, like the majority of my fellow colleagues in public education, risk our own health and safety everyday for the benefit of our students and their families by reporting to work everyday in this pandemic. We have shouldered a lot for our students, their families, and the larger community. We deserve our dignity and we deserve to keep our pay as fairly negotiated in our current contract. Do not take furloughs lightly. Do not rush the process. Be informed and advocate for public education like you have never before, because a lot of lives are dependent upon your leadership, your decisions, and your final actions. Let them be made with clarity, compassion, and a commitment to the "power and promise of public education."

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hapolei Hili



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tate Fong <tatef@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:32 PM

Hello,

I am writing in regards to 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.**

My wife and I are both educators, my wife a teacher and I am a counselor. In regards to furloughs, it is very worrisome for our family. We carry 2 mortgages, car payments, and our 3 year old son is just about ready for preschool. taking a furlough would put us financially in a hole. We are worried about making our payments to keep our home and car (which we need to get to and from work) and would not have enough money to send our son to preschool. Can you imagine as educators not being able to send your child to preschool? My mortgage company has still not responded to my requests for information on forbearance or other options I can consider for help since March, 2020. So hearing that Governor Ige at that time was considering a 20% paycut was excruciatingly scary. Furloughs offer not much stress relief.

We both acknowledge that a solution to do our part in this crisis is necessary and when we compare what we would lose comparing a 20% paycut (which for us would have been a 40% household loss of income!!) to the proposed furlough plan, we would opt for furloughs. At least we would both have our jobs and we think we could manage our mortgages and other payments. Preschool unfortunately would still be on the question mark list. Asking for 1 furlough day a month would definitely help us manage financially better. We both love our jobs and as of now, as far as we know, we both have our positions back next year. I kindly ask that the BOE consider no furloughs or paycuts, but if you made me choose, I would choose furlough days and preferably for the board to consider 1 day a month for teachers.

Sincerely,

Tate Fong
Aina Haina School
Counselor



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough testimony

1 message

karen kramer <kkramerfit@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:36 PM

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Karen Kramer and I have been teaching special education for over 15 years in the state of Hawaii. This will be my second round of furloughs in my career here. Not to mention I have always had a second job while teaching. It is difficult to find more work in my second job due to the current pandemic circumstances. If I can't find more work, I may have to leave the state because the cost of living is so expensive. Isn't that messed up? This teacher might have to leave her home and career because not only her first job as a teacher can't cut it, but her second job can barely support her?

Not to mention the effects furloughs have on students. These kids need to be in school. They have already been out of the classroom for too long during this pandemic. Not only kids with disabilities, but ALL kids. Let's talk about due process cases rising due to special needs student's not being able to access their education, do you remember how many of those cases we had the first round of furloughs. Many. Do you know how many there are because of Covid 19? Many. It costs the state so much money to "pay back the loss of services" Why would we do this *again*?

When will education be a priority here in the state of Hawaii? Furloughs are a slap in the face to the kids and teachers in Hawaii. They deserve so much better. We have to give them better.

Thanks for reading my brief testimony. Please consider fighting for education.
Mahalo,
Karen Kramer



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kahanu Nguyen <kahanunguyen@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:37 PM

My name is Kahanu Nguyen. I am a 1st grade, dual-certified teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hawaii District on the Island of Hawaii. I have taught for 14.5 years here in Hawaii. I am submitting testimony for Action 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.**

It's been disheartening news to receive the dates that I will not be able to work for or meet with my students, again affecting the already restricted learning of our keiki. Not only are our keiki the ones that will suffer because of these furloughs, but we've already been informed by our principal that 4 teachers positions and numerous support staff positions will be lost due to extreme budget cuts and the dire circumstances for next school year. We will lose valuable teachers who have learned so much and work so hard for their students doing distance learning. Invaluable assets to our keiki and our school will be lost due to these extreme budget cuts, it's just unacceptable what we're imposing on our teachers and our students. To be honest, it's also another reason to resign all together. We're being stretched too thin, many teachers are already on leave which means fulfilling additional duties on already bombarded and bursting work hours for teachers who remain. We're working tirelessly to be available to our students, their parents, and our school community and now to ask for furloughs days and still expected to do the same amount of work. For example, the first furlough day is on what would've been our teacher work day. So now, we'll be working without pay doing report cards, prepping for the next semester, and preparing distance learning packets for our students. How can we be expected to work without pay, how is that fair or ethical? As teachers, we choose to work way beyond our salaried hours because we love our calling to serve our keiki but now we have no choice, even if it seems like a limited number of days, it's not. Precious hours will again be added to the amount of time we don't get paid, we're not getting paid and working already, we should be compensated, but instead we're being furloughed! I just can't understand and plead for your help as a board to please, please advocate for what is best for teachers because it will be what's best for our keiki! We do not deserve this, we need you!

Mahalo,
Kahanu Nguyen, Hawaii District, Island of Hawaii



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: Furloughs affect us all

1 message

C Renna <2carabella@gmail.com>
 To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
 Cc: "Ikalani, Beverly" <bikalani@hsta.org>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 10:45 PM

Aloha members of the BOE,

Since April, I've been doing my duty as a "compassionate consumer." As I'm single, no dependents, with a savings and some disposable income, I could afford to spend a dollar or two. These dollars have been spent in my local business economy and have included some one-off purchases: a surfboard from **T&C Factory**, a bike from **McCully Bike and Sporting Goods**, repairs made to my car at **Gary's**, a little spending spree of gifts from **Pop Up Makeke**.

As a teacher/state employee, I want to take a moment to share the effects of what is going to occur when I'm furloughed. As I will no longer be able to consume in a compassionate way, I'll be forced into a once a month Costco trip:

- No more 2 coffees a week at **Brew and Foam**
- No more weekly takeout meals: **Surf n Salsa, Jerry's Pizza, Haleiwa Café, Maya's Tapas, Taqueria El Rancho**
- No more looking my best thanks to **Paradise Sugar**
- No more acupuncture for stress and immune support from **Jenna, LAc**
- No more monthly massage with **John, LMT**
- No more gas from **Erik's "Waiialua Service"**
- No more "little things" from **Brown Bottle**
- No more treats from **Paalaa Kai Bakery**
- No more groceries from **Waiialua Fresh**

Just for a moment, I want to further demonstrate the trickle effect of what that last one means, as I have evidence in my fridge and cupboards:

- Money out of the hands of **Uncle's Ice Cream Sandwich**
- Money out of the hands of **Sweet Goat Farm**
- Money out of the hands of **Makana Provisions**
- Money out of the hands of **Charmaine's Cookies**
- Money out of the hands of **Kahuku Sea Asparagus**
- Money out of the hands of **various North Shore produce farmers**
- Money out of the hands of **various North Shore hen keepers** (eggs)
- Money out of the hands of **Rainbow Sprouts**

I know we are in dire straits regarding our state finances, and I know some serious budgeting needs to take place. Let's stop hounding after individuals to: change, pivot, be flexible, take on more at this time, know we are all in this together, etc.

It's high time our systems change, before our individual backs are broken. Financial institutions need to roll out compassionate capitalism; unemployment agencies need to start creating employment opportunities; health care and housing need to be accepted and treated as fundamental rights; our HI State Government needs to budget based on spending, not convenience (our top 3 costs as a state are FUEL related, what budget cuts are taking place in regard to this?)

Additionally, our DOE system needs to consider not cuts but creating more appeal: Why can't our SpEd Preschools become inclusion classrooms so we can attract more students to our schools? Why can't the public schools offer solid distance learning programs as a valid option, not just an appeasing time sensitive peace-offer? Why can't the DOE buy a bankrupt hotel or two, remodel them as learning centers, reserving the top floors for living space for teachers, then sell off school land to industry and manufacturing? Why can't schools offer junior kindergarten classes, as they may help eliminate "the gap" during the early intervention period? Why can't "outside the box" ideas be taken seriously? Does our DOE continue to need District positions? Why do we go to "schools of the future" conferences when our own system is anti-change? Could schools offer parent training opportunities in English as a second language, or positive behavior supports? Why can't furloughs be bundled into an extra week at the winter and spring

holidays? Couldn't the DOE on a national level appeal to movie stars, professional sports players, tech gurus, tycoons, etc. for an "Adopt a School for 2021-22" program?

Are the furloughs going to personally hurt me? They are going to add even more stress onto what I already feel. Am I going to leave teaching because of it? You bet. I may take leave next year, then return for 2 more years before leaving teaching, as I'll have put in enough time for a little pension payback in my 60s. Do I know teachers who can't afford this, will have to leave, or experience even more hardship because of this? Yes, I do. Did my school already hear about doomsday next year? Yes, and it's negatively affecting how people are doing their job this year, in apprehension of next.

Perhaps we (BOE/DOE) now have an opportunity to school Governor Ige in *participatory budgeting* (in short, it's a practice where people and government come together to decide how to spend money). BOE/DOE staff of all positions could come together in its essence; not to spend money, but to decide where to cut spending. This could in turn be a model for our government to take to scale for state level spending and budgeting.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our messages, listen to our calls, and hold space for our virtual testimonies.

Cara Renna



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

brooke nasser <b.l.nasser@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:33 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawaii teachers and students have been bombarded this year. New challenges are being thrown at us weekly, we're being put in unfamiliar — sometimes impossible — situations and told to abracadabra our way through them, and we've been asked to do it all without complaint or disruption. Then, when we don't meet non-COVID standards, our shortfalls are thrown in our faces.

Now, once again, we are being forced into a difficult — and, frankly, actionable — position and are being asked to perform miracles: Do everything you've been doing, but do it with less.

And once again, the Superintendent is pitting us against each other. Kishimoto, for the third time this year, has shown her deep-seated distrust of our profession when using manipulative language to imply that if teachers voice our concerns, we are letting down our students and not doing our jobs.

I am not going to waste any more digital space discussing the quagmire we've been put in; nor am I going to argue the inevitable short- and long-term effects of the Governor's decision to furlough teachers. Great teachers will leave the profession, likely the most qualified who have other options and can afford to leave, and students and our state will suffer. These consequences can't be understated. but, surely, you are already aware of them.

I am, however, going to talk about fairness. If the state has no money, it has no money. I choose to take the Governor at his word and I understand the financial dilemma that we face here in Hawai'i as a result of the pandemic.

But if it is necessary to cut pay and furlough students and teachers, there are consequences. The State and Superintendent do not get to skirt those consequences with gaslighting; you cannot eat your cake and have it, too.

All furloughed government employees should be subject to the same rules. A 9.23% furlough equates to 2 days per month; for 10- and 12-month DOE employees, that should mean 10 days from January 1 to June 1. Legally, the state cannot administer its rules unevenly.

If the State and DOE do not want to furlough 10-month DOE employees the full 10 days over the 3rd and 4th quarters of this academic year, they will then have to adjust the pay cut to 5.5% to be commensurate with their 6 proposed furlough days.

There are consequences to every decision — this is something we teach our kids starting in Kindergarten. If the Governor and DOE don't like the consequences, come up with a different solution.

--

Brooke Nasser

www.brookenasser.comwww.instagram.com/bnibblet/<https://twitter.com/bnibblet>



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Leah Rampolla <leahrampolla@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:56 AM

Dear Sir or Madame,

This testimony is regarding **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 full-time, licensed English teacher and am strongly opposed to the furloughs decision. Furloughs will have a significant, and detrimental, impact on my current financial situation. I am already working a part-time job, in addition to my full-time teaching job, in order to meet my financial obligations just for basic necessities such as rent, utilities, and food. It is well known that the cost of living in Oahu is extremely high, and a reduction in salary will make it impossible to remain living here.

I will absolutely leave the state of Hawaii if furloughs are implemented, and I know many of my colleagues have expressed the same sentiments. This is a disservice to students and the teachers who remain, as the quality of education will be significantly impacted due to the high student-to-teacher ratio. Teachers simply cannot give as much individualized time that each student may need if they are overwhelmed by the number of students on their roster. This is also very unfair to the students themselves, as their academic progress will be negatively impacted due to the lack of instructional support, which is a direct consequence of budget cuts. This is a detriment to the entire community and the future.

The lack of government support for a crucial resource such as public education is alarming, and their willingness to break valid contracts, and reduce educator salaries, particularly during this time period, is incredibly unfair and exploitative. Teachers are considered "essential workers," are forced to come to campus during a pandemic- risking their own health and well-being, provide emotional and social supports to their students in addition to academics, and are expected to completely double their workload to accommodate the ever-changing requirements for online learning models and health protocols. And now we are expected to meet all these additional responsibilities for less income? Teachers are people, too. We have breaking points and have our own personal struggles we must deal with, particularly during these stressful and uncertain times. If these furloughs are implemented, there will be many dire consequences that result from this choice, and the students will suffer the most. I urge you to prevent this from happening, or a mass exodus of educators leaving Hawaii will certainly occur.

Sincerely,
Leah Rampolla, MA



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on agenda item V. B.

1 message

Kelly Gallego <akeg99@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 7:18 AM

Testimony to Agenda 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 Esteemed Board,

I am a career educator, who has spent over 15 years in education. This is the third state I have taught in and am happy to have reached tenure. When making the decision to move to Hawaii I knew that it would be a financial struggle for a little while. I was prepared to work a second job for some time. I am a single woman with no children. I am also lucky enough to be in the middle of the salary scale. With that said, being in the middle of the salary schedule barely pays the everyday costs of living in Hawaii. My salary covers my mortgage, my car payment, electricity, and internet. In short, the bare minimum, and I was able to reclass up last year. I work an extra 20 hours a week on top of teaching to provide for myself, food, gas, and other necessities. A third of my take home income comes from my second job. Which was suspended from March through August due to Covid-19. Because of my teaching job, I could not qualify for partial unemployment benefits. I had to deplete the small savings I have.

According to the state, I make too much to apply for any help whatsoever, yet I also qualify as low income on state reports. I believe that I am one of many that fall into this category. There is no partner or roommate to bring in any extra income, just me. I am working harder than I ever have before. With all the new models, virtual learning, and constant training in new platforms, teaching in person and online. My day is packed with work as well as the extra 20 hours spent at my second job.

I have worked hard for 4 years to be able to reclass and make enough money to survive here in this beautiful state. I moved here with the intention of staying here for the rest of my life. With the governor's furlough and cut proposal I will not be able to stay here. There are simply not enough hours to work in the day and in the week. With a possible 9.2% cut I will be making less money than when I first moved here. I am almost 40 years old, with a Bachelor's and Master's degrees. I am licensed in two subjects grades 6-12th. Again, I have been in education for the last 15 years and now I am being forced out. With the budget cuts the DOE announced the administration at our school announced that she wants to cut 7 teacher positions. Which is a huge chunk of our staff. Many of my colleagues are new teachers in Hawaii, they are not making enough money to get by on just their teaching salary. With the budget cuts we will lose them. Many of my colleagues have expressed their concerns about the furlough and not being able to stay in Hawaii due to the cost of living. Five teachers at my school have told me that they will be using the winter break to find new positions out of state, myself included.

Our school already operates with a massive shortage of teachers. I can't imagine what education will look like if the governor is allowed to cut our salaries, budgets, and furlough us. Hawaii's children deserve a quality education. This starts with quality licensed teachers in the classroom, not emergency hires or unqualified long term substitutes. Please help us maintain our livelihoods and allow us to continue to live in this beautiful state serving the children of Hawaii and their families.

12/15/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony on agenda item V. B.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gallego
Lokelani Intermediate School

Hawaii Board of Education:

My name is Aaron Kubo I am an eighth grade social studies teacher at Hilo Intermediate School in the Hilo-Waiakea Complex area on Hawai`i Island. I am submitting testimony imploring every single appointed BOE member to not reduce teachers' salaries through furloughs/pay cuts or possible layoffs!

Teachers are besieged everyday by many systems (e.g. burdensome evaluation system, mandated curriculum, SBA/WIDA/NWEA/NGSS-HSA, data collection/implementation, RTI, meetings and many other mandated things teachers are required to do on a daily basis that exist in the DOE/complex/school) and, in turn, receive the lowest pay in the nation adjusting for inflation and Hawaii's high cost of living.

Then the pandemic of COVID-19 hits the world and teachers are still asked to do everything they were doing prior but virtually, in person or some hybrid of both at great personal risk to their own safety and their families at home.

Now we are facing furloughs, pay cuts and possible layoffs of state workers. The Governor wants to cut two days a month for state employees, six to 10 days from DOE employees as announced on 12/14/2020 at 9:16 pm (when email was received from DOE).

Many in my immediate and extended family are state employees that work in many different sectors. My mother is a recently retired teacher and my sister has many more years ahead of her teaching career. This is going to decimate my family which is already financially struggling under COVID-19. Every one of us has financial obligations (e.g. mortgages, utility payments, student loan payments, car payments, pre-school payments etc.). Not to mention basic essentials like food, clothing and shelter costs. Costs for goods and services are only rising on everything...how are we going to make ends meet? Can we survive paycheck to paycheck?

Cutting one-tenth, almost 10%, of teachers' salaries are going to be devastating to all of us. Many teachers pay for school supplies out of their own pockets. I have spent over \$1000 in this school year alone. My school is 70% free and reduced, in other words in a low socio economic area, where the students cannot always afford the basic supplies. Do we ask police officers to purchase their own guns and bullets? Ask firefighters to purchase their own axes? Does the paramedic ask the rider if they brought their own saline solution?

And on top of that cut their pay and ask them to do the same amount of work? The answer is a resounding no, so why is it okay for teachers in Hawaii to buy their own supplies and work for one-tenth less pay for doing the same amount of work? For society to flourish the needs of the whole child must be addressed, teachers' and schools' need to be adequately funded and that is why cutting teachers' salaries, and state workers for that matter, are a catastrophic mistake.

Respectfully,

Aaron Kubo, Hilo-Waiakea Complex, Hawai`i Island



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Noelle Gerst <kngerst@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 7:31 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

My decision to begin teaching in Hawaii four years ago was a tough decision because the salary did not compare to the cost of living in Hawaii. Ultimately, I decided that I could not pass up the opportunity to work in this beautiful place with such an amazing community and that moving up in the pay scale would work out to something reasonable as I started a family. I now have a 3 month old baby and my husband works in the tourism industry with very few shifts available and no way of knowing when business will resume as it was prior to the pandemic. With the proposed budget cuts, I would be making less than I did my first year teaching here with no way of knowing when the furloughs will end. I love this fulfilling work with this incredible community, but I will have to look for an opportunity to raise a family with reasonable pay if the budget cuts go through. Thank you for taking your valuable time to read these testimonies.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

THOMAS MERINGOLO <tmeringolo@me.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 7:50 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 deeply concerned, for many reasons, about the proposed furloughs.

- Students are having such a difficult time with the transition to online learning, and, I have experienced, they need much more support - both academically and emotionally - to support their success. One-on-one meetings, planning and modification of course material, increased contact with parents to support in-home learning, etc. are all things that are requiring more of my time, and not less. How can a reduction of teacher hours be other than disastrous.
- Teachers have risen to the challenge of COVID. The impact on our professional and personal lives has been emotionally draining. Maintaining morale to encourage our students is of the utmost importance and will be so difficult with the impossible task of having a 9% cut in pay adding to these difficult times. It is hurtful in so many ways.
- Funding has already been reduced. Teachers have already left. Our students are already suffering. This furlough can only exasperate these issues. DO NOT do it!!!

me ke aloha
na Thomas A. Meringolo



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Lisa Yamada <lyamadahsta@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:00 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.**

Aloha Dear BOE members,

My name is Lisa Yamada and I am a 4th grade teacher, this year, at Wailuku Elementary School.

In 2010, I received my Bachelor's in Elementary Education degree through the UH Manoa College of Education, Distance Learning Program. I have been working in the field of education ever since my oldest daughter went to school. She is now 31 years old, and I am still giving my heart and soul to the children of Maui.

I am writing on behalf of all the single parents out there, which I know, you already know there are a lot of us out there in the Hawaiian Islands.

This furlough idea that was dropped on us, is going to devastate us even more. Having the Covid disable us back in April, and now this, is just unbelievable and painfully heartbreaking.

I have been a single parent for many, many years. I faced hardship both mentally and financially, all the while raising my 3 daughters on my own, and putting myself through college to make a difference in my children's lives. I struggled, I cried myself to sleep every night wondering why God was putting us through such pain. We ate cream of mushroom soup and crackers every morning for breakfast, and saimin for both lunch and dinner, almost everyday. God showed me in 2010 that if I pushed hard enough and remembered why I was doing this (my children) I would get my degree and I did!

I am still a single parent today. I have my 19 year old living at home with me, she lost her job as a barista in May, she's suffering from depression from being in quarantine.

I am a grandma of 4 beautiful grandchildren. I have a mortgage payment to make, I have monthly car payments to make, and I have credit cards up to my eyeballs due to lack of pay and trying to support my daughter at home.

This furlough being dropped on us. The thought of pay cuts or loss of my job, has brought so much stress back on me. We finally received our 3% raise this past November, and now we are taking a 9% pay cut? Why? I am too old to look for another career. I am too old, to work a third job. Why! Why! Why? Why do we have to take a pay cut after how much we give and do for our community? We are one of the lowest paid essential careers out there. We are barely making it already. Do more people have to take their lives because they cannot handle the stress? What will happen to their families if they are the sole provider?

Please hear our cry!

In loving words only,
Lisa Yamada

--

Lisa M.L.K. Yamada
APC Chair/SLL- 4th Grade, Wailuku Elementary School

"It takes a village to raise a child." African proverb



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Brian Goldstein <brian.goldstein@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:03 AM

I am very concerned with the furloughs as a Special Education Teacher, I am already having to work two jobs to afford to live here. My partner's workplace has been closed for many months due to the pandemic leaving me to support her as well. I am already applying and looking to leave the state due to the recent proposed cuts as I can't afford to live here and with such disrespect for the Teachers as we are already one of the lowest paid states adjusted for cost of living. I am hoping things change but at this point I would imagine many other teachers leaving for the mainland where they will not have to endure such painful cuts and are respected more in the profession, thanks.

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



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tara Foster <tara.lyn.foster@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:12 AM

The following email is 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.

Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Tara Foster, I am a School Counselor at Keolu Elementary School. While I understand that our state is struggling financially, I do not agree with these potential furloughs for several reasons:

1. I am a school counselor. A position I had to get a Masters for. I have two degrees and still am not paid enough to survive off one paycheck. I have always had a second job to allow myself to pay my bills. Without that second job I would be struggling or in debt. I think that is ridiculous to think that I have a higher education, and yet the state of Hawaii cannot pay me enough to live off of one paycheck. With the pandemic, I lost that second job for around 6 months. I was struggling to live off of my DOE Salary. Losing two days of work a week will bring me from living paycheck to paycheck, to living above my means. As a single individual, my rent is one whole paycheck from the DOE, and that is not including insurance, car costs, food, phone bill, electric bill, and other various costs that I need to survive. Those two days a month may seem like a small cut but it could mean going from being able to buy groceries every week to trying to stretch my money so thin that groceries would be a luxury. I can't even imagine those that have families, student loans, debt, and other extra costs. I don't know how they'll do it. I am even in the process of looking for a THIRD job.
2. The state puts immense pressure on students' education and yet does not provide the amount of funding students need to get a proper public school education. Cutting 2 days a month for students, means losing almost a WHOLE MONTH of instruction a year. By furloughing educators you are directly taking from their education. How do we expect to raise successful adults when they are losing out on a month of education each year? How do we expect our students to meet testing standards when they are missing out on 20 days of instruction a year? For a lot of students, school is a safe space with consistency and adults that care about them, keeping them home two extra days a month does not serve them any positive purpose. There are no positives to having two furlough days a month besides financial gain for the state.
3. During this pandemic and the educators have been treated, I have seriously considered changing professions, moving to another state, and quitting all together. We have been expected to learn a complete new way of administering education with no empathy from the state or some parents. Teachers go to school to learn how to teach, but nothing has prepared us for teaching 100% virtual at the drop of a hat. With no training, we were expected to continue to do our job in a completely different way, while getting guilt from the state on how important education is. I ask you this: if education is so important, why are we requiring teachers to teach in new ways without any sort of training? With all of this, the state STILL wants to cut our pay??? Absolutely disgusting.
4. Finally, not only are we getting budgets for schools are getting cut and the school I am currently at is having to face very hard decisions. Decisions that shouldn't have to be made. We might be on the verge of losing a teacher which would force us to have two combination classes. Teacher positions should never be put into question. Students NEED teachers or education would not happen. Having one teacher teach two grades does not offer students the proper education that they need. This is also directly taking away from the students in our community and not setting them up to be college and career ready individuals (something the state heavily pushes).

I urge the state to look at their budget and figure out different ways to cut costs and save money. I personally can think of several ways, but I am not in the position to make any of those calls. When you cut school budgets and furlough teachers you are taking directly from the keiki of hawaii. They deserve so much more than our state is providing them. I can't believe education is the first step that our state looks into when cutting costs. We are considered ESSENTIAL WORKERS and yet our pay is less than essential. I know I speak for a lot of educators when I say these furloughs and the treatment we have been receiving has left us feeling extremely undervalued and underappreciated. When morale is low, how do you expect teachers to go above and beyond their jobs (which is what the state has always expected of us whether it was said explicitly or not) to help the youth of hawaii and shape the minds of the future?

Thank you for your time,

12/15/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Tara Foster
School Counselor
Keolu Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE Testimony for December 17, 2020

1 message

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:15 AM

[REDACTED]
to: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

December 15, 2020

Dear Board,

This has been a year like no other. The lack of planning and preparation on behalf of the DOE has caused my family a huge amount of stress along with my husband being laid off. We are surviving, but health has taken a toll.

First, thank you for delaying the start of school. I only wish the time had been used more wisely. We had no plan for distance learners and communication to our families was and continues to be very vague. Parents expected contingency plans and tentative dates, so they could plan accordingly. The lack of flexibility in the distance learning plan was a shock and is causing attendance difficulties which ultimately led to lack of instructional time. Attendance in the spring was blamed on teachers. This could not be further from the truth. The lack of concrete expectations was the cause. Our keiki will be behind our state standards and we are still being asked to calculate grades according to core standards. To add insult to injury, we are now asked to give up our only planning day before school. This contractually is a day for teachers to plan and organize for a new semester and compile report cards. We were already looking at using that time to prepare for a hybrid model of instruction. How will we roll out a hybrid plan safely with no preparation time.

We are professionals and deserve the time plan and as safely as we can with limited resources, plan for our students. This current furlough schedule is atrocious. How are we going to do our jobs. I am outraged as I imagine are many other educators. Additionally, January 4 is the day that many teachers were to plan for the return of students during a world-wide pandemic. How are schools to manage without preparation time.

Please take a long hard look at how front line educators are being treated and the impact on our keiki and our communities. This entire pandemic has been an eye opener on the disorganization that is rampant in the DOE.

A teacher who shall remain nameless, because of the widespread retaliation that also occurs in the DOE.

Please do not disclose my email or name. Mahalo

-



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony DOE furloughs

1 message

Denim Cretton <denimcretton@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:18 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern,

I am a master teacher working in the rural community of Pahoia. At the moment I conduct virtual zoom sessions with my students 5 days a week. I always have 100% attendance and my students are always excited to be in class. This is the only chance they get to be with their classmates and gain some sort of normal social interactions. They are already struggling in their home lives, as we live in one of the lowest socioeconomic areas in Hawaii. My class give them the daily hope and support they need in order to make it through each day in a positive way. I have weekly breakdowns in my class due to the high level of stress associated with the struggles of learning at home. Therefore I start and end each week with self-care techniques through our Choose Love curriculum. It has been really helpful.

With furloughs likely on Fridays, my students will lose this valuable reflection and self care time that they so need to be successful. The feeling anyone should have about taking away more learning time for our keiki should only be shame. Put yourself in our Pahoia students shoes and ask yourself, do you think it's right to take away more learning time? If you can honestly answer yes, then come over and spend a month in Pahoia and experience real life for yourself, (properly vetted volunteers are always welcome in my classroom).

Sincerely,
Mr. Denim Cretton
6th grade Kumu
HAAS, PCS



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Here we go again...

1 message

MATTHEW MASUYAMA <matthewmasuyama@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:28 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Leadership. It all comes down to leadership. What's the definition of a LEADER to me? Someone who makes the right decision at the right time. Someone who takes a stand to serve the people to fight for their wellbeing. Someone who puts themselves AFTER their followers - LEADING by example. Someone who is a person of INTEGRITY. Again, I am not shocked by this decision made by people who ARE NOT LEADERS. Hurting our kids. Taking away more days from them. Cutting pay for front line people. Spending money on things that truly does not make any difference in our future. Giving raises to people during this time when others are being a cut. Saying one thing and then doing another. Saying that you support education and then making history again like Gov Lingle to bring back furloughs. One thing I do know about people in leadership positions... their legacy will always be remembered in either a positive way or a negative way. Unfortunately the people who are making these decisions to continue to take away education from our keiki will always be looked down upon as a disappointment to our society. The impact of this year is yet to be seen, but I do know that our students will ultimately end up being the losers of other people's greed, selfishness, and ignorance. Shame on Hawaii's public education system... And you wonder why you can't keep good teachers home! You wonder why we have low test scores? You wonder why we have high unemployment? Hmmmm..... I wonder why!



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: general

1 message

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:35 AM

To: Testimony BOE <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha

When examining closely the history and purpose of the Hawai'i Department of Education, it is clear that the underlying goals from the earliest of years is to promote and continue the US capitalist system, ie: to create good American citizens.

Nothing says this more than the lack of leadership by the DOE admin. and BOE throughout 2020 to act in the best interest of the people of Hawai'i.

Multitudes of examples exist but let's highlight the following:

- 1) Resigning us to furloughs. Powerful leadership would have searched, delved and presented alternatives. We have some amazing learning happening right now. Educators invest in their students, helping them remain safe in their learning, during this pandemic and always. It is a slap in the face to not try something other than furloughs.
- 2) Acellus On line Program continues throughout the DOE
- 3) Ignoring local place/community in decision making for the safety of students (Kahuku, for one)
- 4) Curriculum resources continue to be purchased with the same lens/the US lens vs the place-based, Hā centric. How is that Arizona pilot going?
- 5) Standardized testing remains the goal for data, even during a pandemic. It should be the last thing on anyone's agenda.

As I always do, I implore the BOE to take the lead (some are)and truly help us become the center of strong, place-based, equitable learning for ALL students. Though, I question and challenge the BOE, I am and always will be a supporter of public education. I strive for the day when the stereotypical saying "oh, you went public school" becomes the positive statement it should be. We can, yes we can.

C. Burghardt
Retired educator



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

jeff sampson <10128387@k12.hi.us>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:38 AM

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

I do not have a long testimony on how the furloughs will effect me and my family. I just want to state the we cannot afford a 9.2% pay cut for even one year. I will be looking for other employment starting in January and will give my notice to terminate my employment with the DOE as soon as I find new employment. I have been a CTE teacher for past 8 years and hate to say goodbye; however, we cannot afford to work in the DOE if the furloughs are instated.

Regards

Jeff Sampson

Culinary Teacher

Kapolei High School

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Elizabeth Bowen <elizabeth.bowen@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:39 AM

Hello - I am writing to provide testimony to the Governor's proposed furlough scheme.

I am personally **OUTRAGED** that the Governor has made a unilateral decision about furloughs and layoffs without consulting the Board of Education or HSTA, as well as NOT providing adequate notice so that we may attempt to adjust our financial budgets. Many of us have already been struggling financially with having our spouses/partners out of work since March, due to the Pandemic and shut down of our tourist industry.

I am not sure how I can adjust my budget to accommodate this loss of income and still be able to pay my rent! I moved to Maui in support of the teacher shortage, where I have really felt like I have made a difference for our keiki. I am not sure if I shall be able to stay. My husband was unemployed from March through August, but still has not reached pre-pandemic employment hours.

Hawaii's teacher salary is already one of the lowest in the nation relative to our high cost of living. I am not sure how this state can expect to attract new teachers when it is showing the country how little it values their teachers.

Please kindly consider this testimony in light of the future of our teachers!

--

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Bowen

ELL Teacher

Princess Nahienaena Elementary
808-662-4020 x429

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kalei Kagawa <kaleikags@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:41 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Kalei Kagawa, I am a 3rd year teacher, teaching at Koloa Elementary School on Kauai.

As a single mother, the furloughs will greatly impact my personal life. After paying for my student loan, car payment, medical insurance, childcare and everything in between I depend on this single income.

I have not applied for help from the state, and I do not intend to. I do not think that we teachers who are essential in every child's future and education should even be able to qualify for things like Medicaid. Our pay should not be that low in the first place. Instead of cutting teachers' pay, my suggestion is that the state should look into fraudulent medicaid and welfare. With the furloughs upcoming, I am given no other choice than to use my Bachelors Degree elsewhere. While I am working towards a masters degree, I think I should cut my losses where they stand, since I can no longer reason working so hard in a profession where I am considered low income. I find it very sad and disheartening that teachers in Hawaii are getting this dramatic pay reduction, when we are already paid so little for the time we put in, the amount of money we use out of our own pocket to better our instruction, and the amount of challenges we are facing. The DOE is doing a dis-service to our State Education and must do better.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testifying on general business meeting discussion item V.B:

1 message

Amanda Wilson <amandaofthejungle@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:00 AM

Hi there,

I am writing to beseech you to find an alternative way to cover the budget shortfalls rather than impose furloughs on Hawaii's teachers.

The charter school I work at is already feeling the crush of not enough personnel. I had to leave my classes that were working on a research project studying the coronavirus vaccines to go and sub another class because we are short-staffed already.

This hurts teachers' quality of life, but, worse, it hurts the students' quality of education. What does this communicate to them? That when there is money trouble, they feel the hurt, even when it comes to their education. It is pretty shameful.

What if the governor found a different way, and communicated to the students that their education matters more than money?

Personally, my husband and I own a bar on Maui, which has been shut down once again. Unemployment for spouses to teachers will run out shortly, and we do not know when or if it will get renewed at this moment.

Perhaps a pause on state construction projects? Perhaps a harder push on the federal government for help?

If this must go through, could it be a sliding scale, affecting people by a percentage of their pay, so that people on the low end of the pay scale would not be hit as hard?

As you know, our state's teachers are paid the least in the country when we correct for cost of living. We truly do this for the love.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

AW

--

Amanda Li Wilson
808.250.8471



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Traci Rosario <traci.rosario@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:01 AM

Good Morning,

I am at my desk with three computers and a tv screen on in my classroom alone writing this testimony. This is how I have sat since August. The only way I can make this work is by having three computers going at all times. It is lonely and I am tired.

My name is Traci Rosario and I have been teaching at Maui High School for 22 years. I am a National Board Certified (Renewed) teacher with my Master's Degree in Foundations in Education. I am the advisor to our school's National Honor Society (16 years). I am one of the advisors for our school newspaper (which we started this year of all times). I help coordinate our AP Program on campus and I wear a variety of other hats as well. I LOVE my profession and most of all, I LOVE my students. I call them my kids. My mom is a retired teacher and my best friend of 40 years is the Curriculum Coordinator at my school. I have teaching in my bones....

That said, I have never worked harder than I have this year and this is really saying something because you can ask anyone I know and they will tell you I am one of the hardest working teachers there are. I feel like I am drowning and have the worst anxiety I have had in years. My husband is not working (tourist industry), his unemployment is going to run out and his employers may have to drop his health insurance soon. This will mean that I will have to put him on mine. We had to remortgage our home at the beginning of the pandemic just to be able to make ends meet. We live frugal lives and have no debt other than our home---for now.

A cut of 9% is devastating (in addition to paying my husband's health insurance) and could be the final blow to our budget in which I will have to retire early and look for a job that pays me my worth. I already have three other part-time jobs. The cost of living in the place where I was raised is so high. I understand that we have to do something for our state budget, but why is it always us first? I love my job. Teaching is where I belong, but if it comes down to me having to choose between the job I love and my family, my family will always come first. I am a humble woman, but the DOE will be losing a great teacher if it comes to me having to leave.

Please look at other options first and please let the governor know that telling us two weeks before Christmas after we have been working so hard that he plans on cutting our pay and is just going to do it because he can is just awful for our morale. I don't know how much more we can take.

Take care--

Traci Rosario

Dear Board of Education,

It is the middle of December, and I should be preparing for the myriad of activities I need to do before my students leave for Winter Break. Yet, here I sit again, writing another letter to the Board of Education. In five months, others, along with myself, have written numerous letters. I have written more letters in the last five months than I have ever written in the previous sixteen years I have been in education.

What words do I have left to say? What more do you need to hear from your teachers. Everything has already been said, and if you haven't heard it by now, if you can't see the value in your teachers and the tremendous work they are doing, then there are no words I can say to convince you otherwise.

I guess there are just times that educators hope that those in charge will mean what they say when they say things like, "Kids are the future. Education is essential."

So, this is my letter. In closing, I am reminded recently of the words from a character in the book and later movie adaptation, "The Green Mile." The character, John Coffey, states:

I'm tired, boss. Tired of being on the road, lonely as a sparrow in the rain.
I'm tired of never having me a buddy to be with to tell me where we's going to, coming from, or why. Mostly, I'm tired of people being ugly to each other.

Like, John, I am also tired.

Danielle Bryant
Kapa'a Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Budget shortfall and furloughs

1 message

Gordon Piianaia <heulup@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:30 AM

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

I can't stress enough how much it infuriates me to see the amount of spending that the DOE and BOE approve of for outside consulting. Every single organization that comes from the mainland to HI for "school-wide improvement" is just taking taxpayer \$ out of HI. I only hope that if we are going to be furloughed, then all spending to consulting or mainland companies immediately is halted. How can we justify to taxpayers that it is OK to cut salaries and school days, yet continue to give our \$ out of state. If it does continue, and I'm sure it probably will, then you should all be ashamed of yourselves. It's pretty common sense, if \$ leaves Hawaii, it ain't coming back! So as a DOE teacher for 16 years, my ask is that if you're going to approve cutting funds to our schools, then you sure as hell better cut all spending that takes any taxpayer \$ out of HI. I've seen this happening for years and yet no one ever seems to want to talk about money paid to outside consulting. I also believe that there is absolutely no transparency to stakeholders regarding how much is actually being spent on these educational providers. If taxpayer monies are being used, then the DOE/BOE is obligated to provide that information in a transparent manner. From an economical standpoint if we are going to cut our budget and the first thing we do is furlough our employees (who spend their paychecks in HI, we're not about to fly anywhere because of Covid 19), it would be foolish and unethical to at the same time continue to pay outside providers from the mainland when we don't have the financial standing to do so. I am a teacher at Keaau Middle School and we are currently working with the Berckemeyer Consulting Group out of Washington state. Our school also has sent faculty/Admin twice a year to conferences as far as Tennessee just last year. Like I said earlier, these are unethical practices that must also have a moratorium if we are truly facing a budget crisis. It's comparable to a parent telling their children "we have less money for food so we're going to have to skip eating 2 days a month. But the good news is we still have money for our netflix." So, as a taxpayer, a teacher, someone born and raised here in HI, my ask is that if we are to have our local communities once again pull together and struggle, and make no mistake people will struggle financially, by making them take a pay cut via a furlough, then don't you dare add insult to injury and continue to approve of paying outside companies in this time of need. If these kinds of business relationships continue with mainland organizations, then our leaders in the DOE, the BOE, and lawmakers are truly doing a dis-service to their community and state.

Gordon Piianaia



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Opposition to pay cuts for education

1 message

Miller, Niko <nmliller@kiheicharter.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:34 AM

Aloha to whom it may concern,

Understandably we are in a financial disparity due to COVID. Cutting funding for education would be catastrophic for Hawaii. The long-term effects and downfalls of this decision would affect our economy for decades.

With the obvious faults of a heavy tourism economy causing a huge burden and Maui's push to create a more sustainable economy, decreasing education will hinder us from achieving this goal.

Prior to COVID Hawaii is in an education crisis of underfunding, performance, large class sizes, and literacy rate. Cutting teachers, cutting pay, and/or furlough school days will only dig a deeper hole.

Please take these points into consideration.

Warmest Aloha,

Coach Niko-

--

Warmest Aloha,

Coach Niko-



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:58 AM

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.

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education and Chair Payne,

I am David Negaard, a teacher at Henry Perrine Baldwin High School on Maui. I am deeply concerned about state and Department of Education imposition of (non-contractual, anti-labor, anti-professional, probably illegal) work furloughs *during an in-force, collectively bargained contract* that, compounded with other draconian budget cuts, hurt public educators and inevitably, *nā haumāna o Hawai'i*.

You get what you pay for, the saying goes. Well, for decades the state of Hawai'i has got far *more* than it paid for from public educators, although rising expectations coupled with shrinking real compensation have eroded the profession to the point that we have a chronic staffing crisis. These cuts will make that crisis catastrophic.

The budget and staffing cuts mean class sizes will rise and courses vital to student enrichment—Hawaiian studies, fine and performing arts, CTE—will be cut. Those courses are arguably as important as—perhaps even more important than—tested courses; they foster and feed students' humanity.

Those of us who are left standing after those staffing cuts will be expected to pick up the slack; always doing more with less. My class sizes and workload will increase (at the same time as I am robbed of work time I previously had), and my students' morale will be impacted because the classes they really enjoy will no longer be available to them.

All that is without mentioning the elephant in the room—the devastating financial impact these cuts will have on me and my colleagues.

I am a 10-month employee. Six furlough days in five months works out to about a 6% cut—better than some other public employees are being burdened with, but still:

- twice my share of health care premiums, or
- 25% of my housing costs monthly, or
- two thirds of my family's grocery bill, or
- just over half my student loan payment

And I am better positioned than most of my peers.

Many of my colleagues feel that this is the last straw—the straw that broke the camel's back—and they are planning to leave the state or the profession. They cannot survive even with a side job (and side jobs are currently hard to come by). So the positions remaining after a 10% reduction may *still* go unfilled, just like the 1,000+ open positions we have had every year for years.

Rarely is the answer to a broken system to break it further, and public education in Hawai'i is broken. It has been starved and constrained like an unwanted dog in a fifth-rate kennel, yet now the state proposes to double down on the abuse. That is not how to make things better. The actions of the state now will determine the fate of our students for a generation.

To be clear...any time the state balances the budget on the backs of educators, it is not just the educators who suffer. Our students do, too. Their teachers (the ones who survive) are increasingly stressed, demoralized, overworked, and desperate. We cannot do our best for our students when we are undercompensated, overworked, and impoverished. It is bullying and cruel to expect us to do so.

We are professionals—something the state and DoE seem to forget. Treat us and compensate us like professionals.

You get what you pay for, and Hawai'i has long paid for junk public education. It has been fortunate in the past to have gotten far better than that, but the camel's back is breaking, and when it does, it will be too late to take straws off.

Mahalo,

--

David Negaard

cel [REDACTED]

"Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play." -Heraclitus



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Linda Jones <linda.jones@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:13 AM

Aloha,

My name is Linda Jones. I am a product of the Hawaii public school system from high school through college and a professional degree in Education through the R.I.S.E. program. I have given twenty years of service to the Keiki of our state. The state wants those in my profession to yet again bear the burden of a collapsed economy.

In 2009 we were also called upon to bear the brunt of a gutted economy due to the housing bubble and bankers' greed. At that time I was frozen on Step 6. I had 8 years of service. In the past few years, my union has successfully negotiated me to Step 11. After waiting **eleven years** the state was going to *finally* address that discrepancy last February. Then Covid.. now furloughs for teachers.

I am supposed to be at Step 14! I was finally going to have a salary that matched my years of service and expertise! But NO!

Now I am being furloughed again. I have never recovered financially from the first round of furloughs! I am unable to retire because my pension is based on the highest-paid years. I cannot get that! Now more than ever. Thus, I am forced to remain in a profession that I am paid less and less as the years go by. I'll never be able to retire at his rate. This makes me feel like an indentured servant. Stuck.

And this is what I want to ask you each to think of and ponder... the fact that there is no other profession...anywhere!... that the salary *decreases* as the number of years service *increases!!!*

How does the state hope to recruit and retain anyone to become or continue being a teacher in the state of Hawaii??? Ige proclaims that as soon as the furloughs are not needed they will go away. After waiting eleven years to be restored to my place in the Steps from the last time... why would I believe that bunch of [REDACTED] ??? That won't happen... and I know it from my experience in the DOE.

The students in this state deserve so much better. After decades of defunded education, we are now at a point that to be a teacher one must be willing to live in poverty, with a couple of side jobs to be able to make ends meet. And then be expected to take even more hits when any financial problems hit the state. We are asked to do more and more and accept less and less pay! Our students are being taught by teachers who are stressing about paying bills, working numerous jobs, being used as political expediency for those in power... or by people who are not teachers but warm bodies to babysit. Is this really what we want for our children? This is how professional, highly educated people are treated? especially those who care for our keiki???

I ask again.. what profession pays its professional employees less and less year after year???

It is a travesty.

Linda Jones
Lanai High and Elementary School

ELA/Peer Mediation

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Against Furloughs

1 message

Sampson, Amber <asampson@kiheicharter.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:19 AM

Aloha BOE,

For what it is worth I want to express my frustration with the plan to furlough teachers and school staff beginning in January 2021. These school personnel have been working extremely hard, adapting to complex teaching environments and dealing with unprecedented situations to continue teaching throughout all of the shutdowns that have happened. Teachers and school staff have been expected to continue to provide the same high-quality service as always. Meanwhile, people on unemployment received additional \$600 per week, then an additional \$400 per week, then a \$500 restaurant card on top of any other benefits they qualified for. All while teachers and school staff continue to work incredibly hard to ensure our students continue to receive quality education and keep their brains growing! Now you want to reward these people with pay cuts??!! This makes zero logical sense. Not to mention the fact that this reduces the number of educational days for students, impacting their education and ability to learn. Please find another way to balance the budget. This is not fair to school personnel or students.

Sincerely,

Amber Sampson

--

Amber Sampson
Wellness Coordinator
Kihei Charter School
asampson@kiheicharter.org
[REDACTED]



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Mila Savini <mboucheva@kamaile.org>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:36 AM

Aloha!

I'm not sure where or how to begin this email. I am deeply troubled with the approaching furloughs that are due to plague our community. I am worried and concerned about my family as well as so many other families who will be impacted by this.

We know from past experience that furloughs only take away from our communities and our students. Hawaii still hasn't recovered from the last furloughs, and yet here we are again. Dr. Kishimoto and Gov Ige keep talking about putting students and their education first, yet they seem to completely ignore the fact that these furloughs will do the exact opposite - one thousand positions cut, and hundreds leaving the island and the profession as a result.

I, myself, along with many others have already spent time updating my resume, and searching through sites like Indeed for opportunities in other fields, both in-state and out. Gov Ige has tried to smooth the situation over by claiming that he and his staff will also take a 10% pay reduction. However, his salary is three times that of a teacher. His paycut will not have as large of an impact as that a single-mother teacher who is earning \$60,000 - for whom every penny is trivial for survival.

If our keiki, the future of Hawaii, is truly important; if education is truly important, then I highly urge you to reconsider this. You know and understand the impacts of these furloughs as much as anyone, and I know that you - who is reading this right now, know without a shadow of a doubt that teachers will leave the profession in droves if this were to go through.

There are so many other solutions that the state could implement to balance the budget. How about legalizing marijuana which brings in billions in revenue (because let's face it, we all have that one uncle who's buying it illegally)? Or raising sales taxes by a mere 1% (Hawaii already has one of the lowest sales taxes in the nation)? Or building a casino in Waikiki (cha-ching!)?

Maybe you feel like this issue doesn't affect you because your child is attending a private school. What if they weren't? Would you feel different then, knowing that your child will lose high quality, experienced educators?

This proposal is a complete disgrace and embarrassment. We can do better than this, and we can find solutions that don't destroy the fabric of this state.

Mila Savini
ELL Department Coordinator

Kamaile Academy
[87-180 Ala Akau St](#)
[Wai'anae, HI 96792](#)
808-697-7110 (ext. 615)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Rick Yamashiro <coachyamashiro@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:05 AM

The Department of Education furloughs is unacceptable for students, their families, teachers, and our state as a whole.

Our students are currently struggling during this global pandemic. Taking away more educational opportunities will only hurt them further. Additionally their families need to feel that our education system is supporting them.

Our veteran teachers have been through this before and know the harsh consequences that will follow. Compromised learning and loss pay that will never be recovered.

The families have been through enough and will now suffer more as they will have to care for their children and possibly miss work to do so.

Our economy will suffer as furloughed employees will cut down on their expenses. Thus small local businesses will be negatively impacted.

Other solutions should be discussed, such as a small increase in the General Excise Tax or a state lottery. I am positive that either would eliminate furloughs. Please reconsider. Thank you for reading my humble opinion. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Yamashiro
James Campbell High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tai Baird <bair6939@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:08 AM

To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

My name is Tai Baird, and I am special education teacher on the island of Maui. Please, Governor Ige, reconsider your decision to furlough teachers. It is absolutely unacceptable for you to do this. I campaigned for you, backed you and now to have you sell us as teachers out really disappoints. Not to mention, that it is against our contract for 2020-2021 school year due to what we agreed to. It is illegal for you to do this to us right now.

I have personally been affected by this decision through not only fighting for a differential in pay for special education teachers, but also now to have to fight to keep my regular pay I worked for, along with the differential. In addition, I have a mortgage I pay, along with other expenses like the rest of my fellow teachers. We have bills, along with our classroom supplies, and everything else we have purchased this year for us to be efficient in our classrooms.

Furthermore, there are 11 of my fellow affected teachers at my school who do not have jobs for next school year. Then comes this. Not acceptable right now or ever. Please reconsider your furlough decision and find another way to help our keiki and our kumu. Mahalo, Tai Baird, Kahului Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Eleyne Fia <hacacefia@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:11 AM

Dear Respected Board of Education Members:

I am submitting the following 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.

It was with a discouraged heart that I took in the news that we educators and others who work for the schools, would be furloughed. While I understand that our budget is in dire straits, I believe that the furloughs may, in the long run, cause more harm than good.

Is it worth the risk of our future citizens', our keikis', lives and self-value and worth, to furlough the very people who work and care for these children and the future of Hawaii? For instance, with myself – there is no time boundary for my students as I assist them. Because of the current CoVid situation, the high school students and some of their parents I counsel often tell me how vital and important counseling and guidance are in helping them to pursue their college dreams. To them, it feels like they are in a fog because they can't see. I have chosen to be available to my students when they need me to help them answer questions and complete their applications. There is no "on and off the clock" and they reach me through texting, on weekends, past midnight, in the early morning hours – anytime! It is not "my job" to do this, I make myself available to assist them because I am an EDUCATOR and I believe in them and the educational system of our nation. I am not alone in this.

I mention the above not for accolades, but to show that as educators, we realize that the life of our children is most important and it should not be something we sacrifice. Those endless extra hours will cease because of the furloughs. It's more than because of the need to take a stand, it's also because of survival. I will need the time to concentrate on building a second job, to make up for the finances lost. So the time I give in return for allowing me to be the Educator I can be, will need to be cut.

For me and my family, these furloughs will be doubled since my husband is also an educator. I don't know yet how we will afford my two sons who are currently in college, their school bills. Our newest car is a 2008 Honda and we are afraid of losing our transportation mode but we can't buy a car right now. During the last furlough, we survived on pork and beans, hotdogs, saimin, and other less costly items. We will again have to relook at what we consume to survive. We have yet to address the needs of the inside and outside of our modest house, something we had hoped to finally do before the Pandemic hit.

Have all the possible solutions really been addressed and evaluated? For example - why has there been no mention of raising the sales tax? Then all, including visitors, can work to assist our State. I believe we may have one of the lowest sales tax rates in the nation, and even a 1% lift, could assist our State's woes. Even if a half (50%) of 1% were to be designated for our education system, it would help! It's like finding 25\$ in your pocket, every little bit helps! Why again, only burden the state workers to solve the State's fiscal problems? It makes me and my co-workers feel as if we are not human, not respected in our careers, and are looked at as disposable resources.

There are a lot of invisible supports by the people who work in the educational system. The unions – HSTA, UPW, and HGEA can attest to the numbers. But we as people in the system are consumers who do spend money. We go to restaurants, support small businesses, support our friends' businesses, frequent the farmers' markets, buy online items, volunteer where we can, and we do it because we know we need to help all of these businesses because they are PEOPLE trying to live, just like we educators have had to deal with all of our careers with being underpaid, which we have always known and still worked with. We have had to deal with initial and very demeaning pay raise offers that can't keep up with our economy. Employees at a school all work with false accusations, being sworn at, disrespect, threats, and sometimes, we even get physically hurt. Some people who are not in the education system say we are stupid to stay in our careers. But we know we are not stupid. Bottom line, we love what we do, so we stay.

Thank you so much for reading and truly listening to our words and hearts.

Sincerely,
Eleyne Fia
James Campbell High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE Agenda Item V.B.

1 message

Joseph Cassler <joseph.cassler@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:25 AM

To the Honorable BOE Members,

I'm writing in regards to agenda item V-B for the Dec. 17th meeting. Teachers have been right at the front of our state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Time and again, teachers have been asked to be flexible in adjusting last minute to different learning formats all while trying to keep our students, families, and communities safe from this unprecedented virus. The governor and superintendent recently announced the plan to furlough state public workers in order to balance the deficit created by this pandemic. Educators, principals, support staff, and custodians should not have to take the brunt of these budget cuts. The impact on students, teachers, and families will be felt for decades as a result of this rash, unilateral decision by our governor.

The decision to teachers for their two teacher work days in January and June is a despicable move by Supt. Kishimoto and her team. Supt. Kishimoto knows very well that though furloughed, teachers will now have to use their winter break to prepare materials, finalize grades, and lesson plan for a model of learning that, for many schools, is still unknown. This is how teachers operate. If we don't, then we'll be labeled as lazy and not doing our jobs. We put our students first and ourselves and even sometimes our family second. Supt. Kishimoto has taken advantage of that in order to "appease" the community's burden. And once again, Supt. Kishimoto is pitting us against each other and the students, families, and communities we serve. Supt. Kishimoto, for the 3rd time this year, has demonstrated a deep-seated distrust for our profession by using manipulative language to imply that if we as teachers voice our concerns, we are letting down our students and failing to do our jobs. This is far from the truth as teachers have worked harder than in a "normal" school year. Day in, day out, we are not only playing the role of teacher in this pandemic, but mental health counselor, academic counselor, community health "expert", custodian, tutor, PCNC, etc.

I teach in a strong freshman academy team at Kauai High School. As a result, we are already losing one incredibly gifted teacher as a result of the governor's furlough plan. This teacher's loss will be felt not only by his colleagues but by the hundreds of students he currently serves and the countless students who will not have the opportunity to have him in the future. He is returning to a school district in the mainland where as a substitute, he will be earning a better salary than a tenured teacher in Hawaii. His story will not be the only one as such. Hawaii's education system cannot afford to lose these types of teachers.

I encourage the board to dig deeper into the significant effects the furlough decision will have on Hawaii's education system, but more importantly, the teachers that are employed by this system, and the students whose learning suffer as a result. I ask the board to question the days that have been proposed for furloughs and focus on the sacrifices that teachers now have to make to prepare for students in January and check out at the end of the school year. Teachers give everything they have to students so the state shouldn't be asking them to give to the governor or superintendent.

--

Mahalo,

Joe Cassler
Kauai High School
Freshman Academy Lead (Team Red)
808.274.3160





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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher Testimony against the Furloughs

1 message

Joshua Joggerst <joshua.joggerst@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:28 AM

As a teacher at Lanai high school, I am going to be severely impacted by these furloughs and my ability to purchase quality food, provide school resources for my students, and planning for the future are all in jeopardy. Paying back student loans and getting a car are now put on hold and decreases my quality of life here in Hawaii. Being a new teacher, it can be hard enough to put up with the current problems we face with distance learning and student engagement. Now these furloughs are being implemented to add on to our problems and restrict us from helping out our local businesses and community with our money. This is going to hurt everyone, especially the students if this leads to teacher positions being cut. This is why we need to stop these furloughs from taking place.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony,
High School Teacher
Josh Joggerst

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Alec Richardson <alecjrichardson@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:32 AM

Aloha Board of Education members,

I am a special education teacher on the Big Island. Before the implementation of special education differential, I was already planning to leave Hawaii in search of a more affordable place to live on a teacher's salary. The differential provided me the opportunity to remain in my position. If I were to receive a pay cut for the furlough and lose the differential I would again be focusing on leaving the state for a more affordable location.

The pay I currently receive has allowed me to pay my bills, and save money I was planning on using for a down payment on a home. If I see a deduction in pay I will no longer be able to put money aside to buy a home in Hawaii.

The reality of these furloughs is that aside from not coming into work on those days, the same amount of work will be required of teachers. My IEPs will not be reduced, the content that needs to be covered will not be reduced. The only things that will be reduced will be teacher pay and the amount of instructional time provided to students.

With no definition of "improved economic outlook" to determine the ending of these furloughs, I cannot see myself staying here. Will the furloughs end when tax revenue reaches similar levels to the months before the pandemic? How long must the economy improve before the furloughs end? If this situation is so dire, what does it not apply to all public employee unions? If teachers need to take a pay cut the police should be taking a similar cut.

Many of my colleagues have a much tougher situation, supporting a family, paying student loans, or for an elderly relative. These cuts will be taking food off their table and security from their future. This is a hard time for many in our country, but I know for a fact, that many unemployed workers made more money from the last stimulus than they were making when they were working. Why were teachers not given this option? Why were required to continue to work if the state was hemorrhaging money? We all could have applied for supplemental unemployment benefits.

I can tell you what I will be doing on my furlough days. I will be applying for every job on the mainland I can find, and packing my bags. With any luck, I'll be on a plane before the school year ends.

--

Alec Richardson




Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kari Stagno <kari.stagno@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:39 AM

Aloha,

My name is Kari Handley. I am a teacher of the Deaf/ Hard of Hearing at Lehua Elementary School in Leeward District on Oahu. 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.**

Furloughs may help save the budget, but it will be at the great expense of our schools; students, teachers, and staff included. Why is it the responsibility of teachers to balance the state's budget? Last week, schools were dealt a heavy blow that they would have to cut their budgets, being forced to choose between supplies, consumables, and teaching positions. Our small school has a current enrollment of 229 students. These budget cuts will mean we will probably lose 5-6 teachers, including 2 special education teachers, and possibly more of our Educational Assistants. This means higher class numbers, and more cases, especially in our already overloaded special education classes. And now, we will ALL feel the effect of furloughs. Financially, I don't know if my husband and I will be able to stay in Hawaii.

In August, I started a Masters Program. This is a program I found out about through the DOE, with incentives and stipends to cover the cost. However, since I am highly qualified to teach in my current position, I do not qualify for this stipend. So okay, I will pay for it out of my pocket. Now with furloughs, I may not be able to continue and finish. If I have to leave the state because we can't afford to live and work here, what will happen to my students? Who will provide them with specially designed instruction? Who understands their needs?

Now on December 14, at 9:34pm, we finally hear what the days are that we will be furloughed. What was the delay for? Teachers and schools are now SCRAMBLING to change their schedules, ONCE AGAIN, for when many students will return to in-person learning in January. Oh, and students will just have to wait outside of classrooms on January 5 when they return while we make arrangements inside the classroom for them, as we won't have the January 4th work day to make adjustments. Teachers are planners! Now we have to change what we are doing and planning for yet again. DO better!

Thank you,
Kari Handley



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

forlough

1 message

Sarah Gillis <sarahnishikawagillis@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:41 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As a tenured SPED math teacher I have two young children that have started pre-school. Their tuition is \$1400 total. I have budgeted that into my paycheck and with this reduction it negatively impacts my ability to continue to send them.

I work beyond my teacher pay as is, and this furlough is very dis-heartening to say the least. At this point, I overly extend myself and this is a slap in the face to all the teachers who have been going above and beyond to accommodate this new educational setting that we are dealing with.

I make videos on my own time and had plans for Jan. 4th and now I'm scrambling to do that now (this last week when grades are also due).

Sincerely,

Sarah Gillis
6th grade
math teacher
Kea'au Middle School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Pualani McKeen <pualanimckeen@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:46 AM

Testimony

Aloha mai e nā kānaka 'auamo kuleana o ka ho'ona'auao o nā keiki Hawai'i,
(Aloha to those that are tasked with the responsibility to educate Hawai'i keiki,)

Here we are AGAIN. I even contemplated what is the point of submitting testimony when maybe nothing can be done. Then my civic guilt kicked in and here I am writing to oppose furloughs. The analogy that best fits this whole situation is, "trying to get blood from a rock." Our education system and its employees are already tapped out. Trying to take more from a system that is already underfunded is like me thinking I will become positive in my bank account when I am already at a deficit on payday. There just has to be a better way!!!

The majority of teachers work 2-3 jobs. Most of those side jobs have already been lost to them. Like myself, I usually teach 2 PD courses this Fall semester to teachers outside of contractual hours. All my courses either got canceled or pushed back because of the pandemic and so I am already trying to cut back financially in areas that are already slim budgets just to stay afloat. As teachers, we do NOT qualify for free and reduced lunch, snap benefits or Quest medical, even with a cut to pay. Therefore, I will need to figure out AGAIN (second time in my 16-year career), how I will feed my children, put gas in my car, and pay for my housing all while carrying a Masters of Ed and 16 years of teaching experience. I am at the top of the scale, class VII, and still, I struggle. Why I ask is this EVEN a thing?

Our system is broken. It is evident that it is broken if we need to furlough state employees to correct a budget that should have foreseen a possible drop in revenue since it has happened before. Beyond that, I ask all of you, when do we really start making choices for our keiki and their future? If we don't make the change who will?

Na'u nō me ka ha'aha'a
Hope Pualani McKeen



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Furloughs

1 message

Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:47 AM

Reply-To: Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com>

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

Please do not furlough us. This has already been such a tough year and are students are already so far behind. I teach in Ka'u and between connectivity issues, motivation, just the discouragement of stuck being home we need more not less time for the students.

Economy is not going to improve with furloughs as less money means less people will shop. Please do not do the furloughs it will just add to the pain, frustration and discouragement. Sincerely, Dr. Angie Miyashiro

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Leina'ala Kealoha <leinaalaolivas@hotmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:53 AM

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

To the Honorable BOE Members,

I'm writing in regards to agenda item V-B for the Dec. 17th meeting. Teachers have been right at the front of our state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Time and again, teachers have been asked to be flexible in adjusting last minute to different learning formats all while trying to keep our students, families, and communities safe from this unprecedented virus. The governor and superintendent recently announced the plan to furlough state public workers in order to balance the deficit created by this pandemic. Educators, principals, support staff, and custodians should not have to take the brunt of these budget cuts. The impact on students, teachers, and families will be felt for decades as a result of this brash, unilateral decision by our governor.

The decision to teachers for their two teacher work days in January and June is a despicable move by Supt. Kishimoto and her team. Supt. Kishimoto knows very well that though furloughed, teachers will now have to use their winter break to prepare materials, finalize grades, and lesson plan for a model of learning that, for many schools, is still unknown. This is how teachers operate. If we don't, then we'll be labeled as lazy and not doing our jobs. We put our students first and ourselves and even sometimes our family second. Supt. Kishimoto has taken advantage of that in order to "appease" the community's burden. And once again, Supt. Kishimoto is pitting us against each other and the students, families, and communities we serve. Supt. Kishimoto, for the 3rd time this year, has demonstrated a deep-seated distrust for our profession by using manipulative language to imply that if we as teachers voice our concerns, we are letting down our students and failing to do our jobs. This is far from the truth as teachers have worked harder than in a "normal" school year. Day in, day out, we are not only playing the role of teacher in this pandemic, but mental health counselor, academic counselor, community health "expert", custodian, tutor, PCNC, etc.

I teach in a strong freshman academy team at Kauai High School. As a result, we are already losing one incredibly gifted teacher as a result of the governor's furlough plan. This teacher's loss will be felt not only by his colleagues but by the hundreds of students he currently serves and the countless students who will not have the opportunity to have him in the future. He is returning to a school district in the mainland where as a substitute, he will be earning a better salary than a tenured teacher in Hawaii. His story will not be the only one as such. Hawaii's education system cannot afford to lose these types of teachers.

I encourage the board to dig deeper into the significant effects the furlough decision will have on Hawaii's education system, but more importantly, the teachers that are employed by this system, and the students whose learning suffer as a result. I ask the board to question the days that have been proposed for furloughs and focus on the sacrifices that teachers now have to make to prepare for students in January and check out at the end of the school year. Teachers give everything they have to students so the state shouldn't be asking them to give more.

Leinaala Kealoha



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

1 message

Marissa Purcell <marissa.purcell@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:11 PM

To the Honorable BOE Members,

I'm writing in regards to agenda item V-B for the Dec. 17th meeting. I am currently in my first year as a TA Vice-Principal and have been a Teacher in the HDOE for 13 years. Currently our Teachers have been right at the front of our state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Time and again, teachers have been asked to be flexible in adjusting last minute to different learning formats all while trying to keep our students, families, and communities safe from this unprecedented virus. The governor and superintendent recently announced the plan to furlough state public workers in order to balance the deficit created by this pandemic. Educators, principals, support staff, and custodians should not have to take the brunt of these budget cuts. The impact on students, teachers, and families will be felt for decades as a result of this rash, unilateral decision by our governor.

The decision for teachers to use their two teacher work days in January and June is heartless. Teachers will now have to use their winter break to prepare materials, finalize grades, and lesson plan for a model of learning that, for many schools, is still unknown. This is how teachers operate. If we don't, then we'll be labeled as lazy and not doing our jobs. We put our students first and ourselves and even sometimes our family second. Supt. Kishimoto has taken advantage of that in order to "appease" the community's burden. And once again, Supt. Kishimoto is pitting us against each other and the students, families, and communities we serve. Supt. Kishimoto, for the 3rd time this year, has demonstrated a deep-seated distrust for our profession by using manipulative language to imply that if we as teachers voice our concerns, we are letting down our students and failing to do our jobs. This is far from the truth as teachers have worked harder than in a "normal" school year. Day in, day out, teachers are not only playing the role of teacher in this pandemic, but mental health counselors, academic counselors, community health "expert", custodian, tutor, PCNC, etc.

I am the TA Vice-Principal of our freshman academy team at Kauai High School. As a result, we are already losing one incredibly gifted teacher as a result of the governor's furlough plan as well as one of our Vice-Principal positions in which is the position I fill. In addition the teacher we are losing will be felt not only by his colleagues but by the hundreds of students he currently serves and the countless students who will not have the opportunity to have him in the future. He is returning to a school district in the mainland where as a substitute, he will be earning a better salary than a tenured teacher in Hawaii. His story will not be the only one as such. Hawaii's education system cannot afford to lose these types of teachers.

I encourage the board to dig deeper into the significant effects the furlough decision will have on Hawaii's education system, but more importantly, the administrators, teachers and staff that are employed by this system, and the students whose learning suffer as a result. I ask the board to question the days that have been proposed for furloughs and focus on the sacrifices that teachers now have to make to prepare for students in January and check out at the end of the school year. Teachers already give everything they have to students and I plead for a better solution during these times.

Respectfully submitted



Marissa Purcell

Kauai High School

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12/15/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - (no subject)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Rose Glad <missgladiator@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:12 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom it may concern:

The proposed furlough days are not acceptable. These unpaid days are sending the message to all teachers that we are expected to do the same amount of work for less pay. Prep the same amount. Teach the same amount. But you are taking away our time and tools to do this. The educational outcomes will not be met if you shackle us. It simply won't be possible. We are being stretched beyond our limits already. I would have thought that the recent past memory of Furlough Fridays would preclude this unproductive directive, but I guess the lesson of learning from your past so as not to repeat such mistakes in the future was not learned well enough. Our communities will again suffer from our loss of buying power. Our students are already suffering mentally, emotionally, and educationally from lack of contact. This will only exacerbate the problem. There is no long term advantage in this plan. I urge you to reconsider and find alternative ways to make up the shortfall.

Rose Glad

Konawaena Middle School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No to Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Janice Magaoay <janice.magaoay@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:17 PM

To the Honorable BOE Members,

I'm writing in regards to agenda item V-B for the Dec. 17th meeting. Teachers have been right at the front of our state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Time and again, teachers have been asked to be flexible in adjusting last minute to different learning formats all while trying to keep our students, families, and communities safe from this unprecedented virus. The governor and superintendent recently announced the plan to furlough state public workers in order to balance the deficit created by this pandemic. Educators, principals, support staff, and custodians should not have to take the brunt of these budget cuts. The impact on students, teachers, and families will be felt for decades as a result of this brash, unilateral decision by our governor.

The decision to teachers for their two teacher work days in January and June is a despicable move by Supt. Kishimoto and her team. Supt. Kishimoto knows very well that though furloughed, teachers will now have to use their winter break to prepare materials, finalize grades, and lesson plan for a model of learning that, for many schools, is still unknown. This is how teachers operate. If we don't, then we'll be labeled as lazy and not doing our jobs. We put our students first and ourselves and even sometimes our family second. Supt. Kishimoto has taken advantage of that in order to "appease" the community's burden. And once again, Supt. Kishimoto is pitting us against each other and the students, families, and communities we serve. Supt. Kishimoto, for the 3rd time this year, has demonstrated a deep-seated distrust for our profession by using manipulative language to imply that if we as teachers voice our concerns, we are letting down our students and failing to do our jobs. This is far from the truth as teachers have worked harder than in a "normal" school year. Day in, day out, we are not only playing the role of teacher in this pandemic, but mental health counselor, academic counselor, community health "expert", custodian, tutor, PCNC, etc.

I teach in a strong freshman academy team at Kauai High School. As a result, we are already losing one incredibly gifted teacher as a result of the governor's furlough plan. This teacher's loss will be felt not only by his colleagues but by the hundreds of students he currently serves and the countless students who will not have the opportunity to have him in the future. He is returning to a school district in the mainland where as a substitute, he will be earning a better salary than a tenured teacher in Hawaii. His story will not be the only one as such. Hawaii's education system cannot afford to lose these types of teachers.

I encourage the board to dig deeper into the significant effects the furlough decision will have on Hawaii's education system, but more importantly, the teachers that are employed by this system, and the students whose learning suffer as a result. I ask the board to question the days that have been proposed for furloughs and focus on the sacrifices that teachers now have to make to prepare for students in January and check out at the end of the school year. Teachers give everything they have to students so the state shouldn't be asking them to give more.

Mahalo,

Janice Magaoay
Kauai High School
Freshman Academy Team (Geometry Teacher)



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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Mary Ryan <mary.ryan@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:22 PM

Aloha,

My name is Mary Ryan and I teach grades 1-3 Special Education at Ala Wai Elementary. I am testifying on 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.

When I heard about the furlough plans I was in disbelief. I still cannot make sense of how it was possible that after a semester of reinventing education, working tirelessly to revamp and remake curriculum and instructional tools, as well as coaching families and students well outside of school hours that the state would even consider such an unfair and unjust punishment is beyond belief. This is exactly what it feels like, a punishment.

Time and time again teachers are overworked and undervalued. When this pandemic set in it was teachers who rallied to create a new normal for families and keiki in our communities. We often give time and resources well outside of our required duties without recognition or compensation. This exploitation must end.

All feelings aside, the financial burden that comes with these circumstances is enormous. Making ends meet in Hawaii is difficult on a normal basis and now we must figure out how to compensate for this pay loss. My husband are contemplating relocating to the mainland in order to keep ourselves afloat. In addition, I feel forced to consider leaving education and pursuing a different career in order to have a livable wage with fair expectations.

As if the furlough news wasn't bad enough, my principal has announced that the Special Education department will be making cuts and we will be losing positions for next school year. This means less support for our teachers and students requiring teachers to work even longer and harder. My caseload is difficult to balance with the support I have now, I truly don't know how we will make things work with less support. Teachers are being expected to do more work and get paid less. In addition to teachers, the students will suffer. They will lose more instructional days during a time when routine, connection, and closing gaps is critical.

Now is a time for us to come together to do what is fair and right and good for the people of Hawaii. We must find another way to rebuild our economy and stop using education as a disposable resource. Now is the time to support our educators, families, and keiki to bring a better tomorrow. I hope you will consider this with utmost urgency. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,

Mary Ryan

Ala Wai Elementary School

Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Proposals

1 message

derek monell <monelld@khswoverider.k12.hi.us>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:22 PM

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

Every election cycle politicians from our State claim that educating our youth is one of the most important functions of our state government. Yet sadly, once again education is treated like a commodity. Hawaii devotes less of their budget to education than most states and we have one of the shortest school years by class days already. Look at our public school scores and acceptance rates- embarrassing.

Now you want to take away 2 weeks of our high school semester this January to May. Really!

Yes 6 days equates to 2 weeks at our high school, this is especially hard on AP students who already have missed a significant portion of their schools days. Many of these students are fighting private school students for placement in college, but does Hawaii care- you've answered NO by showing what value these kids really have to you - by cutting their opportunity for advancement.

Teachers give far more than you can imagine- so you taking income away and never replacing it during good times is what you do.

But why punish these students too? What have they done but try and better themselves.

Shame on the Governor, the Superintendent and the Board if the furloughs go through!

Mahalo

Derek Monell

Kealakehe High School

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Third Grade Teacher's Testimony- Living Wages For Educators/ No Furloughs

1 message

Chelsea Welcker <chelseawelcker@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 12:29 PM

My name is Chelsea Welcker and I am a third grade teacher at King Kamehameha III Elementary School. I have taught for the past 15 years and I love my job. I love teaching.

I can't afford housing here. I work a side job 20 hours a week and every summer, fall, winter, and spring break I work full time. I know it hurts my teaching. I am exhausted. Just think of what I could do if teaching afforded me a living wage?

Before the pandemic many colleagues- highly qualified, professional, veteran teachers were discussing leaving the teaching profession or leaving Hawaii altogether to teach somewhere where teaching salaries are more competitive and you can live off of an adequate income without having 2 or 3 other jobs to support yourself and family. Luckily, some had decided to stay because of the incentive program payments of hard to fill positions that were going to happen.

Living paycheck to paycheck and having 2 to 3 side jobs is the "normal" for teachers in Hawaii. We are underpaid and underappreciated. We deserve a living wage.

We are currently in a teacher shortage and cutting salaries due to furloughs will hurt our communities and our children. This pandemic is temporary but by cutting our salaries many of us will have to make the hard choice of staying here or moving to a place that has a lower cost of living, where we won't be living with a mountain of debt.

For most teachers a 9% pay cut would be \$200 less a paycheck as a fellow teacher shared with me. We are already struggling. Could you afford to live in Hawaii with \$200 less a paycheck? If we lose this much money we can't afford to stay here. There will be a mass exodus of teachers leaving Hawaii. As school continues you will not have teachers in your classrooms.

If you reduce teacher salaries by 9% please be the public leaders and civil servants that I know that you are and take a 9% pay cut as well as you stand in solidarity with our teachers.

Please continue to support our teachers. Do not furlough us!

Thank you for your time and support,

Chelsea Welcker
Third Grade Classroom Teacher
King Kamehameha III Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Yumie Lefebvre <yumie0316@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 1:30 PM

I am testifying on 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.

My name is Yumie Lefebvre and I am a school teacher at Momilani Elementary school, Pearl City complex, Leeward District.

These furloughs will affect me personally in many different ways, such as paying the necessary bills and mortgage, saving money for the future or emergency, supporting my elderly family members, and the list goes on. I know some DOE teachers moved away because they cannot afford to live here even without furloughs, so the furloughs will only put many Hawaii teachers' careers and life here in jeopardy. As a result, the teacher shortage issues in Hawaii will get worsen and the quality of education will be heavily affected by this. I am a Special Education teacher who needs extra help to service my students so that I can support their needs. However, my EA is now facing uncertainty to keep his job due to this pending budget cut. If he was let go, my students' learning experiences will never be the same.

There are different ways to reshape the state budget plan. The state should know that education is much more valuable than the rail project, which has been wasting a tremendous amount of taxpayers' money. The rail project is just an example. The state needs to plan better and stop wasting so much money. So please, be smart and make the right decision. Putting our Keiki at the top of our priority list, which saves the future of Hawaii because they are our future.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yumie Lefebvre, Leeward District, Oahu



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony regarding Furloughs: BOE Meeting 12/17

1 message

Kileigh Sanchez <kleighsanchez@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 1:54 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

To be honest, I am writing this email and I am just TIRED. I shouldn't have to write in to explain to the people in charge that teachers' AND students' needs are being ignored. I'm not shocked at how little teachers mean to our Governor and our state at this point because it seems that we are literally the last priority again and again, so that pretty much fits the bill of what I expected. To assume that you can hurt the teachers and that it WON'T affect the kids is delusional. If we have to face furloughs, the kids are going to suffer and that's on all of you for allowing this because apparently the teachers' voice and our union does not count at all. The AWFUL thing is... when you screw teachers over, you are also DIRECTLY hurting the students our Superintendent pretends to care about. I mean absolutely decimating any chance of our students getting out of this slump this year has forced us into as a country. Imagine going into next school year with the goal and intent of catching our students up to make up for this year, and you realize that there aren't any qualified teachers left in the classroom. The best and brightest who have higher ed degrees will most certainly jump ship because it's easier for us to get out and find another job where we aren't treated like absolute trash. I don't even want to go on about how this will affect my family financially as someone who is expecting their second child, because pulling on your heart strings doesn't work. If it did, we wouldn't even be in this position. You people are all comfy and cozy with your six figure salaries while teachers can barely afford rent/mortgage/car payments/etc. I also just want to say that the Gov./Superintendent taking a 9% pay cut to show solidarity means NOTHING to teachers when that is a meaningless amount of money proportionally compared to a measly teacher salary. We don't GET car allowances and we don't GET paid inordinate amounts of money to play around with the livelihoods and futures of thousands. We're in the classroom doing the work. I can think of 5 different solutions off the top of my head that make more sense than screwing over state employees, but maybe I'm just thinking a little too much about this. Why don't you raise the sales tax? All the other 49 states have higher sales tax than Hawai'i. Tennessee for example is almost 10%. Double our sales tax and put it on everyone who lives here instead of just killing the future of our state by wrecking the educational system? Better yet, tax the heck out of the tourists and hotels!! Charge the precious tourists you care so much more about! Back to reality though...imagine if these cuts affected state leaders in the same way as teachers - they couldn't make their mortgage payments, they were going to lose their houses/cars, etc. I'm sure they'd come up with a better solution than just dumping this on the people who truly run the state and keep it operational.

We just got notification of the dates of the furloughs last night via email, which is so impersonal and unprofessional. The video our Sup. sent out last week about "students losing 9 days" due to teachers needing to plan for this year was so tone deaf. We shouldn't have to defend the days in August that we needed to plan for an ENTIRE semester of distance learning when most of us have never done this before. But I digress...the absolute disregard for teachers was 100% confirmed through the selection of two of the furlough dates. January 4 and June 1 are the first and last teacher work days of semester 2 and the other four are regular teaching days. January 4 is one of the most important days of the quarter and MANY teachers are going back into the classroom with live students for the first time THIS SCHOOL YEAR starting on January 5. Do I really need to explain why taking away this absolutely essential day of planning and preparation is ridiculous? It is such a huge slap in the face to all our keiki and teachers to say "too bad, you will be going into quarter 3 with zero prep from teachers and that's not the priority anyway. it's about money". It's honestly a relief to hear that that is how we are viewed as teachers because it makes it that much easier to say I am absolutely done with teaching in this incompetent state. I have heard from HUNDREDS of other teachers in the last few days who feel the exact same way after hearing how little our state truly cares about our keiki (this is about the ACTIONS, not lip service). While I do feel for the keiki, I also know it's not my responsibility to put the kids and the state on my back, so I'm done being abused. This year of teaching has revealed the true colors of our Superintendent and Governor and I am honestly just too weary and disgusted to care anymore. Don't expect teachers to work outside of our contract when our very contract is being ignored and walked all over by illegally taking away these 6 days. We're sick of "rolling over" and being a doormat for the state and I know that plenty of teachers are quitting this year, rightfully so. Get ready for years and years of teacher shortages, low levels of achievement from students, and burnout from whatever teachers do end up staying. Good luck is all I can say. They're going to need it.

--

Kileigh Sanchez, M.S.Ed.
Art Educator, Waianae Intermediate School
Vanderbilt University '14, Communications and Studio Art

12/15/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony regarding Furloughs: BOE Meeting 12/17

Johns Hopkins University '16, Master of Science, Education

Classroom Phone: (808) 305-2738

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Stephen Smith <stephen_smith@baldwin.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:06 PM

Hello, this email is my testimony 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.

My name is Stephen Smith. I teach Spanish at Baldwin High School on Maui. I have to say, these furloughs sure heighten the possibility that I may have to quit my job with the DOE and seek other opportunities on the mainland. It is already difficult enough to live in Hawaii on a teacher's salary. I would like to own a home someday, but on my salary alone it's nearly impossible to save any money. The cost of living here is so high and these furloughs will only compound the difficulty. Some teachers work second jobs to stay afloat, and many of those jobs have been lost during the Covid crisis.

Teachers make such an important contribution to the community, but they are not compensated proportionately. I really believe that these furloughs will force a sizable number of teachers on to different work, or work outside of Hawaii. With the teacher shortages that we already have, can we afford to lose more? In the end Hawaii students suffer.

To add insult to injury, the furlough dates announced include teacher work days. What doesn't see the reality in that? Teachers are still going to have to do this work, but now it will occur evenings, weekends and holidays. We'll still do the work (because we love our kids) but we just won't be getting paid for it.

Shame on Hawaii for not finding a way to prioritize teachers, students, education, and the future of Hawaii's keiki.

Thank you,
Stephen Smith



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Liz Esguerra <elizabeth.esguerra@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:17 PM

Aloha,

My name is Liz Esguerra and 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 Master's level educated School Counselor at Kamalii Elementary School in Kihei, HI. I am the only school counselor on staff. I've worked for the Hawaii DOE for five and half years and this is my 10th year as a school counselor. These proposed furloughs are extremely distressing & concerning. The cost of living in Hawaii is so high, that I am concerned that these furloughs could force myself or others to leave the Hawaii DOE for a higher paid position. This is not a threat, but a reality of how our monthly income is not commensurate with the costs associated with living on this beautiful island. A reduction in that could greatly impact staffing and morale. Our Keiki need qualified professionals who are paid generously for our hard work and love of educating children.

Please reconsider this decision as it can have detrimental effects on our state's education system.

Mahalo for your time.

--

Liz Esguerra, M.Ed.
School Counselor
Kamalii Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for BOE hearing Dec 17, 2020 1:30

1 message

Lizzy Laliberty <puchanus@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:17 PM

Liz Laliberte
Teacher, Hilo High School

Sample Testimony for BOE hearing 12/16/2020 1:30pm

Governor Ige's proposed furloughs may seem like a logical way to solve a short-term budget crisis. Furloughs seems like the lesser of two evils, if faced with the terrible choice of whether to make everyone suffer a little, so a few don't have to suffer a lot. But this begs the question, "Do either of these options need to happen at all?" Pay cuts for tens of thousands of state workers means less money spent into the economy, which in turn slows Hawaii's economic recovery and prolongs the recession. Pay cuts are only one tool in Governor Ige's toolkit, and a terrible one to use at this time. Our state should, and can use other means to balance the budget.

Politicians are quick to look for places to cut spending when staring at a budget crisis. And furloughs are better than straight layoffs, but another way to balance the budget is to bring in more money through taxes. Opponents of raising taxes will argue no one wants to, or can afford to pay more taxes than we already do. Higher taxes on wages means less take-home pay, but Governor Ige has other tools he can use to raise tax revenues. "Mansion taxes" on high-value homes (\$5 million or more), money raised from capital gains on stock sales, or property bought and sold by non-Hawaii residents (24% of property is owned by non-Hawaii residents). Unlike working-class families, wealthy people usually keep their spending at the same level even with tax increases. This is important because consumer spending is the only sure way to get our weakened economy back on track.

In the end, cutting pay from state workers in the form of furloughs takes money from those least able to afford a cut. The economic recession will last longer. This doesn't even factor in the harms from teachers leaving the profession, leaving the state, retiring early, teaching fewer days, more subs, more shortages of qualified teachers, and having to take second jobs which are all issues I'm sure are mentioned in other testimonies. By using smarter and more selective tools to create an economic recovery, Governor Ige can avoid making a bad situation even worse. For all the rhetoric around caring for Hawaii's 'future generations', if the fallout of this recession mostly lands on the shoulders of workers and students, the negative effects will persist for many, many years and will be felt mostly by the youngest and most vulnerable in our communities.

Sincerely,

Liz Laliberte

Teacher and HFR, Hilo High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Natalia Sandoval <nataliasandoval.hi@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:35 PM

Dear Board Members,

I am submitting this testimony in order to share with you how forced furloughs have impacted my family.

In 2009, my husband and I were both furloughed under the Lingle Administration. At the time, we were both teaching special education in the HiDOE, raising two young boys (ages 3 and 6), drowning in student loan debt (since we both completed our Master's in Special Education), and trying our best to make ends meet. Both my husband and I had to take turns working a second job at night, just so we could pay our rent, keep the utilities on, and put food on the table.

We ended up in Forbearance with our Student Loans, and remained that way until 2013, when we were able to start making payments again. Due to high interest rates, our student loans doubled in amount, and we are now \$175,000 in debt. The forbearance had a negative impact on our credit scores, and till this day, we are still working to correct what furloughs did wrong.

In 2019, my husband made the difficult decision to leave the HiDOE and quit teaching. What a shame!!

A 14-year veteran special education teacher, supporting some of the most severely disabled students in a fully self contained (FSC)/ Community Based Instruction (CBI) classroom, had to give up his passion because of the financial impact the 2009 Lingle Furloughs had on him and his family.

My husband is a highly educated, highly qualified, certified special education teacher, who now works as a laborer because it pays a higher wage, provides us with comprehensive medical coverage, and offers us a chance at building a future. Being a laborer also provides him with the opportunity to financially support his family, pay off student debt (that he acquired to become a special education teacher), and the hope of becoming a homeowner one day.

Does being a laborer make him happy? No. Does being a laborer fulfill him? No. Is being a laborer his life passion? No.

Being a special education teacher made him happy. Being a special education teacher fulfilled him. And being a special education teacher is his life passion. But the reality is, we BOTH CANNOT be special education teachers. One of us had to make a sacrifice for our family and our future, and that was him.

To make matters worse, my husband has been on workmans comp. since May 2020, which has cut his income by 50%. He completely tore his rotator cuff and labrum in a work-related accident, which required surgery to repair, and carries a minimum recovery time of 6-9 months.

So here we are in 2020, facing lge Furloughs. We are still raising two boys (now 14 and 17), still drowning in student loan debt, still trying our best to make ends meet, and I'm still working a second job so we can pay our rent, keep the utilities on, and put food on the table.

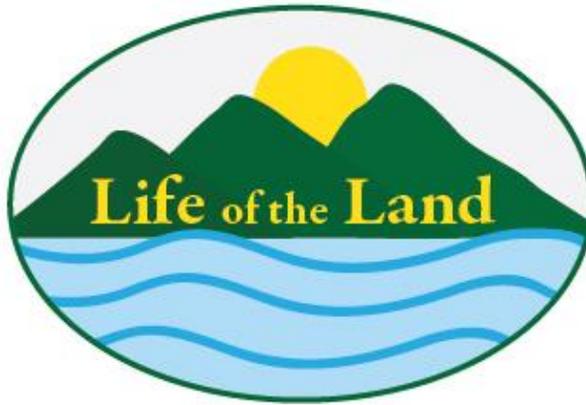
Except now, there's college to think about. My eldest son, Jonah, is a senior this year. He should be applying to schools. He should be excited to go off and pursue his education. He should be confident that mom and dad will be able to support him in any way, including financially. But the reality is, we can't. We can't afford to pay for college. We can't support him financially. And we absolutely CANNOT take on more student loan debt.

All this stress has definitely caused me to reconsider my position as a special education teacher. With budget cuts, loss of staffing, and the liability that comes with being a special education teacher, I find myself questioning if it's all worth it. Is being a special education teacher worth struggling professionally, financially, emotionally, personally?

At some point the love for my students, and the passion for my craft will no longer be enough. At some point I will have to make the tough decision to either stay or walk away. And if I chose the latter, the HiDOE will have lost another 14-year veteran special education teacher who is highly educated, highly qualified, and National Board Certified.

So I guess the BOE needs to ask themselves, can you afford to lose more highly qualified teachers with these forced furloughs? Because I can guarantee that we can't afford to stay teachers. Someone is going to have to make a hard choice. Will it be the BOE or the teachers?

Aloha,
Natalia Sandoval, M.A. SpED, NBCT
Special Education Department Head
Waikiki Elementary School
SPEDucator Project Fellow



P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, Hawai`i 96837-0158
Phone: 927-0709 henry.lifeoftheland@gmail.com

December 17, 2020

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
State of Hawaii
Board of Education
1390 Miller St 4th Floor,
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Petition No. 20-01

SUPPORT

Aloha Board Members

Life of the Land is Hawai`i's own energy, environmental and community action group advocating for the people and `aina for 50 years. Our mission is to preserve and protect the life of the land through sound energy and land use policies and to promote open government through research, education, advocacy and, when necessary, litigation.

The question is whether the Department should issue policy statements with or without public input and with or without adopting Hawai`i Administrative Rules.

Life of the Land favors meaningful public input and Hawai`i Administrative Rules.

The fact that the department has no control over authorizing proposed development is irrelevant to the fact that the department can and has responded to requests for comments and can and has initiated the filing of comments.

The Board of Education and the Department of Education sometimes comments on projects that are geographically beyond the borders of school property.

The Department has highlighted its support for food and energy beyond its borders. “Addressing the theme of this year’s World Conservation Congress (WCC), ‘Planet at a Crossroads,’ these resources are a starting point for teachers, students and schools to participate and contribute to the primary areas of focus — namely biodiversity, food and water security, and climate change.”¹

Strategic Plan 2017-2020 (“SP”)²

“We are heartened by how much these community priorities align with growing initiatives and investments within the DoE and public education in Hawai‘i. Superintendent’s Message. SP at 2

“Every student, school, and community is unique.” SP at 3

"Lastly, as we look to the future, we know that part of the legacy of our special island home is to support the community relationships, culture, values, and sense of place that enables students to thrive." SP at 4.

“We believe that our special island home prepares us to lead globally. our unique values, sense of place, and strong community relationships are increasingly important here and around the world.” SP at 5

¹ <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/Stem/Pages/WCC.aspx>

² <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Advancing%20Education/SP2017-20.pdf>



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Megan Pillos <mpillos88@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:41 PM

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 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!

-Megan Pillos
Parent and 3rd Grade Inclusion Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Lupe Tatum <lupe.tatum@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:48 PM

Attn: BOE

As a teacher, I question why we are one of the first to be considered cutting or taking mandatory furlough? I understand the situation our nation is in because of the unexpected pandemic but we are not expendable. The responsibilities and expectations we have to our students and our community have already been compromised because one; number of days we already missed and two; the number of hours we already cut within a day. The time we lost cannot be made up in the future and now the Governor and BOE is asking for days from our school calendar which will further the detriment our students' education

Another concern is the legality of this decision. Is this a breach of contract on the part of the state's government with the teacher's union as well as the teachers? Reversing the role between the government and the union/teachers, I am confident the BOE would be going to court because of the breach of contract between the two parties. It would be in the best interest for the BOE to first postpone all furloughs for teachers until all communication between the BOE and the union is completed and a compromise can be made for the benefit of the BOE, teachers and our students.

Lastly, this would be a great time for the state's government to begin discussions about severing the Governor's ability to make any decisions about our state's finances regarding education. Therefore, all decisions about finances would be made between the BOE who represents the state's government and the union who represents all teachers. In ending this email, I thank you for taking time to read my concerns..

Sincerely,
L. Tatum

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: Furlough

1 message

Jeanine Dotario <jeaninedot78@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:56 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs.

On a personal level this furlough will greatly impact me. I am a newly single parent trying to survive and make ends meet on this high cost of living island. As I looked forward to my raise this year, I am trying to plan for a pay decrease instead. I can deal with no pay raise this school year, but a pay decrease will be impossible for me and my family.

I will be having to look for a job that will allow me to make ends meet or I will have to take time away from my daughter, who is at home by herself from 7am-5pm because of the amount of time I spend at school now will be home alone for longer periods of time to work another job. My quality of life and my daughter's will be immensely impacted. The rental situation on Kauai is ridiculously expensive and to include utilities, car payments, cell phone cost, food, and all other daily expenses will not be doable.

Due to this situation, we as a family are greatly considering moving to the mainland to be able to survive financially. We are currently searching for places to live that have a lower cost of living, where a single salary family can comfortably survive. I have to look out for the best interest of my family at this point.

As much as I love my job, I will also be looking for a new job that meets my family's needs better. A job that I do not feel like I am constantly being taken advantage of and walked all over time and time again. A job that I put in my 110% for every single day, but get nothing in return. Especially during this pandemic, my grade level and I have worked countless hours, off the clock making sure we have created lessons that are engaging and reaching every student. Teachers have put their own safety on the line every day of this school year. WE are your Frontline workers! We take care of everyone's children but get left in the dust to fend for ourselves.

With positions being cut we will be facing larger class sizes and, of course, a larger work load. Please think about having to work harder for less money.... What would you do if you were in my position? Any suggestions are welcome.

Sincerely,

Jeanine Dotario
Hawaii DOE Teacher/Parent



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Board of Education General Business Meeting Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. item V.B.

1 message

Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 2:59 PM

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

December 15, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii**Regarding BOE Agenda, December 17, 2020, 1:30 p.m., 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

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

In considering questions of budget cuts and furloughs in education, the priority must be to protect the core functions of teaching and learning, and the teachers and staff in our schools that make this possible.

As part of our support for these core functions, while we are still in the midst of dealing with COVID-19, we also need to maintain budgeting for important health and safety measures and ensure that resources such as effective contact tracing and school health services are available. Further, we should ensure that low cost measures such as the consistent enforcement of mask wearing are implemented. If cuts in personnel or resources mean that our schools cannot implement the measures previously mandated by this Board or recommended by the CDC and DOH, then it should be considered whether face to face instruction can be safely implemented or whether there should be distance learning until COVID-19 is under control.

Finally, as suggested by other testimony in prior meetings, it is important that the Department of Education provide details about the impact of cuts at the school level so that stakeholders can fully appreciate their likely consequences.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lynn Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Ashlee Jimenez <ashlee_jimenez@io.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:00 PM

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB:Presentation on questions regarding Department of Ec

On a personal level and as a teacher and a parent, this furlough will be directly and negatively impacting my ability to provide for my family, pay for my mortgage and monthly bills, as well as pay for my child to go to daycare.

Our administration informed us that lines at our school will need to be cut to compensate for the 10% cut of the weighted student formula. This means that our class sizes will be over 30 at the elementary school level and if we are still in blended learning we will need to do an A, B, and now C schedule meaning students will be receiving even less in-person days.

This year I have worked harder than I ever have in my entire career of teaching. I needed to learn how to teach online, put myself and my family's health in jeopardy having to teach in person, and constantly taking time out of the day having to remind my students to keep their masks on and to social distance throughout the day is an additional strain on learning. Learning is not the same and will only dwindle with this furlough. I come in before school and stay 2-3 hours after school finishes in order to grade and prepare for my students. This is my personal time I give up away from my family so that I can be prepared for my students' learning. Now we are losing the work days that would have been utilized to prepare for the return of our students after winter break, had our institute day, and close down our classrooms at the end of the year.

I feel undervalued having all of these burdens placed upon my shoulders as well as all teachers across the state to help our economy. We were already told we are getting cuts to our budget, now we are being told we are getting cut to our pay, and now we are told that we are only furloughing 6 days (3 of which were teacher work days). We have been working this entire time and having to put our own children into daycares and schools because we don't have the luxury of keeping them home safely like our students.

I am deeply disappointed in this decision by our government. Teachers and students have already lost so much, we deserve better than this. Education should be a priority above everything right now.

Sincerely,

--

Ashlee K. Imai
Wilcox Elementary School
Third Grade



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

shelly <shelly.cassler@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:01 PM

To the Honorable BOE Members,

My name is Shelly Cassler and I am a first grade teacher at King Kaumuali'i Elementary School on Kauai. We taught 1st quarter 100% distance learning and 2nd quarter in a blended A/B model. I'm writing in regards to agenda item V-B for the Dec. 17th meeting. For the past three quarters starting from the 4th quarter of school year 2019-2020 and into this school year, teachers have been asked to teach in a whole new way. We've replanned our lessons to teach virtually and then replanned again to adapt to blended in-person learning with covid-restrictions. We have put in countless extra hours to make things work and to make transitions smooth for our students even if we were not given proper time to carry out these things. We knew things needed to be done or our students would suffer so we just did it. It appalls me that even if we've been putting in extra, we are being furloughed and on top of that our planning time is being taken away on two of the furlough days.

After the 1st quarter, our school changed from distance learning to a blended model. Because of this, there were adjustments in class lists as parents were given the option to choose the model they wanted their child in for the 2nd quarter. I lost some students and gained others. I was given a new class list of my 2nd quarter students on the Friday before break, after school. This left me with no planning time to prepare for my new students or to talk to the teacher who my students transitioning out would be going to. I was forced to go into school during my own time over Fall break. Colleagues told me not to, but I knew if I didn't, things would be disorganized and I'd feel unprepared on the first day back and the students would suffer.

Changes will occur over Winter break as well. Depending on Covid-case numbers, parents will opt for different models of learning for their children. Our lists will change again. If the current furlough schedule stays as is, teachers will again be forced to work during our break to prepare because our January teacher planning day would be furloughed.

Similarly, taking away our June planning day takes advantage of the hard work that teachers go above and beyond in doing. Anyone who knows education knows that there's no way we can walk out for summer on the same day as our students. Rooms need to be packed up, cum folders need to be filled out, and grades need to be wrapped up. Taking away our teacher work day in June assumes that teachers would just do these things out of the kindness of our hearts. The alternative is for teachers to start packing up rooms and wrapping up gradebooks early which would affect students' instructional time.

The decision to take two teacher work days in January and June is a despicable move by Superintendent Kishimoto and her team. Supt. Kishimoto knows very well that though furloughed, teachers will now have to use their winter break to prepare materials, finalize grades, and lesson plan for a model of learning that, for many schools, is still unknown. This is how teachers operate. We always put our students first and ourselves and even sometimes our family second. Supt. Kishimoto has taken advantage of that in order to "appease" the community's burden. And once again, Supt. Kishimoto is pitting us against each other and the students, families, and communities we serve.

I encourage the board to dig deeper into the significant effects the furlough decision will have on Hawaii's education system, but more importantly, the teachers that are employed by this system, and the students whose learning suffer as a result. I ask the board to question the days that have been proposed for furloughs and focus on the sacrifices that teachers now have to make to prepare for students in January and check out at the end of the school year. Teachers give everything they have to students so the state shouldn't be asking them to give to the governor or superintendent.

Sincerely,
Shelly Cassler



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Shahinaz Nassar <snassar@wailukuelem.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:02 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.

I have been teaching for more than 15 years. Throughout these years, I have completed more than 60 PD credits as well as my National Board Certification. In addition, I hold a master degree in Elementary Education. With all these credentials, I still have no choice but to work 3+ jobs in order to survive and pay my bills. I am a single parent with 3 kids (2 of them are in college), which makes it even harder. I have worked very hard so that I can reach the top of my salary scale. However, even with that, it is not enough! Teachers are already underpaid and have been underpaid for many years! With this furlough, I have to question if I am in the right profession? Should I seek other opportunities where hard work is appreciated? As a mentor to beginning teachers, it saddens me to see how teachers are devalued. How can I possibly lie to my mentee and tell her that she is in the right profession? While teaching is a rewarding job, it is also a very stressful job and it is certainly not a 7:45-2:45 job. We are already working on our own time (unpaid time) to plan, grade, attend professional developments...etc. When is enough enough?

It equally saddens me to see how our leaders devalue the education of our kids. Last year was a disaster! While we tried to do our best to continue teaching, many kids did not have access to the internet or computers. These kids lost an entire quarter! I have to admit that this year is much better than last year; however, it has been a struggle to get 100% of my students online and turning in their assignments. And now, furloughs! The DOE has strategically placed most of the furloughs on Teacher Work Days/Waiver Days where there are no students. Unfortunately, this will still impact students in an indirect way. When you take away time from teachers, you are taking away planning and prepping time which will negatively impact student learning. Please explain to me how I can relay this to our students today? Should I tell them that our leaders simply don't care about you or about your future? Or should I tell them that our leaders are not willing to fight hard enough to ensure they get the best education they deserve?

I believe there is a better way to balance the State's budget other than depriving our students of their right to free quality education and frustrating teachers, who might leave the profession altogether. There are other ways to temporarily cut our budget. I question which one is more important, teacher furlough or suspending other expenses such as students' surveys and standardized testing? Is this the right year for the DOE to hire many resource teachers to provide teachers with PD , etc... while classroom teachers are struggling teaching online to engage students academically and socially?

I urge you to reconsider your decision! It will have an everlasting negative impact on the future of our kids! You will take away something that they will never get back...their right to learn, their right to explore, their right to create, their right to achieve! After all, they are our future leaders, and we need to make sure that we have smart leaders who are capable of leading and making sound decisions. Please do not take that away from them. Instead, seek other solutions and collaborate with the Federal Government for grants and aid.

Furloughs and budget cuts are not the solution! Not even for our current economy!

Thank you in advance for your reconsideration.

Elementary Classroom Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for Dec. 17 BOE Meeting

1 message

Robert Lozano <robert_lozano@waikoloa.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:16 PM

Re: testimony for 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,

My name is Robert Lozano. I am a teacher at Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School K-8 on the Big Island of Hawaii. Implementation of furloughs, in concert with already planned budget cuts and pending layoffs, will have a negative impact on my school.

Planned furloughs will take away direct instruction time of students as well as teacher preparation time. Students and teachers are already struggling to cover content due to the extra time it takes to deliver and plan for online instruction when compared to classroom instruction.

The financial impact of the furloughs will make it difficult to cover the rising costs of utilities, food, transportation, and health insurance. Less disposable income will put a strain on covering my own children's current college tuition as well as lessen the amount of money I can contribute to goods and services in my immediate community.

My school's administration has shared how budget cuts will affect our school programs in the 2021-2022 school year. Five to seven teacher positions are planned to be cut in the budget proposed by our school's administration. Resource classes and elective classes will be cut as a result. Students will not have classes such as music, art, P.E., and Hawaiian Studies as a result of budget cuts. Pending layoffs will also affect how many support personnel will be available to meet the needs of our students with special needs, English language learners, and students who need extra help in a variety of academic areas. My son, a student at the school I teach at, and others will directly suffer less educational opportunities and support from a combination of furloughs, budget cuts, and layoffs.

Please consider the combined impact our schools and the greater community will have as a result of implementing furloughs, budget cuts, and layoffs when you vote on these measures as a Board of Education member. If we take such shortsighted measures now, both the immediate and long-term adverse effects to our schools, our students, and our communities will be felt for years to come.

Mahalo,

Robert Lozano

Teacher

Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kristina De Witt <kristinakauai@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:28 PM

Aloha, my name is Kristina and 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 wanted to share with you how these furloughs will not only effect me, but my colleagues and most importantly our students.

First, I am already struggling to pay my bills, living paycheck to paycheck. Quite too often I am faced with overdraft charges nearing the end of the pay period. I am not a crazy spender and I never eat out. I can't afford to. I'm concerned with my ability to make my bills with a paycut when I already struggle to.

I am seriously considering leaving the profession if furloughs happen. Teachers have been above and beyond overworked through these challenging times. We have so much planning and prepping to do that most of us couldn't get another job if we wanted to! Teachers are working until the late evening and weekends. Not to mention the teachers that are considering retiring early. This will result in larger class sizes and lower student success. It will also increase teachers workload and decrease teachers happiness with the profession. Most likely resulting in a vicious cycle of more teachers leaving the profession over time.

Two of the 6 planned furlough days are on teacher work days. These days are extremely valuable to teachers. Most feel this time isn't enough as it is to get planning and preparations done before students return, or close out the school year after the students last day. Do you think teachers are going to use this furloughed teacher work day to relax and do something fun with friends or family? Absolutely not. They will most likely go into work anyways because there is much to get done for the students. These furloughs are going to result in teachers putting in even more of their personal time to meet students needs and help them be successful.

Our principal already informed our school that we will be losing a total of 4 teachers next school year. This again will result in higher class sizes, lower student success rate, and lower teacher satisfaction. He also informed us that after paying for salaries and utilities, our school has about 15 thousand left over for funding for the school year. This is ridiculous! How will our students be provided curriculum and programs to supplement instruction and be successful? Teachers most likely will not get a PO at the beginning of the year. So, we will be faced with a paycut AND the reality of using our own money on our classroom and students. Something that mostly every teacher already does because we do it all for the students.

We were already in a crisis before the pandemic with teachers... We had an absurd amount of vacancies and couldn't retain teachers... It's going to get a lot worse with furloughs, budget and paycuts! I am worried for our keiki's future.

Thank you,
Kristina



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Nancy Halley <nancy_halley@baldwin.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:42 PM

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.**

Our government needs to audit their departments, look at their utility and wasteful practices, come up with creative solutions to generate income and lobby for Federal stimulus instead of pulling from the education system again. Government waste is everywhere. A quick example is our school parking lot that was paved last year at a cost of over a million dollars. Fill some pot holes and move on. Solar lights were installed throughout the whole parking lot. There is rarely a night when all these lights would even be needed. It's just an example of wasteful spending which has contributed to a lack of funds in government.

How furloughs will impact me personally.

1. I am two years away from retiring. Generally teachers "High 3" are their last 3 years of teaching. With a reduction in pay, my "High 3" will not be my last 3 years, but will be prior years of service. This impacts my retirement benefits for the rest of my life! Furloughs do not just impact me during the furlough period, but it impacts my retirement benefits. Therefore, this is not just a temporary loss in pay, this pay cut resonates through my entire retirement benefit period. This seems highly unfair and unethical. My "High 3" should be based on what I should have been making my last 3 years of teaching prior to any State imposed furloughs and in alignment with the most recent HSTA union agreement with the State of Hawaii.

2. Prior to Covid19, I had 2 sources of income because working as a teacher and being the major income earner in our household, a second source of income is a must to be able to continue living on Maui.

The first source is my teacher salary and the second source was a lease agreement I had with a telecommunication company that rented a portion of my property for their transmitter/receiver equipment. Due to Covid, this company has ended their lease agreement. One of their large accounts was the communication system for the school bus service throughout Maui. Due to schools moving to an online platform, their business has greatly suffered. This loss of rental income, results in a significant reduction in my annual income ~ \$12,000/yr.

Now, facing furloughs and pay cuts, I am facing a 2nd reduction in income ~ \$6,000/yr per year based on a 10% pay cut (plus as I already stated a reduction in my retirement benefits for the rest of my life). This will require me to dip into savings I have, to pay my mortgage and to pay off a solar panel power loan.

As well as losing income, I recently received a letter from Hawaii Gas stating they are raising their rates. As my income drops, utility rates are increasing.

3. In order to keep my home on Maui, I rent a bedroom to another person, who also works for the public school system. If she is able to retain her job, the furlough and pay deduction results in another 10% loss of income for the household. But, she does not currently have a contract with the D.O.E. There is a strong possibility with school budgets being cut, that she may lose her job. Her loss of income directly impacts her. She can not apply for U.I.C. because she used it all up when schools closed last March, 2019. Her potential loss of income directly impacts her. But is also impacts me by ~ \$5,000/yr.

Overall, I stand to have an income reduction of approximately, \$23,000/yr. This calculates to 29% of my annual income. This number does not calculate any increases in County, State or utility services.

4. I installed solar 2 years ago. The loan amount is due in 2021 for about \$25,000.00. I'm not sure how this will get paid, now with the loss of income I am facing. This could snowball into a default on the loan and therefore negatively effecting my credit rating for the rest of my life.

5. Due to possible furloughs and pay deductions and school budget cuts. (The school I work for has announced a 9.5% budget cut and the loss of 8.5 jobs), I know of a number of teachers that are retiring or moving out of state beginning June 2021. I can not retire early, as this would impact my health care benefits, which I need. But, if I could....I would definitely retire in May of 2021. I am researching different forms of employment and I will walk away from my job if I can find something that compensates me at my current salary and benefit package or more. This may require moving out of State. I teach high school Biology and Chemistry. Good luck finding a qualified teacher for those positions.

6. Besides the impact of approximately \$23,000/yr on me personally and on the possibility of the second member of our household losing their job, the loss of student learning hours is significant. This school year has been wrought with challenges as teachers pivot and re-train to offer socio-emotional and academic support to our students. I applaud all teachers and support staff this year that have not waited for D.O.E. directives and training, but have dived into the world on online teaching and spent long hours and weekends training up on teaching using multiple computer screens, Pear Deck, Ed Puzzle, Google Classroom, Google forms, Bitmoji classrooms, google slides, Canva, Quicktime and many many more software and hardware tools to keep our students (the future of our communities) in school, engaged, and learning. Teachers have moved quickly to organize drive-by pick ups of school materials, computers and hotspots. Student learning success has been admittedly limited, because as much as we try, there are students that have computer connectivity issues, self-motivation challenges, and at home family dynamic issues.

I have students that have dropped out of high school. I have students that have never shown up online for class. Speaking solely on my experience, I know that my students this year in Chemistry and Biology will not complete our usual years curriculum. My Biology students will not be ready for any high stake testing. They too are suffering from being isolated from their peers and they suffer from not being able to engage in the many activities schools offer, such as sports, drama, leadership, band, and art.

With a 9.5% budget cut at our school, it has already been announced that certain elective courses may have to be cut. this includes AP courses. This will result in less opportunities for our students and a poorer quality of education. Now the Governor wants to impose less instructional time for students through furloughs. I honestly find this criminal.

The Governor also announced the dates of 2 emergency furlough days. One being a teacher work day. I feel this is another slap in the face. Because teachers are focused on their students most of the time, teacher work days are assigned to give us time to re-evaluate our teaching strategies, to prepare for incoming students after for example, holiday breaks. This first emergency furlough day is on a day that is important to teachers because at our school, we are planning on bringing back some high need Grade 12 students back on campus the beginning of January. We need this day to make sure all safety protocols are in place and our classrooms are ready. Now this day has been deemed as a furlough, but we still have to prepare for our students' return, so in reality, we will be working in our classrooms, once again, without pay. This is incredibly disrespectful to all teachers. We get a pay cut and we lose any teacher time to prepare for our students, but we still need to do it. Our government takes advantage of teachers' commitment to their students over and over again.

This State and our leadership in government, has long relied on tourism as our main source of income, even though we all know this industry is highly unreliable and vulnerable to numerous threats, pandemics, hurricanes, tidal waves, economic downturns, environmental destruction, airline strikes, 911 etc... and who pays the burden for this? State workers. Teachers especially have been underpaid for the incredible commitment we make to our communities. While other corporations funded by our government pay their employees over \$100,000 per year.

Our government has wasted millions of dollars of tax payer money:

1. The Super ferry fiasco
2. Spending millions on computerizing our hospitals, only to sell them to Kaiser who put in their own computer system.
3. The passenger rail system on Oahu

This mismanagement of tax payer dollars has contributed to the instability of our government. And now, once again, it is the public school system that is supposed to bear this burden. I'm sick and tired of hearing my friends tell me, I'm so sorry teachers are underpaid and that education is not valued in our community, as they deposit their paychecks that are twice or even three times what I make.

If I could go back in time, I would never have become a teacher. Sad but true.

Respectfully,
Nancy Halley

--

Mission The mission of BHS is to develop a community of learners who have the competence and confidence to achieve personal goals and who are responsible stewards of our global community.

Nancy Halley
Chemistry and Biology
H.P. Baldwin High School
1650 Kaahumanu Ave.
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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Doughty, Heather <hdoughty@kiheicharter.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 3:54 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

I write this with a heavy heart because I already know my testimony, like everyone else's, will not change the decision that has already been made. The message is clear regarding the value of education in the state of Hawaii: it matters little compared to the potential profit that can be made from offshore millionaires and billionaires.

I work for the Department of Education as a Behavioral Health Specialist. It is my job to provide behavioral supports as well as social and emotional support to 504 and IEP students. In order to even qualify for this position, I am required to have a master's level education. Additionally, I am in the process of receiving my Mental Health Counselor license, which will further the level of qualifications and expertise I bring to my position.

Once these furloughs go into effect, I will suffer financially. Already, my income from the DOE qualifies as "low income" compared to the cost of living in the state. As I live on my own and am fully supporting myself, my cost of living is high and as it is, I can hardly afford it. I don't go out to restaurants, I don't drink alcohol, I use my air conditioning sparingly and my recreational activities all have to be below a certain price point. Not only is daily living hard, but as someone who works in a difficult field, I often deal with children who are suicidal or living in unsafe homes, which is an incredible emotional burden. As things are right now, I don't even have the resources to take care of myself and make sure that I am healthy enough to continue to do my high stress job.

And that is just my position. I genuinely feel that teachers are treated even worse. This year the DOE has put their teachers through hell and back. The refusal to commit to a reopening plan, to honor the teachers labor, to value teachers lives, to recognize the swaths of unpaid labor already happening at exceedingly high rates PRIOR to the pandemic should be criminal. What separates these teachers jobs from being a paid position to being a personal financial liability? When does teaching go from a viable career in the state of Hawaii to being a volunteer position that actually causes people to come out with a financial loss?

Scheduling furlough days on teacher work days such as January 4th, February 12th, March 22nd, and June 1st sends a clear message to teachers that they are expected to work for free on those days. Unless, of course, your expectation is that they use the following school day to do their planning and prep while the students sit silently and wait while maintaining a 6 foot distance from one another. I can't imagine that this is what you had in mind.

A decision to make this large of a financial cut to an industry that was already struggling is both ethically inexcusable but also financially unwise. I am sure you recall when a furlough was made in 2008 and the state of Hawaii lost 1,000 teachers because of it. And then I am also sure that you recall when the residual teacher shortage caused you to have to recruit mainland teachers at higher salary rates in order to fill the gaps that you had created. It has to be obvious that the state of Hawaii comes out with a financial loss in a situation like this. Studies have clearly demonstrated that financially investing in children and education yield \$7 for every \$1 invested. This is because preventative interventions are far more effective and cost friendly than things like paying for inmates at the jail, paying for hospital beds from teen suicide attempts and paying for foster care programs to have children removed from dangerous homes. Not taking care of children and families comes at a price.

This crisis is actually a huge opportunity to restructure the backwards priorities that this state has held for too long. Kids need something to live for in Hawaii. They need a future to care about. Right now, they know they have nothing to work for on these islands. They can either choose between service industry jobs where they are treated poorly by tourists and fulfill no real passion of theirs, or they can choose a state job, where they will continually be treated like they do not matter and like they deserve to live in poverty.

Every decision you make to affect an adult's working environment directly affects the children of the community. By making this decision you have decided to take money, safety, resources, support, and more away from children. Our keiki deserve the best of what we have, not the table scraps left over once the billionaires have had their way.

How many state employees live below the poverty line in your state? How many children are you forcing into poverty with one swift decision? I can't even imagine how many. How many of the people MAKING this decision will be forced to live

without, to leave the state, to cut their power, to lose their homes because of this decision? None. Because no reasonable person would actually do this to themselves. In order to make a decision like this you have to dehumanize all of the ones you are doing it to.

Well I would like to remind you that we are all human. And we matter.

There is no question that I will be leaving my position at the end of the school year. Even before the pandemic I knew this was my last year because the DOE has treated me poorly the entire time I've been a part of it. I spent the first year and half of my time with the DOE working three positions and being paid for one. I've already given my fair share of free labor. Simply by becoming a therapist in the private sector, I will triple if not quadruple my income. And I will likely have to work less hours per week to do so. I am good at what I do, I absolutely love my kids, but I cannot do this work if I cannot survive.

I wish you the best of luck regarding the consequences of these decisions,

Heather



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Rhonda Comet <rhondacomet@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:09 PM

I am writing in regards to furloughs and it's impact on our community. Teachers are the only stable positions that help our keiki. I do not understand how an economy can reduce income on the most important positions communities have for everyone.

If furloughed the economy will be stymied even more until tourists begin returning. I am a special education teacher that will have my income cut from differentials so even more cuts via furloughs will mean that I can not afford housing on Maui anymore. I will transfer my license to Arizona and leave. I just got tenured, so my situation is better than most. We have awesome teachers that will be leaving with great experience and knowledge.

This is a mistake, it is illegal as per our contract, degrades our communities especially our keiki, and will cause harm to our education system as a whole. We were just starting to recover from 2009 and Governor Ige, and other government officials make the same amount of money. Why? Keiki are at risk here. Proves there is no carry for the community. It makes me sad and depressed.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jade Santos <santosjade06@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 4:13 PM

My name is Jade Santos - a teacher in Central District and I am writing on general business item regarding teacher furloughs.

When covid shut schools down - teachers made their homes a school and virtually taught kids when no one knew how to do it.

When schools went back to its building - teachers figured out how to do it as safe as possible even when they became the front lines!

When the state is only allowed to be with their household / 5 people, teachers have classrooms full of students!

Teachers have been deemed essential and have done everything to prove that, yet now are being furloughed?!

There has to be another way! We need to get creative and figure out how to service our already behind kids!

Furloughs mean less money than we already have! More bills to decide between paying!

More stress, more debt, more retiring, and all the while less teaching!

Leaders...Pls do better! Pls be better!



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Liz Light <lizzardlight@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:29 PM

Dear Board Members,

I am submitting this testimony to outline my extreme disappointment that such an atrocious act could be committed against teachers, ESPECIALLY this school year.

This has been, arguably, the hardest year of teaching any teacher has ever had. Not only were we asked to learn a new way of teaching basically overnight, but now we are teaching online, in person, and everything in between. Those of us teaching in person, especially us SPED teachers who were not given the choice of staying online, are also being asked to risk our own personal safety, as well as the safety of our family each day by coming in to work.

As if all of this was not stressful enough, our principal let us know that our school is taking massive hits to the budget next year that will cost us both positions and resources. Another blow to our morale.

Finally, you want to impose furloughs and pay cuts on us, further demoralizing an already burning out population. You want us to take on bigger classes due to these budget cuts, and on top of that you want to cut our pay significantly and furlough us? More work, less pay, less resources. That is not a sustainable model. At what point does the love of teaching not become worth it anymore? Ask yourselves, would you stay?

Every day I go to work to see my favorite people on the planet: my students. How can I continue to give them the educational experience they deserve with dwindling resources, personnel, SCHOOL DAYS, and support? How long can I take the emotional abuse of the constant budget cutting, pay cutting, and now furloughs? Studies have shown that stress is contagious- meaning, if we, as teachers, are stressed, our students will suffer with us. Our students deserve better.

I knew several teachers who were thinking of leaving based on the chaos COVID caused in schools alone. How many more do you think will leave because of these furloughs? Is that a risk you are willing to take?

Thank you for your consideration.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furloughs

1 message

Lane Yanagisawa <lyanagisawa61@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:33 PM

Are you working on your furlough days?
Why should I?

--

Lane Yanagisawa



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Carol Madruga <carolamadruga@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:35 PM

Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Carol Madruga and I am a math teacher at Kapa'a Middle School on the island of Kaua'i. I am writing in response to the recently announced furloughs. These furloughs negatively impact me and my family. I was out on maternity leave from September 30th to December 11th. This maternity leave forced me to use my sick leave and go on leave without pay. My first week of being back on campus I hear that we are being furloughed six days next semester. This is a large pay cut that I cannot afford. My family strategically planned out losing pay for my maternity leave and we cannot handle the burden of an additional six days pay cut with no notice like this. These furloughs are a complete violation of our contract.

Carol Madruga



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Michelle Santos <michisantos89@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:03 PM

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

Testimony

To the board of education. This is my annual and/semi annual plea to you all to please treat teachers with the respect that we deserve. I feel like even though I put my job first, other people's children first, before my own children and family, before my own health, no one cares about me. I have a child who is special, I have a US veteran, and two elderly parents that I help to care for and support. I've asked for a deferment for my mortgage only to be told I will have to pay 3 months worth of mortgage in one lump sum. I get to monetary assistance because I don't qualify. My second income, tutoring afterschool, was taken away due to our current circumstances and now furloughs will take even more money away. I'm afraid of losing my home and not being able to afford supporting my family. I risk my life and my family's lives every day going to work. I don't understand how my contract can be illegally broken, how teachers are always the first ones to be sacrificed, and how incredibly undervalued we are with what we've had to make work and excel with our students with little to no help from the BOE. We are the front line working our hearts out day in and day out and again we get punished. Please, do not furlough us. We already had to accept we don't get raises in our new contract. Many amazing teachers will leave. Many students will fall farther behind. Many students hearts will not be cared for by their teachers because they'll be gone or will get lost in the big classes. Please do not furlough teachers. We're already sacrificing staff due to budget cuts.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony from a teacher who cares

1 message

Sheri Frye <sfrye737@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:16 PM

Please work to protect our positions as public educators. We are already working above and beyond to provide meaningful educational experiences for our students in this extraordinary time of a global pandemic. The superintendent has already announces our first furlough to be Jan. 4 which is a teacher work day to prepare our classrooms to reopen for the Blended Rotational schedule. This is a huge transition and most teachers are already working beyond paid class hours to make sure we have everything ready to go. Our goal is to make this transition as smooth as possible for our students. It has been a devastating year for us all; both students and teachers. I wish she would have considered working with us to choose more appropriate days for furloughs, if that is our destiny. The first day for teachers to prepare and the 2 Mondays impacts half our students. Fridays would be more appropriate because our school will still be implementing Distance Learning on Fridays.

Then it is a concern about a community that is already struggling to survive. I have a family to support with only my income as an educator. My mom is a retired elderly, my 2 adult children have been laid off due to Covid since last March. And we have twin 11 year olds to support as well. We cannot afford to lose even \$1 of my current pay. I know many of my peer teachers who are in similar boats of economic hardships in our families. Have mercy.

Please consider furloughing the administrators of the public school system on a rotational basis. Save the Teachers so we can save the Children!



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

SH 77 <silverhonu77@hotmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:23 PM

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

To the Esteemed Members of the Board of Education,

Do more with less.

I hadn't begun my teaching career yet at the last teacher strike, but my mother, an elementary school teacher on Maui, walked the picket line. I did get to experience working through the embarrassment of Furlough Fridays and the rounds of Directed Leave Without Pay.

I'm about midway through my teaching career, and I can honestly say that this job has never been harder. I teach high school and my students are icons lined up in squares in a Google Meet. I toggle between my instruction and monitoring the chat, hopping in and out of Breakout Rooms. I'm staring at screens all day: I usually have 2 or 3 going at a time. I have to remind myself to sit up straight, take a break, walk around. My optometrist had to adjust my prescription yet again.

I spent the first several weeks feverishly building up my Google Classroom and stocking it with an arsenal of cherry-picked reference material, essential curriculum, and home-made video tutorials, while also providing instruction, and planning, and grading, and following up with guardians, counseling, and administration.

Given everything they are faced with, my students have been amazing. They show up for our daily Meet, pop-in virtually to ask questions as needed, and email regularly with questions.

None of these responsibilities will disappear just because the State says, "Teachers, on these days you will take DLWOP." All I see is that time I **need**, time I require to do my job to the best of my abilities, time that is already minimized and marginalized, and not enough, is yet again *reduced*. I'll still have the same bills, responsibilities, and expectations laid on me. Our students pushed ever more quickly out the door.

Do more with less.

Please preserve education funding and protect our teachers and our keiki.

Mahalo,

Mrs. Anjanette Naganuma,
Lahainaluna HS, Maui

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

ellis.leilani@gmail.com <ellis.leilani@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:27 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Leilani Yamauchi and I am a First Grade teacher at Waihe'e School on the island of Maui. I know that the governor has said that budgets need to be met and so he decided that furloughs and budget cuts to the most important people (teachers) were necessary. Please let me tell you why I don't think this a smart choice.

We were recently sent furlough tentative dates. I noticed that some days were originally teacher work days. They were teacher work days because these days come before returning to school after a long unpaid break or at the end of the year where we know teachers will need to work in their classroom. This saddens me because teachers already put in enough of our own time or our family's time for work. We deserve to be paid for our time and turning these days into furlough days only shows how much we are taken for granted.

Most of us already make the bare minimum because so much of our money is taken for medical or other dues. If you add furloughs to our already small income, I'm sure most of us are looking at a huge loss to income. Some may have even entertained thoughts of another professions and these people are teachers we cannot afford to lose. D

We love what we do. We do what we do for our students because we truly care. We raise future leaders, medical workers, presidents, and even you (the person reading through my testimony). Our society would not exist if not for teachers. After all, how did you learn how to read? How to write? How to identify numbers? And yet still, teachers are the first people to face furlough and budgets cuts.

Please reconsider. Let's find another solution. Let's listen to people who have other ideas in where we can save money. Do this for Hawaii's future. Our students.

Mahalo for your time.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Shelby Stern <shelby.desilva@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:38 PM

To: Hawaii Board of Education

My name is Shelby Stern and I am a 4th grade teacher at Pohakea Elementary School in Ewa Beach on O'ahu. I am testifying on 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. This year has been the toughest year of my life and my career to put it lightly. I have never endured more daily struggles than I have in this school year alone, from fully revamping my curriculum and how I deliver instruction to finding time to provide feedback to each student to trying to find the necessary time for self care.

However, what came as the hardest blow was the news we were delivered last week regarding furloughs and the pay cuts that we would be taking as a result. I don't think there's ever been a time where I have felt more unappreciated than I did in that moment. I've felt a range of emotions in the past week spanning from anger to panic to sheer anxiety and feeling like I was about to jump out of my own skin with the worry of how my husband and I would make ends meet when my income, the income we rely the most on, is dramatically reduced. As two native Hawaiians who were born and raised in Hawaii, our home, the place where we are so deeply rooted-we worry about being able to keep our home which we were able to purchase just two short years ago; we worry about being able to take care of emergencies if they come our way, etc. I've woken up every day since the announcement of furloughs gripped with anxiety and yet I still go to school each day to teach my kids because they need me.

The keiki in Hawaii need their teachers and they need good, caring, qualified teachers in their classroom showing up for them every day. I cannot stress enough how awful these furloughs will be for the teaching profession in Hawaii. We were just beginning to address the teacher shortage that we have and I can assure you that we are going to have a mass exodus of teachers who are either 1) retiring or 2) leaving because they just cannot make it here anymore. Who will teach our keiki when the teachers are all gone? Unqualified subs? Teenagers fresh out of high school?

Enough is enough. Teachers advocate for our students day in and day out, even when we hardly have it in us to keep going ourselves. It's time for the BOE to put their foot down and advocate for the teachers of Hawaii and push back against furloughs. Testimony has been given many times this year and we have been breezed over as if our voices have been muted. Do not let us be muted on the issue of furloughs.

Help us help our students,

Shelby Stern



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Deneva McGill <deneva84@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:39 PM

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

Testimony:

To Whom It May Concern:

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 writing this testimonial in regards to the purposed furloughs for educators. I am alarmed that furloughs for teachers are part of our state's plan to financially recover from the global pandemic. Our state already has a severe teacher shortage. I found the following paragraph in an NEA article, "*According to the Department of Education, Hawaii's school system experienced a shortfall of 1,029 qualified teachers for the 2018-2019 school year, 352 of which were in the area of special education. Overall, more than 60,000 students are not taught by a qualified teacher each year*". If we continue with teacher pay cuts and furloughs we are going to lose many of the qualified teachers we currently have and make it more difficult to attract new teachers to the profession. I personally will not be able to remain in this state. I will have to move home to Washington. As it is I am barely making ends meet. Many of the teachers I work with have to have second jobs or side direct sales businesses to make enough to support their families. If we lose teachers now we will be starting next year with an even bigger teacher short fall. Leaving more than 60,000 children without qualified teachers. Education should never be where the state makes up deficits in the budget. If teachers are essential to getting back to normal than treat us as though we are.

The proposed furlough schedule is taking away our teacher work day before students return from Winter Break. When are teachers supposed to prep for the next quarter? You are expecting teachers to do what they have always done and prep outside of paid hours because we love our students and want to do the very best for them that we can. This is a disgusting abuse of teachers. We are expected to do the same amount of work for less pay. This is especially unethical given that for many schools students may be returning to face-to-face instruction after the break. So now teachers are expected to figure out how to teach some students face to face, some students blended, and some students completely online all without time to prep. This year has bought intense challenges for teachers to transition from in person school to digital school. We have all risen together and again spent countless of unpaid hours learning how to best teach our students. By taking away our planning days it will greatly impact student learning.

I urge you to reconsider taking money from the Education budget. You are only hurting our children by doing this.

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/hawaii-educators-tackle-teacher-shortage-ambitious-5-year-plan#:~:text=The%20teacher%20shortage%20in%20Hawaii,country%20in%20teacher%20turnover%20rate.&text=According%20to%20the%20Department%20of,the%20area%20of%20special%20education.>

Link to article I referenced

Deneva Broughton- Neiswanger



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Briana Sabado <sabado.briana@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:45 PM

As a new teacher of 5 years, a new mom, I never had the time to take extra PD courses. My family is insured under me for our insurance plan, which already takes a huge chunk out of my paychecks. Basically, I already don't get paid a lot. It's factual that Hawaii's teachers are 49th worst paid of our entire country and we are the most expensive to live in. I've worked hard during this entire covid pandemic to make sure that my students receive the education that they deserve and need, despite the circumstances. Teachers work hard to provide that for students and it is so very sad that our work is not valued or appreciated. I need not only a living wage, but a wage that correlates with the responsibility and hard work and effort that goes into our job. There is no reason that education is mandatory for students but we pay teachers the worst salary? and to take away a huge chunk of money on top of that involuntarily? it's wrong on so many levels and it's not wonder that the turnover rate for teachers is so high. This state makes it hard for teacher to stay in this profession. Good teacher that love what they do and are good at it, are hard to come by.

Briana Zamoras



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Planned furlough for public school teachers.

1 message

Merrill Ranken <merrill.ranken@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:46 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I am a 5th-grade teacher at Pōmaika'i Elementary in Kahului Maui. I am submitting testimony to request the BOE find a way to limit or omit furlough for public school teachers.

Our students have already been negatively impacted in their cognitive, emotional, and social well-being by extended school closure.

Now, we receive word we are to be furloughed on top of that. Particularly shocking is the first furlough day of January 4 which is a teacher workday. The DOE knows full well that teachers HAVE to work on this day to prepare for the new student blended models beginning on January 5 and 6. Placing a furlough on this day is like a slap in the face- "we know you will work on this day because you are dedicated professionals so we'll make it a furlough day so we don't have to pay you for your work."

That is just so disheartening, after all the extra hours and added responsibilities and soul searching that has been asked of us this school year.

I ask the BOE to find an alternative to meeting budget shortfalls, not on the backs of teachers and students.

Merrill L. Ranken, MEd.

--

"Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later." Og Mandino



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony-School furlough proposal

1 message

Brad Kusunoki <bradkusunoki@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:49 PM

Testimony regarding

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 Board Members,

My name is Brad Kusunoki and I am the school counselor at Alvah A. Scott Elementary School. I am writing to please help me because the upcoming furloughs and cut in pay will have a significant negative impact on myself, my family and my students at my school.

My wife and I are both educators in Hawaii schools and we have two young children ages 4 and 1. We live paycheck to paycheck and I constantly worry about how I will be able to afford all the things my family needs. We both are seriously planning to leave education and possibly move out of Hawaii to a state that is more affordable. At this point, it also seems that paying for college for our children in fourteen years will be impossible.

At my school, I give everything I have to take care of the social and emotional well being of my students. I know that many of them depend on me and look up to me as a father figure because many of them do not have one. I want to be there, but the situation with my family takes priority, so I may need to abandon my students. I also know that I would not be the only one, as many of my colleagues at my school will be forced to strongly consider career changes as well. With a possible mass exodus of teachers, our public school students will get another first hand experience of a trusted adult quitting on them.

I am begging you all to help save us. I understand we are in a pandemic and the worst economic crisis of this generation, but please do anything you can to help the people of Hawaii to survive.

Very respectfully,

Brad M. Kusunoki



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Unacceptable

1 message

Angela Kan Hai <cn3angel14@icloud.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:50 PM

Aloha I am a special education preschool teacher I am deeply concerned about the issue of our furlough how do you expect Hawaii teachers to make a living I almost have to pack my family up and move to another state because I can no longer afford to be a teacher a certified special education teacher in the state of Hawaii we need to have support we need to know are we essential workers or are we not are we important to the state of Hawaii or are we not having us take furloughs is ruining our children is ruining our families ruining the morale of teachers !! Aloha Hawaii another qualified teacher has been pushed out of her home because of the Governor's ridiculous decision!!!Angela Kan Hai

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Concerned Educator <concernedhawaiieducator@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:56 PM

Chair Payne and the Hawaii Board of Education,

As teachers, we know that many of our students need the stability and predictability that school provides. Amid a pandemic, when our students need predictability more than ever, the DOE has made it near impossible for teachers to provide this. From the last-minute pivot in the start date to the confusion about opening metrics, lack of proper supplies, and the ever-changing guidance documents it's no wonder that we teachers are working harder than ever to meet the most basic demands of our job description.

I am a special education teacher on Maui and I am testifying today that the recent actions and decisions of the HIDOE leadership has me considering not returning to the classroom.

I began this school year wondering if I would receive the stipend pay promised to me when I entered my 20-21 teaching contract. I am thankful that the proposed cut was not approved. This was followed by debates about whether or not schools could safely open. The HIDOE leadership stood before the BOE promising that schools had proper PPE despite the hundreds of teachers testifying otherwise. The metrics for school openings were set, then changed, and the Health and Safety Handbook is now on version 13. Hundreds of teachers continue to testify about a lack of telework and ongoing unsafe practices, but again the HIDOE leadership reports to the BOE that all procedures are being followed and the kuleana for these decisions rests at the school and/or complex level.

Now, at a time when our nation is facing the worst COVID surge to date and many of our islands are experiencing community spread, the HIDOE is forcing teachers and staff back into the classroom. I am faced with having to go to a campus that is non-compliant with several major mitigation measures. I consider the practices so unsafe that I have chosen to keep my child at home. Others I work with have made this same decision not to send their own children to school. I have spoken up many times to the school leadership and asked for change. I have been assured that the CAS has approved the practice of allowing students to change classes without sanitizing desks or shared spaces between student use and that it is okay for students and teachers to be in cohorts of 200+ because changing the students' schedules would be too daunting and disruptive.

The true disruption this quarter was the two weeks that my campus had to be shut down when a positive COVID was discovered. Not only did the case send 6 teachers and many more students into mandatory quarantine, but non-quarantined teachers were asked not to come to their second jobs, and non-quarantined students were excluded from sports practice due to their affiliation with a campus that the community knows has unsafe mitigation practices. Since this incident, no changes have been made to increase the success of contact tracing or limit the impact that a high number of close contacts causes.

Amid the uncertainty about if or when we teachers will end up quarantined again, the HIDOE has created more chaos by taking what little planning and collaboration time we had left. This year, all teachers on our campus lost their normal planning period so that class sizes could be smaller and spread out. We now

teach 6 class periods a day and have to plan for and provide both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Every teacher on my campus is already sacrificing their personal time for this job.

Teacher work days are essential for preparing grades, providing feedback, and creating safe and inviting classroom spaces. By furloughing us on non-student days, the HIDOE leadership is banking on the fact that we teachers will still be professional in our job and perform these necessary tasks.

So now, to date in the 20-21 school year, I have experienced the following: threat of a \$10k stipend cut, unsafe work environment, ever-changing guidelines, EES evaluations, teaching more classes, holding more IEP meetings, increased work expectations, and NOW furloughs that have not been properly negotiated with my union. The HIDOE has asked a whole lot of professionalism out of me, but does it sound like I am being treated like an advanced degree, licensed professional in return?

I write with honesty today because I am one of the lucky ones. I do not depend on my DOE paycheck to ensure I can put food on the table for my children. I have many options for other work and teaching positions outside the DOE. I chose to teach in the DOE because I enjoy serving the community I live in and advocating for our most vulnerable keiki. However, at this time, the negative impact on my health and safety as well as the impact this situation has had on my family outweighs my desire to continue in my teaching position.

If the HIDOE leadership does not pivot quickly to improve our working conditions, then I will be resigning from my position and returning to work in the private sector. I know I will not be alone as many of my colleagues have also expressed that they are planning to leave the DOE if improvements are not made quickly.

Mahalo for your time in considering these serious issues that affect the health, safety, and stability of our schools and our community.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Michelle Heaviside <michellemybell3333@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:02 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Furloughs will definitely affect my life and my families life. It will affect my income and may be financially unstable after. I don't know if I'll be able to pay all our bills. I also believe that taking away days from the students is not beneficial especially in the special education Department. I am a special education teacher and I don't know how I would do my job justice to my students and teaching them and to the quality of the writing of my IEP's. Normally I'm the kind of teacher that I would work at home on my own during the furlough but I refuse to do that I'm not gonna put in all the extra work when we keep getting so much taken away from us. I have been working harder than I've ever had to work in my life The students and teachers will suffer from having furlough days.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Warren Hyde <whyde808@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:04 PM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony in opposition for Action Item VI.B: Board Action on Superintendent's Evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year: Superintendent's Priorities and Strategic Plan Indicator Targets

Dear Board of Education,

During Christina Kishimoto's tenure, student achievement and outcomes has not been the focal point for DOE. Trendy terms with innovation, school design, and voice took center stage allowing schools to drop standards based instructional materials and adopt non-rigorous Acellus. Christina Kishimoto has identified two priorities, (1) Decreasing access gaps and (2) decrease the language arts gap.

1. In 2013, the DOE began its 1:1 initiative and by 2017, the 1:1 initiative was already a success. Using this as a target when schools have been in device replacement cycles, one would expect Kishimoto to choose a target that addresses the outcome of student performance.

2. The DOE has an entire data division for over a decade that has illustrated the inconsistency between grade marks and summative (SBA and/or HSA) marks. The Longitudinal Data System (LDS) uncovers the inconsistent grading by teachers statewide that are not aligned to the standards based assessment students take every Spring. Students that score A, B, or C in Language Arts, and Meets Proficiency (MP) in Reading at the elementary levels regularly are not proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Spring assessment. Kishimoto states, "In lieu of assessment data, the Department will use grades for student achievement." This is outrageous.

In an earlier BOE meeting, Board members were briefed on the universal screener data. The Board should use data that is consistent and continue to use the data from the universal screeners. Schools screened students in the beginning of the school year, mid year, and at the end of the year. I implore you to look at the same data you already were briefed on. Grades are arbitrary, inconsistent and inflated because Kishimoto does not value standards based education and grading. Hawaii has approximately 50% of students not proficient in ELA, however, they receive A, B, C or MPs on their report cards while they are below proficiency on the Spring assessment. Furthermore, with Kishimoto's approval of the use of Acellus until the end of the school year, findings of the review state Acellus is non-rigorous and below standard, however we will still honor the Language Arts credit and a passing grade. Shame on Kishimoto.

Christina Kishimoto appears to have chosen targets with the intention to manipulate the Board of Education and the public to enhance her resume for her next gig. Christina Kishimoto is disrespectful to the citizens of Hawaii, especially the children of Hawaii proposing self-preserving targets. Hawaii needs someone homegrown who is vested in our community that will do the hard work of increasing the capability of our society instead of the catchy, quick win, and self-preserving actions of the last three and a half years. It's time to bid Aloha Oe Kishimoto.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

W. Hyde



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jonathan Hinderer <jonhinderer@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:06 PM

Good evening Distinguished Members of the Board,

I am Jonathan Hinderer, a public school teacher of 6 years at Leilehua High School.

These proposed furloughs erode all 6 years of pay increases I have received thus far. I have a Master's degree and very sellable skills, which has led me to seek other employment opportunities with several offers pending.

With these furloughs, the students are the only ones that lose. I have to rethink my free time on the weekends, and thus have to quit coaching debate at my school. I am also the 2nd Vice President of the Hawaii Speech League, which organizes all speech and debate activity in the state, and I will have to leave that too.

I am 4 weeks behind on content and it will only grow with these furloughs. The children are unprepared for life after high school.

Last but not least, If the Governor and the Department of Education want to make these furloughs all about the money, then that's all this job will ever be; all about the money.

This is our finest hour. The children deserve heros, and we need to stop this for them. Fight with us, you won't regret it.

Very respectfully,
Jonathan Hinderer

JONATHAN A HINDERER, MEd.
Leilehua High School
Social Studies Teacher
Speech and Debate Program Director
808-687-0339
jonhinderer@gmail.com



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Erin Noel <eahnoel@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:11 PM

Testimony

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.

The proposed furloughs are guaranteed to have a significant negative impact on my family both financially and emotionally. At a 2-teacher household my husband and I already scrimp, save, and stick to a tight budget in order to remain teaching on Kauai in the community we respect and care about. Having both of our incomes slashed will put further strain on us financially. As we have sat down to discuss the implications we have both felt extreme emotional responses ranging from anxiety to depression. This is on top of wondering if we will even have jobs at all next year or if we are one of the estimated 1,000 educators who will have our positions cut.

We continuously put on brave faces for our students and show up each day, whether virtually or in person, giving 100% of our energy to making a positive impact on our students' lives. How long can we keep up the brave face when conditions keep worsening and we are fearful not only of the pandemic but of first losing a large chunk of our income and then possibly, if our positions are cut, our entire income in months to come? We strive to instill in students the values of kuleana, ho'ihi, and perseverance by modeling these in our words and actions; however, students see and hear that public education is getting trampled on and question whether living these values actually pays off. This is not the message we should be sending the future of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Erin Noel



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Vanessa Picon <vanessa.picon@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:12 PM

Aloha,

I am writing regarding the teacher furlough days that have been approved and will soon go into effect. I urge you to reconsider if these changes are necessary. Many teachers will be negatively impacted. For some employees days off without pay will put them in a tough position. After everything that we have endured as educators this school year I question if being furloughed is the only option.

Please consider other options.

Thank you,

Vanessa Knoepfel (2nd grade teacher)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

DW Ab <dabuel247@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:20 PM

Aloha,

Thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Dwayne Abuel, teacher/tech at Highlands Intermediate. I am writing to inform you of the conditions that we teach in and to let you know that the pressure is too much.

Although I am a licensed teacher, the area I teach in, although I have much experience from the private sector and in school, I am no longer considered highly qualified due to some change that had happened. Many of us whom we teach have now become not highly qualified. But this is the start of it all. We have to take course, keep the tech running in school, address teacher tech needs and training and still be able to do our own teaching. In the pandemic, although we are all essential, our position, although important to the situation, is always at risk of being cut. The stress of that kind of thought by many of the leadership is hard to swallow. Band and many electives are under the same situation of possibly getting cut, some hear the cut threat every year. It is already insulting that we get a letter that tells parents we are not qualified even though we have many years of experience. Now furloughs when we are already under so much pressure. This is a hardship for my personal life trying to pay off bills, take care of my wife as she is no longer working thanks to this pandemic. A lot of us face the same kinds of woes. This furlough is a further insult. I can only feel that we are not that important. I have an underlying condition with a note from my doctor to work from home due to the risk. Everyday I go to work, with the kinds of kids in school, if parents knew/know of them kinds of kids coming and how they do not follow the rules of wearing masks and keeping a distance, no parent in their right mind would send their kids. No one comes down tomorrow level and observes what is going on. No one has asked us what is going on and what is happening with us. We were forced into work, forced to watch all kinds of training videos, given two days to three days of trying to put up a year's work from our curriculum and try to get everything working without much practice. On top of that adjusting and readjusting to changes made from the top. So many have had paralysis due to stress while trying to run a course. We all had our moments. We took it and we tried to keep a good attitude. The breaks did not seem long enough because we are forced to help students evenings, weekends, and still have to attend courses and collaborate and attend other meetings. I and many others are burnt out. Many of us who are closer to retirement want to retire and not have to face this any more. It is exhausting. Even with mental help, it is not enough to really keep us going. We cannot afford the cost of that kind of help. Even when insurance kicks in, we are still paying \$100 out of pocket for medical help/psychiatric help. The vaccine cannot come anytime soon. Even with this first round some of us like me cannot get this first round due to our specific allergies and severe allergic reactions. It is just too scary and mentally exhausting. Please hear us! Please understand us! Please come and see the conditions without anyone masking the reality. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,

Dwayne Abuel
Teacher/Tech



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Chrisna Woo <chrisnawoo@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:23 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Having furlough days are going to affect our students especially the sped students who need all the academic days so we can continue to teach them since many of them have been affected by this pandemic. We as a teacher don't want any more academic days being taken away from our students so they can continue to progress in their reading, writing, and math.

Also, having furlough days is going to hurt my family because my husband just lost his job right before Thanksgiving. His employer Menehune Water Company refused to pay him his family leaves so they claimed my husband didn't want to take the drug test and covid test while on his family leave. Unpaid leave is going to hurt our family's tight budget having only one family income which is my sped teaching job.

Two of my children are still in school so they need every academic day because taking away their right to learn on those six furlough days is going to hurt them academically more since this pandemic negatively affected their learning during the fourth quarter of last school year and now negatively affecting their behaviors learning online.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

Jaclyn_96792@yahoo.com <jaclyn_96792@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:28 PM

Please rethink the governor's proposal for furloughs for the teachers and the education system this school year. His proposal is as soon as January 2021. It is a shock when told that we are now needing to adjust our finances within a month. Teachers are under contract and the budget was already allocated for this school year. Let's sit and discuss things like the democratic society Hawaii is supposed to be. We fully backed the governor years ago, and sadly many of the unions are ending the year with regret. Just sit and come to the table to discuss, like intelligent people of Hawaii.....governor where is your Aloha? This disrespect for teachers is at the forefront of retiring at the end of the school year. I was one who hoped to work until I dropped because I love what I teach Life is so fulfilling with the children you have had a hand to raise in your community. This disrespect from the system is what is leading me to leave....No Aloha

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Mike Landes <jmlandes@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:28 PM

Testimony re: 12/17 agenda 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 Board members,

My name is Mike Landes, and I am a social studies teacher at Lahainaluna High School and HSTA's Maui Chapter President. I write today on agenda item V.B. This written testimony is in addition to the oral testimony I will be providing at the meeting.

In my oral testimony, I will be speaking to the harm these furloughs will do to my family (where both my wife and I are teachers and will again be forced to suffer a double pay cut), and to the harm furloughs will do to our state's attempt at an economic recovery (as austerity measures naturally harm economic growth). But here, I would like to share my thoughts about the timing of these furloughs.

Not only are these furloughs illegal, violating our current and valid contract which the employer entered into under the state's collective bargaining law - but even if they would have been legal or negotiated, the timing of them is just plain nonsensical. Teachers have been working harder than ever this year: first to completely modify everything we do and convert to a 100% distance-learning model, and more recently to modify everything once again as we convert to a hybrid/blended model where many have to simultaneously teach in-person learners and those joining in remotely. This has been a herculean task, requiring many of my colleagues to do the equivalent of two full-time teaching jobs at one time (and for one paycheck)...and teachers have done it, because that's just what we do. As we approach winter break (a time when many of us recalibrate our instructional methods and materials to prepare for the spring semester, and to grade mid-term exams and projects - not a time of rest and relaxation, despite our wishes and the common misconceptions), many of my colleagues have been informed that they would be required to prepare for increased in-person learning in the spring semester. This requires yet another modification of everything we do to convert our instructional approach again. But once again, teachers resign themselves to doing it, because that's just what we do. And what do we get in return, during the final week before this winter break? The holiday "gift" of slashed pay thanks to illegally imposed furloughs. Unfortunately, for most of us, this will be the gift that keeps on giving.

The furloughs are scheduled to begin on January 4. That is the contractually-required teacher workday between semesters. What exactly does the employer think we do during that day? Clearly, whoever made the decision to schedule a furlough for that day has never taught a day in their lives. Would you ask an attorney to walk into a courtroom without preparing for the case? Would you ask a doctor to walk into the emergency room without scrubbing in and studying the patient's medical history? And would that attorney's client, or that doctor's patient, feel confident about the services they were about to receive? Obviously not. So why on earth would we force teachers to return to the classroom with a new learning model to implement and a new semester of instruction to start, without giving them their day to finalize their plans, make their copies,

rearrange their furniture, and so much more? Does anybody really think that the scheduling will somehow not impact student learning?

June 1 is another furlough day. That's the final day of the school year for teachers. Know what we do that day? That's when we close up our classrooms by packing things into boxes, cleaning up all the items our students have left behind, and moving our furniture so the annual summer cleaning can happen. That's also the one day we have to grade all end-of-year exams and projects and to finalize our gradebooks for the entire year. We have to do all of this on that one day, because it is our last day of work for the year and we have students the day prior. When exactly does the employer think we will do all of that stuff? They must think we'll just come in for free and do it over the summer, because the only other alternative is that they want us to eliminate a day of instruction with our students so we can complete these mandatory tasks before June 1.

And how about the rest of the furlough days? They are student instructional days. What happened to all the concern about the lack of instruction students were getting, and the need for teachers to risk their health and safety by returning to the classroom mid-pandemic to deliver the highest-quality and -quantity instruction possible for our keiki? All of a sudden that's not a concern anymore? Just eliminating student days is now totally fine? It doesn't make any sense at all.

Following through with this illegal furlough plan will have consequences. Students will lose instructional time, both due to the furloughs themselves, and due to teachers having to use instructional time to take care of our mandatory non-instructional tasks. Teachers will refuse to do those tasks for free when we're off-the-clock, and we will refuse to work all of those unpaid hours we always work during evenings, breaks, and weekends. Many teachers will retire early, and even more will quit and find an employer that values them and their service. The DOE will be wishing they only had a shortage of 1000 teachers as in previous years. And those of us who are too far into our careers (and too invested in our communities) to leave, but who are not yet old enough to retire, will fall even deeper into crippling debt. This will be a mess that will take years to clean up...and the students, the teachers, and the community will suffer the consequences. We are better than this. You are better than this. You have the ability to help avoid this mistake.

Mahalo for your time.

Mike Landes
Kihei, HI



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony re: furloughs

1 message

Cai <cai_mir@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:38 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Catherine Davis. I am a special education teacher at Kamali'i Elementary on the island of Maui. This has been a very difficult time for all of our Island families many of whom have lost jobs and the ones that do have jobs are barely hanging on. Now that tourism has started up again some of our parents are being able to go back to work. This is a terrible time to tell them that they will have to inform their employers that they will need time off because their children won't be able to go to school due to the furloughs.

My adult children have not had a jobs for months because of the pandemic and working in the tourism industry. Since I am working, I have been sending them money to help with living expenses. I do not have a lot of extra money but choose to sacrifice for them what I am able to give. If I am put on furlough I will not be able to help them or my grandkids. Everyone is working as hard as they can. All of the teachers at our school had to learn new skills in order to teach in the distance learning model. Now we are being asked to keep children safe at schools and spending numerous hours discussing and designing these safety measures and routines.

The furloughs will hurt our economy, hurt our morale, hurt our community, hurt our children. Please do not do this! Additionally, it is my understanding that HSTA has not negotiated or approved the furloughs. I was trying my best to support our governor during these times of trouble but he now has turned on us. We who have held on, teaching children daily, reaching out to families, on the front lines. And not just teachers many of our state employees have been serving our community at risk to their own health.

I am almost 65 and see children face to face each day. Wearing a mask all day. Supporting parents. Worrying about my coworkers. I have heard teachers talk of leaving Hawaii for jobs in the mainland. We don't want to lose them. Please do not do this thing. Try to keep what little respect we have for you and do the right thing! Be pono!

Respectfully,
Catherine M Davis
Kihei, HI

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Public School Teacher <thinkofthekeiki808@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:43 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am a first-year elementary school teacher on the island of Oahu. I am writing to testify 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.

Back in 2009 where Furlough Fridays were implemented under Lingle's administration, I was a 7th grade student attending a Hawaii public school. I still vividly remember the countless protests at the State Capitol protesting Furlough Fridays because these furloughs will (and now have) negatively impacted educators, families, and students. At that time, classmates around my age were looking forward to Furlough Fridays because it was another day off from school. However, at the ripe age of 13, I knew that Furlough Fridays were a sacrifice that educators, students, and families had to pay. Educators took a 7.9% pay cut and lost 17 instructional days, thus negatively impacting students' quality of education. It did not feel good having that some Fridays off knowing the impact that Furlough Friday caused to Hawaii's public education in the years after those furloughs. Looking back on those Furlough Fridays, was it necessary to create budget cuts to education to save Hawaii's economy from its \$1 billion deficit from the mid-2000 recession? Probably not. After all, there were other avenues the state would've taken to save their economy without jeopardizing the future of Hawaii's public education system.

About a decade later, our state is reaping the negative impacts that Furlough Fridays placed on our educators and students. Hawaii still has not recouped the 1,000 teachers who were lost from the 17 days of Friday furloughs under the Lingle administration. Knowing well that we, as the people of Hawaii, understood and saw the impacts on Furlough Fridays has on teachers and students, why are we back to furloughs after a decade struggling with teacher retention, lack of funding and resources, and failing our students? Yes, we are in a pandemic and it is important to keep the state's economy afloat, but have you folks learned from your mistakes almost a decade ago? You tout that you support public education, but instead you are going opposite of your words when you decide to slash funding to public education, the thing you swore to uphold and protect. Many public-school teachers are working tirelessly juggling with distance learning or hybrid learning. They were thrown into a type of instruction that they were never trained in their years of teaching prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are teachers like me who are first-year teachers that just joined the profession and are juggling not only teaching virtually or hybrid, but also finding their own teacher practice during a pandemic. I find it amusing how you folks boast and cheered how teachers are working hard to find ways to support their students during the wake of the COVID-19 shutdowns, how you folks finally "understood" the labor and love we put into our profession when we planned the rest of the 4th quarter with enrichment activities, and how you folks were overwhelming thanking teachers for their resilience during times. However, when it was time to start the school year without any direction on how to keep students and staff safe in an environment where COVID-19 will be easily transmitted, you folks disregarded our concerns for safety. And now here we are in the present where you folks are threatening pay cuts and furloughs after all the trials and tribulations teachers are currently going through in this pandemic. Frankly and to put it nicely, these pay cuts and furloughs are a big middle finger to all hardworking public-school teachers in Hawaii.

I cannot speak on behalf of all public-school teachers on how the furloughs will affect them, but knowing myself, these furloughs will negatively impact my life. As a first-year teacher, recent college graduate, and a person in my mid-twenties, the roughly 9% decrease in my salary will force me to re-evaluate my dreams for the future. The dreams of paying off my student loans, getting my own apartment, getting married, or even starting a family will be put on hold because I could not afford to chase these dreams. Also, as a child of immigrant parents who are currently struggling because of the pandemic, it will be more difficult for me to continue to support my parents because of this pay cut.

On top of that, I must re-evaluate my decision to remain in this profession. I spend countless hours planning, researching, and instructing for my students during this pandemic and cutting my salary does not justify the effort I have been putting in for my students. I became a teacher because I had hope that I can instill change in the children of Hawaii. The children of our future. The children of the world. I came into this profession knowing that salary is not the greatest, but in the end, teachers are professionals. We had to earn a college degree, go through years of training to get our licensure, and get evaluated for our performance. Yet, if teaching is seen as a profession, then why are we not treated like professionals? We are not martyrs for our state's failures on the economy and social-emotional well-being of the people of Hawaii.

Continuing down this path of destruction to the teaching profession, will lead to more teacher shortages, less resources for student enrichment, and more sacrifices that our children and future will pay for your mishaps.

A wise person once said it is important to learn about history because it will prevent us to recreate the same mistakes. From your announcements about teacher furloughs and lack of support towards teachers, it clearly shows that you folks have not learned anything from the last furlough ten years ago. If you folks continue to furlough teachers, especially during a pandemic, you are doing a great disservice on teachers and students. Think carefully about the impact that these furloughs will have on people's livelihood. Any hardships that will be experienced in the future in the public education realm will be in your hands. Please reconsider these furloughs on education or history will repeat itself again if you do not consider them.

Sincerely,
A public-school teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony from DOE Teacher

1 message

laura walker <pinkpoodle2007@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:50 PM

Testimony from DOE teacher regarding Covid Furloughs

To Whom it May Concern,

I have worked as a school Counselor for the Department of Education in the state of Hawai'i since 2001, nearly 20 years now. Before that I was a waitress, and a single mom on food stamps who worked hard to get my Masters in Counseling Psychology in hopes that I could support myself and my child without being a burden on the state.

Even with my perseverance and Masters degree, I realized that the low pay provided by the DOE did not afford me the luxury of staying on Oahu, which had been my family's home since King Kalakaua was in rule. I decided that I needed to leave my elderly parents and move to the Big Island where I could afford to house my son and myself and one day build our home; which, by the way, I could have never done on Oahu.

I have lived on the Big Island for about 16 years now. I have done my time at a school considered to be hard to fill; I drive many miles each day to get to Kau High and Pahala Elementary School and back each day.

As of last month, I still had not paid off my graduate school loans, but was so sick of there burden, that I decided to pay them off out of my savings at the age of 64... after 19 years!

Since 2001 I have seen furloughs, and tiny raises. I have often felt like the stress was just not worth it, but our last pay increases were truly the best yet and it made me feel like I was being treated like a professional and it made me want to stay on and serve the community. I knew this higher income was going to affect my retirement in a good way.

Well here we are...another bump in the road... another threatened furlough/cut in pay... this furlough, if it happens, will affect my retirement in a bad way... With this decrease in income I wonder how many others in my position are ready to jump ship... If this current idea to cut our pay actually comes to be, I feel it will affect how many of us feel about staying... or not. Perhaps you might want to consider giving us elders a nice little severance package and be done with us.

One way or another I believe cutting our pay will be the catalyst for many of us to leave ... the elders to retire; the younger ones to move one to greener pastures.

Aloha & Mahalo,
Laura E. Walker





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

ms.bollinger.inbox@gmail.com <ms.bollinger.inbox@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:52 PM

This year is my 10th year of teaching with the State of Hawai'i DOE. I have had the privilege of teaching at Moanalua High, Moanalua Middle, Campbell High, Mililani Middle, & Mililani High. I was born and raised on Oahu, and earned my teaching degree at UH. My father is a retired educator, having worked in Waianae and Wahiawa. My father-in-law is a current public school teacher at Olomana, AND I met my husband at Mililani Middle the year the school opened! Go BLAZERS!

NEEDLESS TO SAY, our public schools have a special place in my heart.

Throughout the years I have been honored to teach and connect with a number of students in profound and meaningful ways. Some of my students who are now in their 20s still make it a point to visit and include me in their lives. I know I am only ONE of many educators out there who make a positive impact on our keiki and who regard public schools as dear.

My family of 3 will soon be surviving off of my sole income. Teacher furloughs would therefore be detrimental to my family and others. My husband, an airline employee, was furloughed when Covid first hit, and has been out of work since. Unemployment monies will soon discontinue.

Sadly, we have already started researching a potential move to another state due to our current financial reality. Our desire is to remain rooted in Hawai'i, but we may not have a choice. It pains me to think of leaving my position to a temporary, out-of-state body who will likely view this job as a stepping stone rather than a career.

Speaking of this...

My SPED coteacher is resigning, just in time for winter break. She is a great new hire this year who moved from the mainland to teach in our public schools, BUT has now decided to take another job mid year because she has found better compensation with another employer. TEACHER TURNOVER like this is damaging to our students. I have witnessed this COUNTLESS times at my school. Teaching has become a revolving door.

To exacerbate the situation, our principal has mentioned that BUDGET CUTS will result in fewer teaching positions at our school next year. Fewer teachers will mean an increase in the student to teacher ratio. Already burdened teachers, who have made so many adjustments this year, will be tasked with even more.

Our job as educators has become increasingly HARDER and more STRESSFUL since the start of Covid. And yet, we educators have worked overtime to engage our students with positivity and creativity, adapting to a myriad of new online platforms within unrealistic timeframes. We have so far emerged as successful amidst the impossible. Teachers continue to work tirelessly to deliver the BEST to students, DESPITE all obstacles.

Chipping away at teacher pay will be DETRIMENTAL to teacher morale, and in turn, student morale. Educators already GIVE beyond their resources in every respect... to take away even a little of the little we do have communicates that we have been devalued.

Please reconsider teacher furloughs. After all, some of us were once public school keiki too, now just trying to make a living so we can give back to the schools we love. I've got 20+ more years to go and I would love to serve them here.

Respectfully,

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Tiffany Olivares
8th Grade English Teacher
Aiea Intermediate School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Lory Peroff <loryperoff@waikikischool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 9:55 PM

This is a testimony in response 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.](#)

Last week I received an email from my husband that read simply “bad news”.

It was followed by the announcement by Governor Ige that the state would soon be furloughing teachers. This meant that teacher’s already low income would be cut significantly. Living in a state where my teacher salary barely keeps me afloat, I knew that many teachers, including myself would need to make some very hard decisions in the very near future.

Yes, the news of furloughs is very bad news not only for myself but for teachers, students, and our whole state.

I shouldn’t have been surprised. Due to the pandemic, Hawaii has been essentially closed to tourists. Hawaii’s economy, not particularly diverse, relies heavily on tourist dollars that had stopped flowing into the state. When the state needs to make cuts, historically, education has been at the top of the chopping block.

After the disheartening news, my mind was swimming but my thoughts kept circling back to Mr. Figinski.

It was a story I had heard many times before. A student was kicked out of private school in 8th grade. He was enrolled in a public school in 9th grade where the disciplinary problems persisted. This struggling student then proceeded to fail 9th grade and was forced to repeat. As his behavior worsened he was placed in a special class for “at risk” students. This didn’t help. He started dabbling in petty theft. He was on the road to prison or worse.

During the school year an English teacher, Mr Figinski, recognized something special in this student. While belligerent, Mr. Figinski also noticed the student was articulate and intelligent. Mr. Figinski, undaunted by the student’s bravado, took the time to talk to the student and got to know his interests. Mr Figinski invited the student to try out for the school production of Durango Street. The student accepted and took the starring role. This built the students’ confidence and set him on a new path.

After the play, the student started to apply himself in the classroom. Under Mr. Figinski's mentoring, he graduated his second tour of 9th grade on the Honor Roll. He continued on to finish high school with honors.

Today the student is in his late sixties. He is the father of four, grandfather of 13, and is fighting stage 4 prostate cancer. He is also the founder and president of a company that has helped tens of thousands of middle school and high school boys stay out of trouble through sports.

The student in this story is my father.

I think of all the students like my father who in some small or big way owe their lives to a teacher. In light of the impending furloughs, I wonder how many great teachers in our state, without adequate income to support themselves and their families, will be forced to leave the profession they love and the students they serve? How many of our keiki will lose their "Mr. Figinski"?

Now more than ever our students need "Mr. Figinskis". With the pandemic raging on, students of all ages are suffering. Students are reporting higher rates of depression and anxiety. Local families are scrambling to navigate online learning. Many parents needing to work (sometimes several jobs) to put food on the table have no choice but to leave their children to navigate online schooling without support. Many families have been directly impacted by the virus. Many students have lost loved ones. How, at a time like this, could we possibly furlough teachers?

How long will it take for our state to realize that hurting teachers doesn't just negatively impact teachers alone? The impact of teachers is in every fold of our society. The story above is my father's but it is not his alone. The lives that teachers touch cause a ripple effect throughout our state. My father's story is also the story of countless doctors, lawyers, veterinarians, authors, architects, and perhaps even governors. This story is also my story. Without Mr. Figinski, my father may have gone down a different path and I may not be here today. In a way, I owe my life to a teacher.

Now is not the time to furlough teachers. It is time for our state to stand up for education. It is time for our state to find innovative ways to mitigate budget shortfalls that do not harm our children. Before furloughing teachers it is incumbent that our state explores every possible option. Some viable suggestions I have seen in the media include legalizing marijuana, increase property taxes for luxury second homes, and/or start a lottery system.

It is time that all teachers got paid a livable wage, not endure furloughs that will likely exacerbate Hawaii's teacher shortage in a time when teachers are needed most. When teachers are at risk our entire state is at risk. For the sake of our children, our state and our future, do not furlough teachers.

Lory Peroff, NBCT
Waikiki School
[3710 Leahi Ave, Honolulu, HI 96815](#)
Tel: (808) 971-6900



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jenny Migita <migitaj@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:02 PM

Dear BOE members,

I understand that the economy is in a dire situation. However, there are several points I would like to make about the proposed furloughs.

First, teachers have been working throughout this pandemic. From spring, teachers were creating new instructional materials, providing work for students and giving feedback on that work, sometimes in addition to caring for their own children. Meanwhile some other "non-essential" employees enjoyed an extended vacation. To unilaterally impose a 9% cut across state employees fails to recognize this work, and, in fact, lumps teachers together with state workers labeled as "non-essential." This stands in stark contrast to the "essential worker" status that was conveniently flaunted in order to push teachers to put themselves and their families needlessly at risk in person, in facilities with broken and or non-existent ventilation during an airborne pandemic. These furloughs basically balance the DOE budget cuts that were passed the last time you met, on teachers' paychecks.

Second, I would like to remind the Board that the reason schools had to implement hybrid schedules that drastically reduce instructional time for students is because education and teacher salaries have been underfunded for so long, resulting in teachers often having enrollments of nearly two hundred students each, with classes of over 30 commonplace, rendering physical distancing impossible. Implementing these furloughs will perpetuate this situation. Teachers who can retire are doing so. Those who will no longer be able to afford living in Hawaii are leaving. They are leaving a profession that is clearly no longer valued in the state. What other "essential" workers are getting 9% pay-cuts?

The argument is that teachers do not work round-the-clock like hospitals and prison systems whose workers are excluded from furloughs and pay cuts. Since teachers are no longer a "necessary 24/7 operation," I suppose nobody will mind if teachers don't have a lesson plan, get work graded, post grades, or answer emails because they are teaching classes, sanitizing in between, eating lunch in half an hour, helping students during tutorial after school, and have meetings until 3 or 4 pm? After all, if the contract that teachers are currently working under can be so easily disregarded by their employer, then it stands to reason that the employees, namely, the teachers, may show an equal disregard for said contract and need not fulfill any contractual obligations contained therein.

The truth, as anyone who has ever been or lived with a teacher knows, is that teachers truly are equivalent to those working in a "necessary 24/7 operation." A BBC article (<https://www.bbc.com/news/education-27087942>) says that teachers work around 55 hours a week, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Scholastic article (<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teachers-work-nearly-11-hour-days/>) corroborates this. These hours are comparable to those who have been excluded from furloughs due to their essential "24/7 operation" label, such as firefighters. Without the unpaid overtime that teachers work, there would be no athletics programs, no high school volunteers at any community events, no proms or graduations, and nobody would get an academic letter of recommendation for a scholarship or college.

Finally, the six furlough dates scheduled for 10-month teachers are inadequate to justify a 9% pay cut. Six furlough days out of 98 instructional days barely results in a 6% work hour reduction. The DOE should be asked to clarify this point in detail before this plan is approved. I understand the leadership's desire to minimize the loss of instructional days, since a certain number of days at the beginning of the school year were allocated as training for teachers to implement distance learning. To be clear though, that time was not time lost by students; it was time invested to better their online learning experience to the greatest extent possible this year.

Also, leadership seems so intent on avoiding loss of instructional days that it forgets that if teachers do not have adequate time and support to plan and give meaningful feedback, instruction and student performance will suffer nonetheless. Consider, for instance, the Furlough Friday's year that saw increased student test scores despite decreased instructional time. However, to strip teachers of all planning and work days and then ask teachers to work for free on top of furloughs is unreasonable and downright disrespectful.

If leadership wished to avoid loss of instructional days, then it would have been best to cut the year short at the end of the third quarter in order to conduct this training, rather than having teachers provide optional ungraded enrichment work,

12/16/2020

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during which time no students were allowed to progress academically due to equity concerns. It was apparent from the ongoing situation in Wuhan at that time that this would not be a short term situation.

I ask the Board to please consider these points when deliberating on Thursday. Your decisions will affect public education and the state economy for years to come.

Thank you again for your time.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony of a teacher

1 message

Christian Cahill <ccahill@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:03 PM

I am urging you to prevent furloughs to teachers at this time. The impact it would have on communities and specifically families with keiki. How are schools supposed to provide substantial time to support learners when we cut school days out? How are teachers supposed to have extra time to plan lessons when the state removes those days from our work schedule? Why are we expected to make ends meet when the support is reduced even more than it already is? Where is the respect to our education and dedication to this type of "respectable" career? I keep being asked to hold my head up and work over time while others actually get paid to do so? I implore you to prevent these furloughs to save our community and sanity during these extremely challenging times.

Mahalo,
Michael Cahill

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Gayle Fujita Ramsey <gayle.fujita_ramsey@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:03 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, I am a recently graduated non traditional student in my third career. I decided to go into teaching because there was such a HUGE need for SpEd Teachers and I was curious as to why our graduates were lacking in basic skills needed to perform entry level positions.

This is my third year at a school I have come to love. Although new to being an educator I am not at running a business or what it takes to keep morale up so all benefit, clients, customers, and staff. This proposed furlough will create hardships on educators who have stepped up during this trying time of Covid19. They have spent endless hours learning new ways to educate, provide services, and most of all how to motivate students who are struggling in this new learning environment.

Shame on The DOE for not having mandated students enter into the 21st Century long before Covid19. The lack of technology in schools is heartbreaking and shameful. We are supposed to be preparing our students for College and Career. Today, in any profession, you need basic computer skills. Our students are struggling because we have not focused on teaching these skills in our classrooms prior to Covid19.

This should be a lesson to the DOE. Better prepare our students for what will be expected of them in today's workforce. Not only do they need to develop and maintain executive functions, they need to know how to use technology ethically and with purpose. They need to have a mindset that will overcome all challenges and know that they can problem solve to figure out a solution.

By furloughing teachers you are again committing another terrible mistake. I know I will be hugely impacted by the furlough. My husband has not been able to run our business since March 2020 and we do not think that this situation will change any time soon. This means we have been surviving on our savings and my meager teacher salary. Our savings will be gone by the end of January right when furloughs will begin.

Honestly, my first reaction is to take furlough days as a day off. No work. No IEP reports. No parent calls home. No responses to students who will text me when they need help. No school. nothing nada. The state has decided not to pay me so why should I keep giving so much of myself when what I provide is not valued by them. So easily, they say we are going to furlough you. With no care as to how this will affect us.

I have learned from teachers who went through this before that they still are paid just a bit much more than new teachers and this was determined the last time the State needed to furlough teachers during Lingles' era. How sad. These are the teachers new teachers learn from. These are the teachers who give everything they have to help students and admin. Yet, no one has given back the pay they lost.

Am I going to become those teachers who lived through this before and were not valued? Were expected to still provide the service as if the furlough was not in place? Am I going to bethem now?

My first reaction is to just provide what I can within normal business hours no more. Then I think, is this fair to the students.... and then I see and understand why Those Teachers are still here. Why they still work so hard to provide everything they can. It is because of the students.

Funny, I think - not so funny. Why is it that the teachers care more for the students then themselves. Until they stand up and say enough already this will continue to occur. The pattern is set. Government says they want the best for their children but when it comes time to support educators and schools there is none. Politicians say all the right things when they want to win. When it is time to put their money where their mouth is they suddenly forget what the best is for the children and all their promises.

When furloughs hit it will be devastating to me and my family. Our savings will be gone. How will a stressed out teacher teach? Maybe she will be so stressed that her patience will be nil. Maybe she will be so stressed that her lessons will no

longer be at the higher standards she once held. Maybe she will be so stressed she will no longer care. This if it happens will be a sad day. Teachers need to care about their students. They need to care enough to figure out what they need to learn. When they don't care anymore the quality of the education being provided will no longer exist.

Who is to blame for this you ask? It will be those that made decisions to cut funding for education. It will be those who decided that you are just a teacher there to babysit my kids.. and oh teach them something if you can. It will be those people who do not value what teachers provide and do day in and day out in hopes of helping their students.

It will not be the Teacher's Fault.

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



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

G Pinnow <gpinnow@rocketmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:26 PM

Reply-To: G Pinnow <gpinnow@rocketmail.com>

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

Testimony

Aloha, Can we please look at other ideas to help balance our State budget? Let's problem solve together. That's what we teach our students. Watching our students suffer through this semester is difficult. Thinking of them suffering again through furloughs is anxiety-invoking. My young colleagues are trying to hang on through that 5 year trial period, this is just another thing running against them. Our family, like other Hawaii families, rely on 2 salaries. Both of us work for the Department Of Education. He is 12 months. So what was a couple of days now becomes x2 for our family and even more. I saw the Board of Education Chair on t.v.. She spoke eloquently about how these days are quadrupled for our children, our families, and our whole community's future livelihood.

Geri Pinnow, MEd.

Nathan Pinnow, MEd.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Sherry Robello <sherryrobello@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:30 PM

Aloha,

I am testifying to urge the Board of Education to prevent teacher furloughs.

My name is Sherry Robello and I teach second grade at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School. I am asking the Board of Education and the state of Hawaii to please prevent the unnecessary furloughing of teachers.

Teachers are front line essential workers during this pandemic, who are working daily with students face-to-face. We are risking our health and safety to provide quality education for our keiki. These important and dedicated educators are who Governor Ige wants to furlough?? It is absurd to want to furlough healthcare workers, firefighters, and police officers during the pandemic just as it is absurd to want to furlough teachers and further damage our keiki's education.

I have been teaching for 14 years in Hawaii public schools. I have learned that Hawai'i does not value education or their teachers since I have been furloughed and forced to take pay cuts in an imposed contract from multiple governors. It is sad to think that I have invested my personal time and money in improving my teaching to help my students but the state and governors haven't done the same for its teachers.

Please help to change this trend of putting teachers and students last. We both deserve better.

Mahalo for your time,
Sherry Robello



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Samantha Tomori <samanthatomori@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:40 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dearest Board of Education,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify 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.

My name is Samantha Tomori and I am the School Improvement Coordinator at Kea`au Elementary School on the island of Hawai`i.

I understand the gravity of this unprecedented situation and do not envy the decision before you. While I respect our governor's concern for his fiscal responsibility, particularly when our economy has been impacted as much as it has, I am deeply concerned about the negative impacts these furloughs will have.

As you are well aware, our state is experiencing a teacher shortage and furloughs will only make this worse. I have already lost 6 colleagues by means of retirement or relocation back to their home states, strictly because of our current working conditions. I've never been so distraught by the news of a colleague's retirement. Instead of squealing with excitement for my friend's milestone accomplishment, I'm nauseated by the thoughts of what our school system has become. When a friend with no previous intention of retiring has decided to throw in the towel, I lose hope. Our school was already struggling to fill these voids, and this was before the furloughs were imposed. We can't possibly afford to lose any more good teachers.

If that wasn't dispiriting enough, let's turn our attention to how furloughs will impact the children. In all honesty, I am struggling to write this paragraph. There's nothing to say that you don't already know and words will not give my feelings justice. Just know that these students deserve more, not less, and we cannot give from an empty cup.

Finally, I need to advocate for my community. My husband and I were blessed with job security throughout this pandemic. Our way of paying it forward was by spending our money at local businesses and donating money/goods to those in need. If these furloughs go through, our family will no longer be able to support restaurants, retail establishments, nail salons, bakeries, and craft fairs. Teachers have a positive impact on our community's economy. If teachers stop frequenting these businesses, you can expect more "covid casualties," as we call it when another beloved business closes down.

Thank you for hearing my concerns,
Samantha Tomori



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - furloughs

1 message

Deborah Clevenger <clevenger.deborah@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:37 PM

Aloha BOE,

I am requesting that you protect public education funding by supporting our fight to prevent furloughs.

Furloughs would impact our students' education that is already compromised due to COVID 19. We only see our students twice a week and to enact furloughs would create even more of a deficit of time with students.

I respectfully urge you to support us in the prevention of furloughs.

Mahalo,

Deborah Clevenger,
Waipahu Intermediate School

--

He leadeth me.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Maile French <halia36@hotmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:01 PM

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

I would like to send in written testimony for the general business meeting discussion item V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

My name is Maile French. I am a single mother with full custody of 3 public school children. I work at Central Middle School as a FSC special education teacher. I have been working with students in class since the beginning of the school year who have difficulty wearing masks and social distancing is not an option. I also have students I work with on line teaching them because of their pre existing health conditions. I have spent many many extra hours planning and preparing for home and school learning. I have also had to leave my 3 children home alone to learn on their own.

Furloughs, the effect will it affect me and my children it will be potentially disastrous. I am a single mother on a SINGLE INCOME. My minimal child support has been threatened to be decreased due to covid. I am afraid. I will not be able to provide for my children and potentially loose my home. My daughter is supposed to attend college in the Fall. As a teacher my paychecks have been stretched thin since I had to care for my children alone for the last 18 years. We had cut back a lot throughout the years and have so even more in the last 8 months. I don't know if this will stretch it so thin, it will break. I will need to look at the possibility of another job to supplement my income but I don't know if there will be anything thing that will work for me.

My students at Central Middle school are the most vulnerable and need to have school. They missed so much I am afraid for them as well. They need school for consistency on academics, behavior, and life skills. I also know parents need us. To go to work and to see there children learning and growing. SO many of there outside services have been affected we are finally something consistent for them and help them with some sense of normalcy. Central MS is Such a small school I am concerned there will be NO electives for them next year.

Thank you,

Maile French

Central Middle School

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kamalei Ontai <kontai@pueo.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:10 PM

Aloha nui e ka mea heluhelu,

He wahi leo mahalo ho'i kēia i ka heluhelu 'ia 'ana ka'u wahi leka pokole.

I am thankful for this opportunity to write this letter. I am hereby stating my full opposition to furloughs. I feel strongly that the education system is where we need the most funding. Teachers are already being overworked and underpaid and with this proposition of furloughs it could really be detrimental to our students. Many teachers might choose to leave the profession that is already lacking staff and support.

I am a Kumu Kaiapuni. I teach at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'O Pū'ōhala which is a hawaiian immersion school in Ko'olaupoko, Kāne'ohe. My students have been struggling to keep up with Distance Learning and keep up with learning a new language. They are determined to learn the language of our 'āina and their lāhui. It is difficult with these upcoming cuts to keep them on track with the many many lessons that they need to learn on a daily basis. It is stated in our mission that we as a kula will immerse them in the 'ōlelo Hawai'i as much as humanly possible to provide them with the best education. If these furloughs are allowed this will set up my students for failure. They need school they need education they need 'ōlelo Hawai'i!! There absolutely isn't anything they love more than being able to learn and have fun while learning through our native tongue.

Please kōkua in supporting families, students and teachers so we can provide the best education possible.

'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia
It takes a village to raise a child.

Me ka ha'aha'a
na Kamalei Ontai



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

T Rouse <trrouse808@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:11 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

How many millions of covid relief funds were spent to upgrade PD terrain vehicles? Millionaires flocking to buy coastal estates, and our keiki been deprived of in person education for the last 3 quarters, and we are going to furlough teachers who are already underpaid and give their lives to caring for our next generation, our kids, our most valuable resource? So shame! Find the the money, it's there! Tax the four seasons and the grand wailea, whose guest are spending 800-1000\$ a night, living lavishly while the working class residents in the state are struggling.

Mahalo to whomever spent the time reading this. Pardon my aggressive tone, this is just really upsetting. Happy New Year.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

A'ole Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Margarita Alo-Chu <margarita.alo.chu@hawks.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:14 PM

Aloha kakou

Mahalo for your aloha for all kumu in Hawai'i nei. Aloha...the "cure all" for everything we know and do in Hawai'i. I'm a 20+ year kanaka 'oiwi educator for the Leeward coast schools on O'ahu. I'm currently the science and technology kumu for the Ho'opulapula Academy of Nanakuli High & Intermediate School. Some may feel that what we are seeing this 2020 year is incomprehensible that can cause fear and disrupt the peace of mankind. Some may see that narrow light and highlight ways to make ways for changes.

If Hawaii took a look back before foreign contact, our kupuna were the leaders of academia in the world through navigation of the globe and self sustaining archipelagos with the same number of people we have on our islands today. Since then, our islands and its people have constantly been disrupted by the greed of foreigners wanting to acquire the invaluable resources through; forced settlements of militarism, diseases/pandemics, forced economic advantages of foreign profiteers and a foreign education system the continues to erase the core of what it means to think in balance of the universe and to believe in aloha for all.

When we chose a system that requires education to be sustained through currency, we all lose. This pandemic has taught us that we need to be more like our ancestors and not be so dependent on a system that can cause failure to all but a system that unites us to malama one another. This caring for another begins on the ground level with nourishing of our bodies and making sure that our waters are safe for sustainability. When foreign corporations and businesses, policy makers, foreign people that vote for these politicians, we lose again to foreign ideologies. We all need to work towards living much simpler lives and share what we have in communities that understand a kanaka 'oiwi mindset in aloha.

I believe that this is what teachers should and could bring to our students day in and out instead of what technology has or has not done for them in their current situations. We need new ideas for Hawai'i's future and those ideas are from students that we teach daily. If everyone continues to plague teachers with worries and no aloha for what they do, Hawai'i will lose HUGE! Teachers are at the HEART of every child's heart. Teachers understand everything that happens in the world and they are the very ones that makes the world a better place for students to learn and grow so that students will continue that "way of being." Teachers exemplify values the encompasses what the world constantly needs, Aloha mau a mau!

Please, we don't have to make it so hard that it already is for teachers who are raising the next generations. Aloha our teachers and please support their livelihoods to continue the great work that they were blessed to do for our Keiki.

Malama pono ia oukou ame lesu pu...aloha

Lani Alo-Chu
PH.D Student, University of Hawaii at Manoa-COE
Curriculum and Instruction

Nanakuli High & Intermediate School
Ho'opulapula Academy
Nanakuli, O'ahu



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Miller, Niko <nmillier@kiheicharter.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:17 PM

Aloha to whom it may concern,

Understandably we are in a financial disparity due to COVID. Cutting funding for education would be catastrophic for Hawaii. The long-term effects and downfalls of this decision would affect our economy for decades.

With the obvious faults of a heavy tourism economy causing a huge burden and Maui's push to create a more sustainable economy, decreasing education will hinder us from achieving this goal.

Prior to COVID Hawaii is in an education crisis of underfunding, performance, large class sizes, and literacy rate. Cutting teachers, cutting pay, and/or furlough school days will only dig a deeper hole.

Please take these points into consideration.

Warmest Aloha,

Coach Niko-

--

Warmest Aloha,

Coach Niko-



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Heather Sheridan <mommyx100@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:24 PM

This letter is written to all members that care about the educational system that affords a future for all of our students. Firstly, I have had to fight the system to get the same face to face rights for all of students this school year. Secondly, I'm the only person in my family working, because of Covid-19. My husband has been laid off since March 17th with no hope of finding work. This situation was bad enough with my school loosing a minimum of six positions. I implore you to fight for ALL students here in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Heather Sheridan
Pu'u Kukui Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furlough's

1 message

Lane Yanagisawa <lyanagisawa61@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:28 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

the furlough on the 4th is b[REDACTED]t as they know we'd be working on our waiver days at home getting ready for school on Tuesday. So, in effect working more for free. Are judges going to do the same? Custodians for your state offices? NO, they will be at home NOT working. Kishimoto is a [REDACTED] thinking we're working for free.--
Lane Yanagisawa



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Amy Fiandach <afiandach@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:41 PM

My name is Amy Fiandach and this is my testimony against the proposed furloughs. I have been a special educator for over 20 years, with the last 9 here in Hawaii at Voyager Public Charter School. I love living and working in Hawaii, however it is not easy. My family simply can't afford to see any more money taken. I'd like to use the BOE's own words to share my thoughts..."these past few months have been extraordinarily challenging due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed economic activity in the state and has negatively impacted **individuals'** overall revenue and budget." The truth of this statement cannot be denied. I will not be able to afford to live here and do the work that I've dedicated my life to. It isn't fair to me or to my family or to the students I work with.

If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will likely see a collapse in our public education system, in addition to a continued and worsening collapse of our economy. We cannot allow this to happen. We cannot allow our keiki to suffer. I'm afraid we will see our quality educators leave for the mainland or private schools. We can do better than this.

Even more is being asked of teachers as we face an uncertain and dangerous future returning to the classroom. Now is certainly not the time to take money away from us. Please do the right thing and continue to support our children, our education system and Hawaii's future.

With sincerity,
Amy Fiandach

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

alexis <avivalisa@aol.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 8:35 PM

Reply-To: alexis <avivalisa@aol.com>

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Though there are many reasons that many of us share about dealing with pay cuts....there is a primary concern that comes to mind and that is families. A significant part of pressure that these furloughs will cause, is the loss of aid to families who struggle on a daily basis with special needs children. This is not just about the lack of funds to cover staff's positions at schools, it is also about families who desperately need respite from children who need round the clock support. Support from many avenues....social services, special therapists, skills trainers, educational assistants, teachers all who provide this care to these families who barely have time to read a good book, have a quiet meal or talk on the phone with a friend as an outlet in their overburdened lives.

We have recently been told 2 EA positions have been cut and one will be down to .75 next year. Middle school years are challenging for any parent, but for families with special needs children it is magnified several times over. We want to work with these children because it is our way of contributing to the welfare of the community, to society, to our school. We want to be able to give the parents an opportunity to learn with us how to best manage daily needs of these children. We want to work together as a team to provide the best available care and support that we can.

Please work with us and allow us to help these families in the community! Please allow us to stay in our positions as full time workers so that we can service ALL the families that come to school everyday...that need additional services during school hours as well as during school breaks and holidays. Please let us work in partnership with these parents who struggle daily with children with special needs!

Thank you for your consideration and support!

Sincerely,
Alexis Friedman
Niu Valley Middle School
Educational Assistant



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Paula Paula <blinks2000@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:31 AM

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

Aloha BOE Members,

Please fight to support our keiki by preventing the proposed furloughs. These pay cuts will impact student learning as they cut deep into planning time, affecting direct instruction and safety protocols as we return students to campus during a pandemic. They will have long lasting effects on students who have been too long in distance learning mode. Students want to come back to school and teachers want to teach, yet the proposed furloughs take more days away from direct instruction. This is unconscionable.

Not only will these furloughs impact students, but it will have a detrimental effect on parents who already struggle to balance work and childcare schedules. It will impact health and safety measures at all schools. Rushing to prepare students to return from distance learning is not the way to keep our students, parents, teachers, and communities safe. As you discuss these points virtually, you are expecting teachers and students in classes, face to face. Give us the tools necessary to do this.

Teachers in Hawaii have always been at the bottom of national pay scales while living in one of the places with the highest cost of living. We understand that scarifies must be made, and we have been making them! Cutting our pay further will have a trickledown effect. You will see drops in local business spending commensurate with a 9% cut in pay. It will not only affect teachers, students, and families, it will continue to impact an already staggering economy.

I urge you to think about the short- and long-term effects of austerity cuts during national crises such as this pandemic and do the right thing for public education.

Mahalo,

Paula Evans



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony of Furlough Implementation

1 message

Iris Harris <senseiharris808@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:49 AM

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

Regarding:

Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, and communications with families and employees

To Whom it may concern:

Aloha, I am an educator at Makaha Elementary School and I am writing in response to testify against implementation of furloughs for all public school teachers. I know the pandemic has put an economic strain on the state as businesses have had to be shut down and tourism halted. However, implementing furloughs on education for our keiki should not be the answer. Especially when Congress is still discussing COVID Relief. According the Brian Schatz (State Senator): Congress is looking at providing state support to pay for teacher's salaries. (Hawaii News Now, Dec. 15)

Children are already hurting due to the pandemic. They have been forced to stay at home for months, away from their friends. Even as school slowly being to reopen, it is still detrimental because they will not be returning to the normal classroom they remember nearly a year ago. Our keiki are already behind and taking away instructional days is not going to help them make gains.

Furthermore, have we not learned our lesson nearly a decade ago when we implemented furloughs then? What about the state legislation that was passed to make 180 instructional days for students "law?" How are we expected to provide quality education for Hawaii's children with less time to work with them?

Educators are already stressing trying to support student achievement in academics with the time we have presently online. With the amount of standards we are expected to teach, classroom time is essential. Yet, we continue to take this time away from students, but keep the high demands on educators. How is it possible to demand more for less time? Think of building a house. Would we be content with a house that as quickly constructed, taking short cuts? How would we be willing to fly on a commercial airline if we were aware of the construction time that was allocated to build it was shortened?

As a sixth grade educator, I witness the direct effects of cutting instructional time on students. Student already in sixth grade are lacking many prerequisite skills and as a 6th grade educator, I feel we are constantly trying to fill in those gaps. With the pandemic, students are still going to be coming up to 6th grade behind where they need to be and it seems the state's position is to keep it that way by taking more time in classroom away from them.

We are all aware of the teacher shortage in our state. With the implementation of furloughs, I firmly believe this is continue to add to the problem of teacher shortage. If currently working teachers can afford to leave the state, I am confident they will take the opportunity to do so. This will increase the shortage of teachers in our state. Me, personally, I have consider leaving and perhaps it may be time for me to do so. How can I be expected to be a distinguished teacher in the classroom when I am financially struggling at home. The school I work at I am already using my own money to provide supplies and other essential learning tools in the classroom. Furloughs will impact my efforts to afford supplies for the students to use in the classroom.

Finally, what about the families who are already suffering financially? Presently, state jobs are what is helping to keep the state economy afloat and if families are depending on the one income (i.e. the teacher's salary) then we are putting another Hawaii family in jeopardy of eviction. I am not sure how a teacher is going to be expected to meet the high demands of our profession when they and their family are houseless.

I know these are tough times and we need to make really tough decisions, but I firmly believe the answer does not lie in taking the education away from the students in Hawaii. They need to be in the classroom. Parents need them to be in the classroom so many of them can return to work. With a furlough, they will also continue to lose wages because they may have to stay home on furlough days. The plan for furlough implementation on classroom teachers should be rejected to:

- A) Prove Education IS essential in the state of Hawaii
- B) Promote teacher retention in the state of Hawaii.
- C) Support the high demands already placed on many classroom teachers to meet all state academic standards.

Mahalo for listening to my testimony. I implore the Board to reconsider it's position on furloughs and request the governor to find other means to save the state money. Education needs to remain a priority for all students in Hawaii, not JUST the affluent.

Iris Harris
Makaha Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Alison Cameron <alialoha125@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:06 AM

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

To Members of the Board of Education:

I am writing regarding general business meeting discussion [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 would like to share the impact that these furloughs will have on my family, our schools and our State.

I have been an employee of the DOE since July of 2001. I work as a Behavioral Health Specialist V in the School Based Behavioral Health Program. I loved my job. However, the announcement of furloughs by Governor Ige has taken all the joy out of my job and caused me an incredible amount of stress, anxiety and fear. This is not just a pay cut and a few extra days off for me. This is a devastating blow to me as a long time, loyal employee dedicated to serving the youth of Hawaii, and to my family, which consists of me and my 13 year old son.

I am a full time single mother, fully 100% responsible for raising my son. His father died after a 4 year battle with colon cancer in 2012 and my son and I were left with no income from him. I have been fully supporting our family since then on my salary alone. Although I make what some would consider a decent salary, in Hawaii, a single income with no other supports is not enough to even to get by sometimes. I have been unable to put anything away for my son's college or even for my own retirement. We basically live pay to pay check. I rent a room in my rental home in order to pay the rent and make ends meet. Furloughs are a crisis for us. I don't have support from a co-parent or any family to provide supervision for my son while I work nights or weekends. I am not sure how I am going to keep a roof over our head and food on the table. As a single income, single parent family I barely make enough to cover the basics, yet I make too much for any government assistance or subsidies. Oddly this puts me in a position of having an even tougher time than some that do qualify.

I was born and raised in Hawaii and my son is fourth generation here. Yet, other than my elderly parents, my mother suffering with Alzheimer's, we have no family here. We also have no family to go back to on the mainland. We don't have anyone to take us in and allow us to live with them for a time while we figure things out. Additionally, my parents on the Big Island need help. My dad is sole caregiver for my mom at this time and I need to get there every few months to check on them and provide assistance. It's been horrible this year being unable to go, but with pay cuts such as this, I won't even be able to afford to get there.

As I consider my options, I feel paralyzed. There aren't enough jobs here in Hawaii to go around. I have been looking into moving to the mainland. When ever I mention it to my son who is an avid surfer and fisherman he starts sobbing. Leaving Hawaii will break our hearts. This would also require moving farther from my parents, who need me. Additionally my professional license does not have reciprocity with other states, so I may be required to do additional course work or supervision for my licensure elsewhere. Getting started in a new career could be incredibly costly. I can't even fathom how I can afford such a big move on my own, but then again, I can't fathom how I am going to survive here and be able to provide for myself and my son. I feel trapped.

I lived through the last furloughs with a new baby and a husband battling metastatic colon cancer. Now to go through an even more significant furlough completely on my own has left me feeling hopeless and scared. I am not only scared for myself and the present. The repercussions of this action for our State are terrifying. Our economy is in such shambles already, but this is not the fix for it by any means. This is going to result in a huge exodus of teachers and others in the education system. As it is, during Covid I know many teachers that have already left to return to the mainland. These were assets to our educational system. The furloughs are going to drive away many more and our educational system is already so short of teachers, mental health professionals, educational aides, and many other positions. Administrators, teachers and support staff such as Behavioral Health Specialists, are taking early retirement, leaving for different jobs and many leaving the state. As a district employee, I have seen cuts at all of the schools I work at across Leeward District. As my son prepares to enter high school next year, I am terrified for him and for all of Hawaii's keiki. What kind of education are they going to receive and how is this going to impact their future? Besides our keiki, the economic impacts of cutting the pay of so many public servants will further halt our economy. Spending will come to a halt and more people will require assistance to survive. How is this an answer?

The pandemic has had a huge impact on the mental health of adults, adolescents and children. Rates of suicide, depression, anxiety and many other mental health and substance abuse issues are increasing. This situation is furthering the issue. The economic and health impacts of furloughs only adds to a problem happening that is much bigger than the pandemic itself.

I implore you to not allow these furloughs and cuts to happen. My family will be forced from surviving into a state of poverty! There is nothing for us to cut out to make up for this huge loss of income! How will we survive? I think of the thousands of others impacted. Some will be ok, others will be devastated. The impact on our youth and their education and futures is too significant!! The overall impact on our already crushed economy is too much! Hawaii's educators are working harder than ever during these times to provide education and supports to our youth. This is not the time, there is never a time to cut from education in Hawaii. Our schools and those that educate our youth are paramount to our state's future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Alison Cameron
Behavioral Health Specialist V
Leeward District School Based Behavioral Health



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Chris Schumacher <chris.kauai@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:21 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom it may concern,
Please reconsider implementing furloughs for teachers.
Every day that my class is cancelled, there is a strong possibility that most of my class parents will not be able to go to work and support our economy. The economic multiplier is real.
Mahalo,
Christopher Schumacher
Teacher(21 years with Hawaii DOE), Grade 4, Kilauea School, Kauai
(808) 639-0505



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony on V. B Furloughs

1 message

Valerie Simmons <waifongsimmons@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:32 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I disagree with the imposed furloughs. Furloughs will have a prolonged and devastating impact on our teachers, on the keiki achievement, on their parents, as they struggle to ask employers for days off to be home to watch their children, and ultimately on the economy, as all will have less money to spend.

Teachers will be faced with an increased workload, while dealing with the economic and emotional distress caused by loss of pay. This has caused dedicated teachers to retire, seek other employment or move elsewhere. How long can we ignore the negative impact furloughs will have, before we realize that while teachers were deemed ESSENTIAL when it sounds good because parents are clamoring at the doors, but then turn around and cut teacher pay when it is convenient? At Lehua Elementary, we are in school all day everyday, with the SPED and at risk students and are not allowed to telework even if students are absent. The teacher sign in sheet reflects no choice. We have endured having COVID cases on campus and are still there on the front lines working for the students. Are we scared? You are darned tooting that we are, but we know we have a job to do and hope for the best.

Please dignify us with the same care, concern, and aloha as you would your ohana, because that is what I believe Hawaii is, should be, or was. I believe we are the melting pot of the Pacific, working for the good of all and most of all working for YOU. Thank you for your time.

Valerie Simmons



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Shannon Kaaa <shannon.kaaa.hsta@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:51 AM

To Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

Aloha, I am a special education teacher at Fern Elementary,, in Honolulu. 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 very disappointed that teachers are being asked to accept furloughs, but to announce that they will start on the teacher workday between the semester, demonstrates a lack of understanding about what teachers do. Does the BOE and DOE realize that teachers NEED planning and collaboration time? I had two meetings scheduled with parents on Monday, Jan 4 - both meetings will need to be rescheduled, (I was hoping not to have to meet after my work day the week when we return, but as usual, it will be during my prep time &/or after my work day.)

Intentional teaching takes planning. Inclusion takes collaboration. Effective classroom management takes preparation. Planning, collaboration and prep does not happen during instructional time. Students and teachers deserve to have paid time to do planning, preparation & collaboration.

This year,, I have been put a risk serving students with special needs in person. I have been overwhelmed with a plethora of additional reports, logs, plans, meetings and other NEW Special Education requirements. And, I have been expected to switch between in-person and distance learning for students as they are sent home for COVID-like symptoms. (Not to mention trying to navigate the challenges of distance learning.) The state should be giving me MORE support and MORE time - not a pay cut and less time to do the work.

Please support the teachers and the students by writing a letter to Gov. David Ige opposing the furloughs and ask him to protect public education funding.

Mahalo,
Shannon Kaaa
Fern Elementary
SpEd



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Regarding DOE Furloughs

1 message

Kayla Kawamura <kayla.m.kawamura@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:52 AM

Aloha,

I am writing to express concerns with the state's furlough plan. Furloughs will have a negative impact on educators' personal lives, the economic rebuilding of our state, and most importantly, Hawaii's keiki.

I believe furloughs will deeply hurt Hawaii's public servicemen and women. Everyone is carrying the weight of COVID and its restrictions into the workforce each and everyday, while pursuing excellence in their respective fields. With COVID regulations, employees of the state are working harder than ever. Specifically, in the DOE as a speech-language pathologist, I am spending more time than ever to plan and implement safe and effective therapy for my students via teletherapy and in-person. Furloughs may severely impact our ability to finance rent, mortgage, tuition, and basic living necessities. And in reality, many of us will be spending our unpaid "time off" working.

HGEA and HSTA represent some of Hawaii's largest job networks. Furloughs may also decrease our ability to give back to our communities and support local businesses, who need our support now more than ever. Furloughs will significantly reduce our ability to help our economy rebuild.

I believe the children of Hawaii are in need of a quality education and time in the classroom, especially after spending many months in front of a computer screen. We cannot afford to deny our keiki any more time of learning in the classroom. We must help them grow beyond academically: socially, emotionally, and mentally. There are valuable experiences that could only be found in the classroom with their peers.

I understand these are hard times for everyone and difficult decisions must be made to ensure our state can restore financially and provide stability in the lives of many of Hawaii's hardest working people.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.
~Kayla Kawamura



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony re: Furlough Solutions

1 message

Lisa Maria <lisa.on.lanai@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:54 AM

Aloha kakou,

I believe you may be in a position to speak to Gov. Ige, and share these ideas below to find or generate the money Hawaii needs, rather than taking it out of teachers yet again, and adding to the crises we've endured for so long.

Pls. find 10 minutes to read this: [Eight progressive options to close Hawaii's billion dollar budget gap — HBPC \(hibudget.org\)](#)

Pls. also encourage Gov. Ige to consider other ways to increase HI's income, such as legalizing cannabis and hemp, as other states have done.

Please do not let the governor ignore our contract, and push teachers back into the pink collar ghetto, as has been done here for decades. Protecting this work force = better outcomes for students and HI's future. I know you know this. There are other ways to manage our economic woes. Thank you for your consideration.

A me aloha.

Lisa Galloway, PhD
Lana'i High School
PO Box 630630
Lana'i City, HI 96763
(808) 565 7900



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Caitlin Ramirez <caitlinrebekah@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:55 AM

Aloha,

I am writing in regards to the furloughs of DOE employees which was recently announced by Superintendent Kishimoto. These furloughs create economic hardships for teachers and other school personnel and are a contributing factor in our struggle to fully staff our schools, but more importantly, they negatively impact our keiki. Hawaii's children have already faced significant challenges to their education during the pandemic and furloughs will reduce their access to learning even further. They will see a loss of four instructional days and teachers lose an additional two days of planning, which will directly impact their ability to serve students. Civil Beat recently released an article about the high rate of illiteracy in Hawaii and the dramatic way illiteracy reduces quality of life for individuals and within our community. While this is a complex problem, there is no denying that defunding public schools through measures like furlough days is a major contributing factor. Moreover, the state still has over \$175 million of the CARES Act money left to be spent. Why aren't we using this to support our children and their teachers?! This is an appalling lack of leadership at the state level. As a public school teacher and parent, I demand that you put the interests of our children first by funding public education and maximizing support for schools at this time.

Caitlin Ramirez
Librarian, Mokapu Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on behalf of Teachers

1 message

Theresa HABERSTROH <kevlar_h@msn.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:57 AM

Aloha,

My name is Theresa Haberstroh. I am a 4th grade teacher at Haiku Elementary School. I have taught there for 18 years and have been a teacher in Hawaii for 29 years. By my years of service, it should be obvious that I am extremely dedicated to my profession. My years of experience may make it seem as if I'm "old" but I started teaching when I was 21. My students and others are always shocked when they find out that I'm 51 because of my youthful attitude. I love to have fun, I'm silly and goofy and don't act my age. However, this school year I am more than feeling my age. I'm sad, I'm dejected, I'm exhausted. I feel like quitting and "quit" isn't a word I was raised to consider.

You should be aware of the turmoil that has happened at our school. On top of everything else terrible that has happened this year, our beloved school has been through tremendous injury and strife. We have had little to no guidance and have been left to plan and figure things out on our own. I teach a blended learning class with 8-9 students in the classroom and 15 online at home. My students are dedicated to coming to class and we have a great relationship, but not because of any guidance I've received on how to teach in this learning model. They come because of my own dedication to them. But I'm tired and unhappy. I have to fake it for them because the STUDENTS are the reason for what I do.

Teachers have carried our world's futures on our backs since the beginning of our education system because of our love for what we do. So why is more being taken away from us? Especially this year. We've had to work harder than ever. We should already be paid more than what we are and we especially should not have to have our salaries cut.

The DOE has not been prepared for this school year and return to learn. They've been behind on training (what TRAINING???) behind on safety protocols, behind on hybrid teaching, and behind on managing a statewide plan. Therefore, WHY are they already scheduling furloughs when the furloughs haven't even been approved by the State Senate and House? Once again, the leadership at the DOE is showing how it is out of touch with reality. The US Senate is discussing a relief bill yet the DOE seems eager to begin these furloughs.

Please do not approve these furloughs as they go against the contract with HSTA and will hurt many of our dedicated teachers and their families. Please also look into the leadership at the DOE at all levels. To many of us on the front lines, we see the waste in taxpayers' dollars that are being spent on employee positions that are unnecessary and "fluff". Please work to help those of us who desperately want to continue to do the job we love.

Mahalo for your support.

Sincerely,

Theresa Haberstroh
Dedicated Yet Dejected 4th Grade Teacher

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony on behalf of Teachers

808 870-3771



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

maria guardino <mguardino@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:15 AM

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

December 16th, 2021

Dear BOE members,

My name is Maria Guardino. I am a Teacher at Kaimuki High School in Honolulu on Oahu. I have been a proud public-school teacher in Hawaii for 17 years.

I am asking for the board's support to prevent furloughs. You are the Board of Education not the Board of Energy. Fight for your educators and Hawaii's future, our children.

The DOE's focus has been to increase the retention of qualified teachers. Especially for those who serve students who have the rights to special education services and/or Hawaiian language classes and/or English Language Learners (ELLs). We know that we must fund these typically underserved populations to avoid lawsuits similar to Felix Decree. According to Star Advertiser's Dec. 15, 2010 article, that lawsuit cost Hawaii one billion dollars of special education reforms. WE must continue to focus on retaining qualified teachers. Frankly, when considering our students' rights to a qualified teacher, and the outcomes of when we don't, retention of teachers is cost effective.

As a Nationally Certified teacher of English Language Learners, I know my value AND the cost of living in other states. My cousin, a teacher in California, with fewer qualifications (Master's degree and NBCT) earns nearly twice as much as I do. And her city has a similar cost of living as Hawaii.

I understand that cutting state employees' costs is an immediate go-to response, but why must employees who are not making large salaries be the target? We must consider other means, which have been proposed.

I am a highly qualified teacher who planned to remain in Hawaii, but honestly, if there is a pay cut, I must consider leaving to another state where I am valued as the professional and provided the financial security I have respectfully earned.

Last May, I received a letter from one of my former students, he wrote, "Ms. G, I have not forgotten your passion for ELL and your constant push for me to do better. I am grateful for your encouragement because that allowed me to pursue my goals... You drove to be a better writer when I complained writing was unimportant." I love teaching. I love helping students find and develop their potential.

Please help me and the many other passionate educators similar to me, remain in Hawaii.

Thank you,

Maria Guardino, MSW, NBCT, Teacher Leader



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for V.B:

1 message

Matthew May <maym@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:25 AM

Aloha,

I am a new hire SPED teacher at Stevenson Middle School.

I am submitting testifying on Action 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.

Governor Ige has proposed broad budget cuts to public education against the interests of public works that provide the necessary services that keep the state running during this time of pandemic.

Particularly ironic to those in education is the contradictory message these cuts send, that as educators we must both:

- 1) be considered to be providing an essential job for which the physical worksite must reopen, but
- 2) our work cannot be considered essential enough to be conducted without also sacrificing the resources and livelihood that make it possible to continue working

Many teachers I have met already have expressed exhaustion and frustration with Hawaii's historic record of coming to public education to withdraw money. These measures have created a system of inequality within our ranks that consistently make other jobs look like smarter and more stable investments of time and energy.

We know that the future of any society is the education of its youngest citizens, but we must act to ensure that those that provide that education are taken care of and can operate under the current stress of the pandemic.

As a first year teacher myself, I have struggled and watched household budgets grow thin as crises to keep housing and utilities running and to come to the aid of family members in need now present themselves as a long term struggle.

I have one parent now who is struggling to find work, has been out of meaningful work for nearly the entire duration of the pandemic, and grown weary in that search while the backlog of aid applications has yet to be resolved. What used to be a dual income family is now struggling at slightly less than a single family income.

Teaching is a large investment of time, and often teacher money to cover additional classroom resources. The consideration to take on an additional job or leave teaching for a fulltime job that may allow for greater flexibility to maximize income is one that is harder and harder to leave on the table.

Our school has already experienced several unexpected changes in staff, and more are on the way as early retirements, teachers returning to the continental US, and teachers finding other avenues of work are continuing to emerge.

I urge the board to take action in the following ways:

- Please stand with us as educators to fight to prevent furloughs
- Urge the Governor to table the idea of furloughs
- Urge the Governor to work with our union in any talk involving furloughs, it is important to ask

With the growing pressure to pass a relief package with education dollars earmarked, and the approval at the state legislature for additional borrowing, talk of furloughs seems premature. Please help us to look at all options before jumping into this fraught arena.

Mahalo,

Matthew May, Stevenson Middle School, Honolulu



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tammy Holt <tammyholt@waikikischool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:31 AM

Dear BOE,

I am respectfully submitting my testimony regarding 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.

Teachers cannot afford a pay cut. Simply put, Hawaii's cost of living is too high. We live in a state where the cost of an average home is one million dollars. To rent a home, which provides temporary shelter, is astronomical. Medical coverage is costly and car payments are high. We need to be able to provide ourselves and our families with basic necessities.

The idea of a teacher furlough is simply not a reasonable solution. I urge you to please consider other means.

Mahalo,
Tammy M. Holt



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony to BOE about furlough Concerns

1 message

Lesley Kealamakia <lkealamakia@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:33 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Hi!

My name is Lesley Kealamakia. I have been a Special Education Teacher at Kea'au Middle School for twenty plus years. I would like to share my testimony on how furloughs will affect my life as a teacher. This year is my retirement year and I planned to retire at the end of this school year so my students would have consistency in their teaching and learning. I have already had to switch my teaching curriculum to a distance learning model due to COVID. Now I am being told that starting January, of the new year, that we are to start the furlough process and take a reduction in pay. This impacts my family due to the fact that my husband retired, from teaching, a year and a half ago, and we still have educational obligations to pay monthly. In my lifetime as a teacher I have been through a strike and furlough Fridays. If we start furloughs in January, I plan to retire as soon as possible. This will impact my students as well as my school.

Sincerely,
Lesley Kealamakia
Special Education Teacher
Kea'au Middle School
16-565 Kea'au Pahoia Rd.
[Kea'au, HI 96749](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony December 17th 1:30

1 message

hughey2000@aol.com <hughey2000@aol.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:35 AM

Reply-To: hughey2000@aol.com

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

TIME: 1:30 a.m., Thursday, December 17th, 2020

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

SUBJECT: Testimony

POSITION: Against Furloughs

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

It is depressing to see the Governor turn his back on the Teachers who were the tip of the political spear for both of his campaigns for Governor. But furloughing teachers on January 4th, a teacher work day, really highlights how little we are valued.

The first ten years as an Elementary Special Education teacher I had to work full time waiting tables at a Restaurant in order to pay rent. Four years ago, after a decade of working two full time jobs, I suffered a slipped disc and was out of work for a year and a half. My wife teaches Science at Maui High. Before my injury we were both working second jobs to make ends meet. After having a child a year ago, we were unable to work second jobs and decided that we needed to move to a state that adequately pays teachers.

In 2019 I made \$58,000 with a Masters Degree and 15 years of experience as a Special Education Teacher. In one district in Washington State I would make \$105,000. My wife would make around \$85,000 instead of \$60,000 with her PHD. That is \$70,000 more in net income. We were planning to move away for this 2020 school year, until the Governor announced his plan to fund differentials last December. The differentials enabled us to change our mind about moving because we could finally afford daycare!

Now we don't know what we are going to do because the differentials currently are going to run out June 30th and on top if that we both are going to be furloughed next month. Having a second child seems mission impossible. Even if I didn't have a broken back I couldn't work a second job because restaurants aren't hiring. This furlough is not over a full year so it is going to hit us harder. We are projecting to lose \$450 per furlough day as a couple. And how long are we going to be furloughed, 2-4 years? Sylvia Luke said we shouldn't be talking furloughs until 2023. Then I am sure I will lose the roughly \$8,000 of my differential pay when it runs out June 30th.

The difference between teachers leaving now due to furloughs with the worst salary in the country when factored in the cost of living, is that this state has prioritized student achievement over health and safety. I can't find any subs that want to subject themselves to getting Covid-19. Good luck filling all the future teacher vacancies once you stop furloughing teachers in four years?

Cutting state workers by 300 million is an old, lazy tactic called Austerity. Austerity economics increases inequality and instability, and undermines growth. Supply and demand economics 101, the supply comes from demand and demand comes from wages. When you cut wages the economy takes a longer time to recover.

Our legislature and the Governor need to show they value hard working families over corporate interests. If they value hard working families, they will work to fill the budget shortfall by raising a buffet of revenue.

Here is the revenue generated proposals according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, November 2020.

- Create a flat 10 percent corporate income tax rate + 94,400,000
- Impact of closing the capital gains tax loophole + 80,200,000
- Impact of eliminating the deduction for property taxes paid + 39,600,000
- Impact of implementing a millionaires tax at a 13 percent rate + 25,200,000

(adding an additional bracket on income over \$1m married, 750K HOH and 500K single)

- Increase cigarette tax by \$1.00 +15,900,000

Department of Taxation stated two new tax brackets could be created with new rates that would generate new revenue. For people who make \$250K for single and over \$500K for joint —tax rate of 12%. Then for people who make over \$300K for single and over

\$600k for joint —tax rate of 13%. This would create new revenue of; 59.8m for fiscal year 2022, 61.7m for fiscal year 2023 and 67.8m for fiscal year 2026.

Governor Ige valued real estate over state workers when he vetoed the Real Estate Investment Trust bill last year. REITs own approximately \$17 billion worth of Hawaii real estate and earn about \$1 billion in profits every year. Closing the REITS tax loophole could generate \$60 million in potential tax revenue annually.

The Hawaii State Teachers Union pushed a constitutional amendment to tax second homes valued at \$1 million or greater, which would generate hundreds of millions annually. Unfortunately the bill was amended with poor language and the State Supreme Court stated the question was too unclear to be on the ballot. This bill could be reintroduced to fill the deficit then moved into public education once our economy recovers.

Now I am only a novice at creating revenue but I just came up with over 500 million. That is 200 million more than the 300 million in furloughs. Teachers have never been valued in this state and probably won't be in my lifetime.

Mahalo,
Justin Hughey
Special Education Teacher at King Kamehameha III Elementary
[37 Poniu Circle](#)
[Wailuku, HI 96793](#)
[Email:hughey2000@aol.com](mailto:hughey2000@aol.com)

Dear Board of Education:

I am writing to inform you how a 9% pay cut will affect our family and other teacher's throughout the state. I am a teacher with 20 years experience and Master's in Education. With this pay cut my family will qualify for food stamps. It is a sad day when teachers with many years of experience and education cannot support their families without government assistance.

Our family loves living in Hawaii and want to stay. However, my husband has lost his job due to the pandemic and now there is a 9% pay cut to teacher's salary. My family may not be able to afford to stay in Hawaii. We cannot stay if we cannot may a livable wage in Hawaii.

The payout was announced 3 weeks prior to it being implemented. This is not enough time for people to make changes and figure out how if and/or how they can cut expenses. In addition, the pay cut was announced right before Christmas when many people are spending more money. Many teachers have spent more money than usual expecting their usual salary. The pay cut is 9% which for many teachers may mean not paying some bills and/or going into debt to make basic needs.

Teachers, even those toward the top of the pay scale, make a modest salary. I have heard people say that ALL government employees are taking a 9% pay cut. Is this EQUALLY? When someone is making more than 200,000 a 9% payout may mean some life style changes. When a person makes less than 60,000 a 9% pay cut may mean that they fall behind bills and go into debt. Going into debt is not something people get out of quickly. This could mean years of struggles for our teachers far beyond the 4 years of proposed furloughs.

Hawaii's keiki deserve more than this. Education is the key to the future. We can't keep devaluing our educators and expecting quality education. Prior to the this pandemic, Hawaii was already having difficulty getting teachers. Lowering the pay will only worsen the situation. Teachers that are able will retire will, others will leave the profession, and some will leave the state. Research tell us, that a teachers with experience and credentials are much more effective teachers than teachers without. We say we want quality education (good academics, social skills, empathy) and that our children are our future. It is important for us not to just say this but invest in it, even in the hard times. Hawaii's children are our future, we owe it our children to give them a highly qualified, credentialed teachers.

I want to send my child to school with teachers that feel valued. My own children can be hard to deal with, even for me. I don't want their teachers to have the extra burden of wondering if they will be able to pay their bills or having to get a second job. This would only compound the stress of having my child in their class.

I realize that Hawaii is experiencing an extreme economic hardship. Everyone is making sacrifices. However, cutting education cost is the last think Hawaii needs. We need educated workers to diversity our economy and we can only get this when we invest in education and our children.

Please support teachers and Hawaii's keiki by doing whatever is necessary to stop the furloughs.

Laura Phillips
Teacher, Hilo Union



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Ginny Hoyt <ginnyhoyt93@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:36 AM

I found it very ironic that the day after furloughs were announced I received an email from the state asking me to complete a survey about how to attract more teachers to Hawaii.

The disconnect between the state's actions, and their goals, is stark.

As someone who relocated from the mainland to teach in Hawaii, I do not have plans to stay here long term because of the conditions teachers are expected to work under. This will likely be my last year teaching in Hawaii because I do not accept being treated so carelessly.

We have worked harder than ever this year. We have gone well above what should have been required of us. We have dealt with blowout of the serious mishandling and shortcomings of the BOE regarding this pandemic.

And now, in the face of all of that, we are losing precious days with our already vulnerable students, and we are being given pay cuts while expected to do the same amount of work. Taking away inservice days does not mean the work on those inservices days disappear. It simply means the work will have to get done in our own free time.

And as a trained, experienced professional, I do not accept working for free for a state who clearly does not care about its teachers.

From the way you've treated your teachers this year, your message has been loud and clear. There is always room to push us harder, expect more, and support us less. The performance of the BOE these last 9 months has been absolutely dismal. And I do not plan to stick around and bear witness to it much longer.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Joshua Jacobs <joshua.jacobs19@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:37 AM

Aloha, I am submitting a testimony regarding 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 science teacher at Kea'au Middle. The proposed furloughs and budget cuts should be more shocking than it is, especially in this time. But, I've grown used to our state government overlooking the value of us teachers. Especially in this time, it's easy to see that we are taken advantage of. As a first year teacher, and an emergency hire, I am making \$31,000 gross and \$21,000 net, while working 55 hour to 60 hour weeks. I don't say that to gripe, but only stating a fact. If we want what's best for our keiki then we need to be willing to pay them on par with Target or Walmart workers and not continue taking advantage of their passion for their job.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for December 17, 2020

1 message

Spencer Gill <spencergill918@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:37 AM

Testimony: Opposition

Action Item VI.B: Board Action on Superintendent's Evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year:
Superintendent's Priorities and Strategic Plan Indicator Targets

Dear Chairwoman Payne, Vice Chairman Uemura, and members of the BOE,

I am in opposition of Christina Kishimoto's targets of her evaluation. She has identified targets that can easily be manipulated and/or already attained.

Let's turn our attention to an ongoing issue with failing leadership in the DOE. Complex area superintendents and principals regularly fail to make decisions, or make decisions in fear of the HSTA that perpetuate chaos in schools. Individuals in high level leadership positions make the excuse of waiting for HSTA to make a decision, or waiting for HSTA to make the call. Often you will hear them say they will not make a decision because HSTA will file a grievance. Hundreds of teachers and students at each school depend on these high paid, high level leaders, making cowardly decisions.

Kishimoto lacks knowledge, experience, and vision (and care) to negotiate with the unions. Everyone has forgotten what education is about and educating children is the last thing considered. When will the DOE have the expertise and savvy to be confident in what they do? There is an entire office dedicated to human resources. The hiring of incompetent individuals that say YES, instead of being effective in supporting what should be the mission of the DOE, enlarges DOE's weak system.

HSTA has much more airtime than the DOE, and sadly while HSTA is focused on protecting teachers that fail to produce, they do a much better job in directing the DOE.

Support your field leaders to be courageous, there are a lot of people that want to do the right thing and want children to succeed, however, the DOE makes excuses and immediately gives permission to be apathetic.

Shockingly, Principals and CASs have said this year is a "wash". When will you hold Kishimoto accountable for targets that improve the DOE system?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
Spencer Gill



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony furloughs

1 message

Katie Hillstead <khillste@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:44 AM

Aloha,

My name is Katie Hillstead I am a teacher on the Leeward coast.

I can tell you that I have seen first hand the learning loss this pandemic has caused. We have students who we still are trying to track down from March. We need social workers and hazard pay, not furloughs.

As I'm sure you are aware, furloughs will only continue the devastation our students have felt. We are losing more instructional days. We will have generations of students behind academically as we try to recuperate from the pandemic.

I have teacher friends who are actively looking at other professions and looking to leave the island of Oahu. Good, strong dedicated educators who feel unappreciated by the state and the department. We dropped everything and started teaching online, and for what? Only to be faced with furloughs and pay cuts. It is clear kishimoto has a vendetta against teachers.

I have personally reached out to several legislators without response. Brian taniguchi told me he felt the governor's proposal is fair. Hopefully they will listen to you, the board, in what is right for our students.

We need long term solutions that will lift up our state.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Katie Hillstead



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs,

1 message

Catherine Caine <catherinecaine@waikikischool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:49 AM

Dear Chair Payne and Board of Board of Education Members:

Please know I understand the harsh reality that COVID has brought to our state. When I walked out of my second-grade classroom on March 13, 2020 I never thought that would be my last day with the students I had become so attached to. I never imagined my future would mean 14-hour days trying to transition to online teaching. The learning curve was steep but worth the time to try to continue educating the students that I so valued.

Additionally, I know Hawaii's economy is in dire straits. However, I am here to share my memories during my 30-year teaching career here in Hawaii. I want you to understand and consider what teachers have experienced during the difficult economic times over many years.

First, please don't furlough the students. They have been through so much at their young ages. They need to be with teachers whether online or in person. Their families are exhausted and need to get back to work with the knowledge that their child is in qualified hands.

Second, teachers have been at a pay cut since 2008 when the state was in an economic crisis. We were held at that five percent cut until 2014. Other workers such as the University Professors were able to get that back the following year. And as you know last year, we were close to achieving the possibility of gaining what should have been compensation for the past but COVID sidelined that bill in our Legislature. That I can accept and sadly I agree it needed to be shelved.

Second, we have been pay lacked for many years. The state moved our pay from the 1st and the 15th of every month to the 5th and the 20th. Recalling when that was moved, I remember how teachers talked about their mortgages being due on the 1st and how big of a difference this would make in how they lived. I know five days doesn't seem like much but when you are a teacher it can be significant.

Fourth, our state and our students will experience more of a teacher short fall than there has historically existed here in Hawaii. According to the 2018 report by WalletHub, "Hawaii ranked dead last when it comes to teacher salary and teacher support."

Fifth, although I appreciate the gesture of the Governor Ige to offer up a personal pay cut of a similar percentage, he is starting at a higher level and I would venture to say the cut doesn't make survival an issue. I am concerned that many new teachers, and even seasoned teachers may find paying their bills a struggle.

Finally, some of the consequences I will personally experience are a possible move from my rental. I am concerned that I will need to cut back on my housing expenses with a pay cut. I have been considering retirement and with this action I feel that is something that will be on the minds of many teachers who are eligible.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs,

I know the BOE has had a difficult year making decisions through this unprecedented time and I want to thank you for your openness, honesty, and service to our students.

Sincerely,

Catherine Caine
2015 Hawaii State Teacher of the Year/
National Finalist



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kori Harvey <koriharvey@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:53 AM

I urge you to reconsider the furloughs. My husband and I are both Public School Teachers and we began our careers at the beginning of the last recession - the furloughs and budget cuts means a drop in our household income (that we've worked so hard to raise in the past 12 years) - I don't know how we will afford, food, car repairs etc.

In order to make our school safe, we have cut out PE, Art, Music, Technology, Hawaiian and Library. All the things that make school vibrant are gone. With these furloughs and cuts I don't know how we will bring that back. We should not have to choose between having PE, ART, Music, Tech, Hawaiian and safety or class sizes! Our kids are losing out on so much! My daughter who attends the school I teach at is getting a watered down version of what education was and can be...budget cuts and furloughs will only make matters worse!

Also, our school has informed us that we are losing positions : 4 teachers and 2 EA's. When asked if this means our class sizes will be bigger the reply was, "Maybe." With 6 adults gone, our work load will be bigger and we will be getting paid less. We simply won't be able to do a good job.

The furlough schedule states that Jan 4 is a furlough. I am the Grade Level Chair for Grade 3 and we were going to use that day to plan for our students' return from distance learning to blended learning. This involves looking at which families chose distance learning, blending learning, shuffling students into different classes, deciding which teachers will take which class, safety protocols and trying to re-imagine blended learning.

This work still needs to be done and will now be moved to...nights, weekends & holidays? I have been working till 5 pm almost every day since August, and then I go home and work another hour or two at night preparing for the next day, looking at student work. This is unsustainable. I have bouts of depression.

Thank you,

--

Kori Ann Harvey

Koriharvey@gmail.com
808.224.1953



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony JRVP Maui High School

1 message

John Randolph Van Plantinga Jr. <johnrvp@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:54 AM

Dear valued BOE members,

I have a full time job working for the state of Hawaii as a teacher but that is not enough to live in Hawaii. With a son in college at UH and a wife who cannot work due to the pandemic, I am at my wits end to make ends meet. Perhaps it is time to throw in the towel and move? Move where this is my home?

I have been a teacher for 11 years, starting my career for DOE with poverty wages as an Educational Assistant (19K) before accepting a teaching position (30K) when I was not yet licensed and then another pay bump from earning a Masters degree (47K) and taking enough professional development to reach the highest step level to create a living wage (??). It was still not enough until the Governor gave all SPED teachers a pay bump last january to retain quality teachers. And it worked, I now believe that I can finish my career with the DOE as long as the pay continues to grow NOT shrink!!

Living in Maui on a teacher's salary is crazy and forces me to take a second job and at times a third job. In fact I am always looking for ways to make a little more money which is why I work every vacation break serving students during the extended school year as well as my income opportunities outside of the DOE.

Please do not cut my pay as it affects more people than just the teacher, it affects families, families who are from here but cannot afford to live here.

Thank you
Sincerely
John R. Van Plantinga Jr.
(808) 385 7871
Maui High School SPED Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Brian Bilodeau <bbilodeau@kamaile.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:55 AM

Aloha,

To whom it may concern,

My name is Brian Bilodeau. I am an elementary special education teacher working and living in Waianae, on the island of Oahu. I am writing this testimony because the furloughs would have a negative impact on several things in my life. First, we teachers, due to the pandemic, are doing triple the work. Being a special education teacher the paperwork tripled adding to the stress of the daily work impact. We had to scramble frantically at the beginning of the year to try and get ready for students to come. We weren't ready. The state declared that returning to the classroom was unsafe. So we had to come up with a contingency plan for each individual student. And each student has a multitude of goals and objectives that must be worked on in order for students to make progress. Each goal and objective needs to be calculated based on how many minutes are needed to address students' needs and make growth. This was difficult for one student. And within the first quarter, the administration gave the directive that these needed to be completed for each student with services. The administration was given the directive by the HDOE (Hawaii Dept. of Education). During these meetings, sometimes after, the parent was asked if they wanted their child to attend face to face. If so, a schedule to meet the newly agreed upon minutes. If not, a distance learning plan was needed to address the attempt to address the students' minutes. Some parents did not want their students to meet face to face for safety reasons. So in addition to the lesson plans needed to meet individuals' needs face to face a new distance learning plan for online learning and instruction. As I was having these meetings I realized there are not enough hours in the week to meet all of these. I relied on support from coworkers and direction from my administration.

Second, before the pandemic with my current salary, I was breaking even every single paycheck due to the high cost of living in Hawaii, food costs, student loans, transportation costs, and other necessary expenses. It isn't for lack of trying it was just too expensive and I was making it work. Since the pandemic my saving grace was the deferment of student loans. However, next month I am expected to continue my income based repayment plan. I was hoping to save money for maybe buying a house and setting roots here in Hawaii because I love it here. I moved from the Honolulu area a few years ago because the cost of living in the city and transportation costs were too much and unsustainable with my current salary. This year a new Special education stipend was approved. I was happy to finally see a light at the end of the tunnel, knowing that I may actually start to save more. But now if these furloughs go through my pay will be decreased and living will become increasingly difficult. Especially as a single income household. I became a teacher to help move forward as a people by shaping the minds of our youth in preparation for becoming the future leaders of tomorrow. They, the students, will be the ones who suffer the most. So many like-minded teachers will be leaving because of being impacted financially. I fear for the future if we continue on this path. A family member is currently struggling from lower work hours due to COVID. It is a tempting thought to move to another state on the mainland to help out a family member.

Third, I feel a deep connection to Hawaii and I can be fiercely loyal. Often to a fault. When others would jump ship and leave for a better deal, I stay to try and make it work. Due to the increased paperwork,

meetings, and stress, it almost seems too much to try and wait it out. I am burning out. And now that we are threatened with pay cuts in the form of furloughs? I would definitely consider finding employment elsewhere. If only for a higher quality of life.

Mahalo for your consideration,

--

Brian J. Bilodeau
bbilodeau@kamaile.org-email
Kamaile Academy PCS
[85-180 Ala Akau St.](mailto:bbilodeau@kamaile.org)
[Wai'anae, HI 96792](mailto:bbilodeau@kamaile.org)
[\(808\) 697-7110- office](tel:8086977110)
[\(808\) 697-7115- FAX](tel:8086977115)
www.kamaile.org



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

paula <togotelles@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: paula <togotelles@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:55 AM

Good Morning,

My name is Paula Telles I work for the Department of Education Office of Facilities & Operation in Student Transportation on the West side of the Big 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.](#)

I knew that Furloughs were being discussed by Governor Ige but when I awoke yesterday morning 12/15/20 to read my email notice from the Office of the Superintendent office I was very concerned and upset.

We were given the dates of Furloughs and a memo along with frequently asked questions. Not everything is addressed in this. We were informed previously that we would be furloughed 2 days a month. In reviewing the days that was given to us that we would be furloughed, it has some months with 1 day, some with 3 and 4 days in a month and a month with no furlough day.

The memo gives information that the first check it affects is February 5, 2021. There is no information on how the deductions will work. Is it straight across the board the same every month even though the furlough days are different every month?

The other concern I have is I am not the only state worker in my house. My husband also works for the state. We will be taking a double hit. Yet we will still have to pay our bills with less income from both paychecks. My family lives paycheck to paycheck. The cost of living has gone up not down. Prices for food and necessities in the stores have gone way high but the state wants to take away pay with furlough to help reduce the budget shortfall?

This is not right at all. All these months we went to work and got no additional assistance. Residents who were put on unemployment staying home made more money than the residents who had to go to work and work in the front line. State workers who worked from home, teleworking and state workers who had no choice and had to be at work got no additional assistance, no hazard pay NOTHING of any ASSISTANCE! We went to work.

Now we continue to work with the same conditions and you want to take away days of work and pay? When we cannot come up with our rent, pay our utilities or put food on the table because of the lack of income, who will be there for us? We work hard as government employees and take pride in our services that we do at our jobs!!

This is how Governor David Ige says thank you for your service?

My husband and I will have to look for part time work to help with payment of normal day to day living. I may even need to look elsewhere and possibly even move to the mainland just to try to survive.

My co-worker informed me yesterday she may be leaving also. We all cannot survive with this cuts.

Why isn't the Governor working with our Legislature first?

How do I know that I even will have a job? What if the next step is that I become laid off from my position? Then what?

I ask that you please put a stop to this happening to the people of Hawaii who work hard and take pride in working for our Government.

Thank You for listening,

Paula Telles



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kathy Lomont <kathlomont@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:58 AM

Reply-To: "kathlomont@yahoo.com" <kathlomont@yahoo.com>

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

Testimony: My name is Kathleen Lomont and I am a Special Education Teacher at Honoka'a Elementary School. Furloughing teachers to fix the state budget is wrong. There are other options that would work like raising taxes for all, raising taxes on cigarettes, alcohol and motor vehicles.

During this pandemic, a teacher's worth has been unveiled, yet we are again being told to do more with less.

If teacher's pay are cut, the state will suffer great losses when the most experienced teachers leave the profession, when young teachers leave Hawaii because they can no longer afford to live here and the children will suffer the most.

I am close to retirement, so please don't cut our pay. A fellow teacher's future depends on what will happen with our pay.

If our pay is cut, she will have to leave Hawaii. When more teachers leave that makes for larger classroom sizes! And that's not good for anyone.

Please, do not cut our pay!

Find another way, you must find another way.

Thank you,

Kathleen Lomont

Special Education Teacher

Honoka'a Elementary School

(808) 775-8820

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Junko B <junkoboyd@waikikischool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:02 AM

I am testifying concerning 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'm an elementary (science/technology) teacher and have been teaching through the entire pandemic. I've been on the frontline face to face teaching Summer school and then continued during the regular school year teaching distance in a learning format.

The sacrifices, risks, and deep dedication to my students should not be devalued by imposing furloughs. It is a slap in the face . This same one that has done its best to keep a brave smile with my students and their parents.

Please do not allow furloughs to be imposed. Please stop personnel cuts for the sake of doing what is right by the dedicated teachers of Hawaii.

Junko Boyd-Ritari
Waikiki School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony: Furloughs

1 message

Kat Muranaka <katmuranaka272@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:02 AM

My name is Kathleen Muranaka.

I am a 20+ years teacher at Waianae High School.

I am writing this testimony with regards to the DOE's plan to institute furloughs.

I am opposed to the current proposal to furlough DOE employees .

A budget is more than numbers on a page. Monies allocated are based on current priorities, values and needs. Moving towards revitalizing our state's economy is more than looking at positive and negative numbers. It's about supporting an infrastructure that can help us hold onto the potential to "thrive," not just "survive," despite our current adversities. Investing in education is an important part of this process.

In my teaching career, I have walked a picket line and gone on strike to improve teaching and learning conditions in Hawaii. I have also suffered through "Furlough Fridays" and saw the negative impact that both of these extreme measures took on my profession and our Hawaii students. There is a teacher shortage. Any type of furlough will not support building capacity within our teacher ranks. And it will impact, not just the current generation of students, but future generations as well. Academic recovery for students from the strike and previous furloughs took years, and that was without the additional challenges of distance learning and health and safety regulations. Implementing furloughs will add an additional burden to teachers and our students and their families, all of whom are struggling to maintain a sense of "normalcy" in these unpredictable times.

As classroom teachers, we already go beyond what our job description defines.

We tutor after hours, not just students, but also parents, who are unfamiliar with virtual learning tools, so that they can support distance learning in their homes. We disinfect our classrooms with our own resources and materials so that our students have safe and healthy spaces to learn. We manage concurrent teaching situations, balancing the needs and challenges of face-to-face vulnerable students and those in online classrooms at the same time. We create extracurricular activities, such as online service opportunities and virtual karaoke, so that the social emotional needs of our students are not forgotten. We make things work because we know that we need to invest the time and energy into our number one priority: our students.

I ask that the BOE, the DOE and the governor reflect the same priority for the future that our teachers have continually modeled since last spring. Prioritize time, energy and financial resources to education and the tireless efforts of the teachers who continue to try to find ways to minimize the impact of this current pandemic on the future potential for all students to "thrive."



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Keala Watson <watsonkeala@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:07 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

This message is in opposition of furlough days for the department of education. I am a teacher of 11 years in the Nanakuli community and parent of 3 public school keiki.

The pandemic has definitely shaken up our world and caused great harm to our local economy and state tax revenue. However, the impacts of the pandemic are magnified for the keiki of our state. Most of my students are afraid and unsure of what is going on in their world. I believe whole heartedly that imposing furloughs on them will cause irreversible damage to their mental state and educational development that will prove to be much worse than the economic damage of the pandemic. At all costs, we must ensure that our keiki, and future of our state is well taken care of to prevent the impacts of this pandemic from dragging out for decades.

Keala Watson
Teacher

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs and Layoffs

1 message

Jennifer Engman <jennifer0831@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:16 AM

Good Morning,

I am writing to address the furlough situation due to COVID budget issues. I think we are doing a huge disservice to our community by furloughing and laying off teachers in our local community. Parents have been struggling with juggling their ability to work while their child is distance learning. It is a fact that teachers and schools provide care for children so that parents can work. Not only are you harming teachers and their ability to thrive in our already burdened ability to support ourselves in these communities, but you are now making it impossible for parents to work on these days. This will affect all of us and not just teachers, EAs, administrators, etc. Please think about the bigger picture and realize that you are impacting all of us greatly by making these decisions.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Engman



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Caleb Bullock

1 message

Caleb Bullock <caleb.bullock@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:20 AM

Dear Board of Education,

I've become aware of the proposed furloughs for Hawaii educators. Let me explain via email how this will affect me personally and my family who relies on my direct income:

I recently moved to Hawaii to teach for the 2020-2021 school year. Including expenses to move me and my family to the Hawaiian Islands from Tennessee was roughly \$4,000. Fortunately, I received the bonus for moving from the mainland. However, things have still been tight financially with the higher cost of living for groceries, gas and rent.

In all transparency it has been disheartening living to paycheck especially being a qualified educator with a master's degree and full certification. I think it is definitely understandable to be incredibly concerned with the proposed furlough and pay cuts.

Furthermore, with the proposed pay cuts you may potentially lose educators like me who simply can't afford to live here and support their families with the pay they receive. With that being said, it would drastically make it more difficult to find qualified candidates for teaching positions. This will ultimately affect Hawaiian students and overall the state as a whole with regard to education.

Sincerely,

Caleb J. Bullock
Pahoa High and Intermediate
ALPSS Lead Teacher

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Corey Rosenlee
President
Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

To Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association requests that the Board of Education stand with our keiki and write a letter urging Gov. David Ige to prevent destructive furloughs and protect public education funding for our keiki.

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.

At the end of this fiscal year, on June 30, 2021, the state will have an estimated \$546 million surplus. When you add in other reserve funds, the surplus total climbs to \$614 million. By comparison, the governor's furloughs would save a little more than \$140 million over the next six months, an amount that would easily be absorbed by the state's current surplus.

The state will not go bankrupt if furloughs are not implemented immediately. The Legislature has authorized the governor to borrow \$2.1 billion to weather this crisis, and he still has \$1.3 billion available. A bipartisan congressional stimulus proposal currently being debated contains \$82 billion for schools. Hawaii legislative leaders have publicly stated that it is too early for furloughs and they are trying to find other solutions. The governor should give the Hawaii State Legislature and Congress time to approve another stimulus bill or find other ways to increase revenue.

We have seen years of the ill effects of an unfortunate trend in Hawaii: when there is an economic downturn, governors have cut teacher pay and education funding. Gov. Ige would be the third governor in a row to cut teacher pay: Ige (furloughs), Neil Abercrombie (imposed contract), Linda Lingle (furloughs). This trend must stop. Education and our keiki have become

an easy target that does not reflect our values. Do we value our children's learning? During this pandemic, firefighters and police officers did not see their pay cut while Congress increased military wages by three percent. Other countries consider it shameful to cut school funding, yet we have another Hawaii governor planning to do it again.

After studying government cuts to education during the last recession and their impact on schools, University of South Carolina law professor Derek Black stated in the Washington Post, "Last time, legislators convinced themselves that schools could absorb these losses without harming kids... Studies later confirmed their naivete. Recession-era cuts depressed student achievement."

The American Educational Research Association found "the Great Recession and subsequent shock to school spending was associated with significant declines in student academic achievement... (with) school districts serving higher concentrations of low-income and minority students experienced greater declines in achievement from school-age exposure to the recession. Thus, district achievement gaps may have widened as a result of the Great Recession."

The 2009 recession and subsequent furloughs directly led to Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis — we fall short 1,000 qualified teachers every year. Our veteran teachers are still struggling with the impacts of the previous recession. Mid-level public school teachers in Hawaii earn \$18,000 to \$30,000 less than their counterparts in similar districts across the country, and according to HIDOE annual reports, many end up leaving the state altogether. Furthermore, the number of Hawaii college graduates with education degrees has dropped by 37 percent over the past decade. Teaching is no longer considered an attractive, stable profession.

In a Dec. 13 editorial titled, "Hawaii's Budget Burden Must be Shared," the Honolulu Star-Advertiser claimed our public employee unions need to share the burden of the state's budget crisis. But what about those with higher incomes? Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the stock market has improved immensely. The billionaire class in the U.S. has seen their wealth increase by \$845 billion and in Hawaii, luxury homes are outselling 2019 prices. High-paying jobs have increased by two percent while low-income jobs have decreased by 20 percent. Why must Hawaii's financial burden only be shared by our working- and middle-class earners? How does decreasing pay for teachers and other government workers improve the lives of our hotel workers and our business owners? What is "fair" about the wealthy paying less as a percentage of their income than the poorest 20 percent of Hawaii's population? State Senate President Ron Kouchi suggested the possibility of higher taxes on people who earn \$200,000 and more and rescinding unidentified tax exemptions.

Furloughs will hurt our teachers and our keiki, as well as Hawaii's economy. Hawaii economists have found state worker salaries reflect a spending multiplier of 1.5, which means every \$1 reduction in state government salaries leads to a \$1.50 reduction in overall economic activity. A University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization study last spring indicated "that multipliers can be even larger in periods of extreme slack, such as the downturn we are now entering. The results from our models may very well understate the benefit of borrowing now to keep state and county spending in place."



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow

Corey Rosenlee
President

Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President

Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

Education should be the last place to target when considering budget cuts. When Gov. Ige ran for the state's highest elected position, he said, "Improving public education is one of my top priorities. Hawaii's children deserve quality public education that provides an opportunity for all students to achieve their highest potential." Let's 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.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony regarding furloughs for doe teachers

1 message

Joy Wolcott <joy.wolcott@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:24 AM

Aloha,

As a teacher for the State of Hawaii since 2004, I respectfully submit this email as testimony to request no furloughs for teachers.

Our state is at a financial deficit due to the complications with the viral pandemic. Teachers have been at the front lines, working to keep our students moving along in their educational program. Please do not Rob Peter to pay Paul.

Mahalo,

Miss Joy Wolcott

Kapaa Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

NO TO FURLOUGHS!

1 message

Angela West <angela.west@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:26 AM

Teachers in Hawai'i have suffered and shown endless flexibility and resilience throughout this pandemic so far. We have endured rapidly changing plans and schedules and have made it all work for the best of our keiki. We have had to rewrite curriculums, reimagine our classrooms, create and purchase new experiences to engage our students through this ever changing school year.

Despite our endless efforts and all that we do for Hawai'i and it's keiki, we are continuously neglected. Many teachers that I know work second or even third jobs because their teaching salary alone is not sufficient for them to survive here in Hawai'i. Now our state wants to cut our pay even further? We are undervalued and under-appreciated. We already have a teacher shortage and this will absolutely force even more teachers to leave our profession. We love to say that we value education, but when it really matters, will you stand up for educators? We CANNOT and should never be cutting education. It is unacceptable.

On top of the proposed cut to our pay, the furlough dates being suggested are ridiculous. To take away our contractual work days would be obscene. Now more than ever, teachers need this paid time to plan and prepare our classrooms and our curriculum! Not only have our work days been furloughed, but the remaining suggested furlough days have no rhyme or reason and are disruptive to the schedules our schools are using. Randomized days like these make it impossible to have a good schedule for our students at a school like my own, where we are currently engaged in a blended model and have rotating groups of students in person Monday-Thursday and virtual learning on Friday. Having random furlough days throughout the week will make mapping out our curriculum more difficult, will make uneven in-person instructional days for our separate groups, and will create confusing and difficult situations for our families, especially working families. While no furloughs for our educators is the best option, consistency is furloughs, such as furlough Fridays, would be a better plan. Or allowing schools to create their own furlough schedules if furloughs are necessary. In this trying time each school is doing what they can to make learning work for them and their families. We do not all have the same needs or schedule and it is ridiculous for us to all have the same arbitrary furlough days. It is clear that the team making these decisions is disconnected to actual schools and classroom teachers because the decisions they are making would only add to the struggle that we have been having to make our schools work during the pandemic.

Outside of the direct harm to teachers, these furloughs will also be detrimental to our students. Our keiki have not had a complete school year. We have pushed back by weeks at the beginning of the school year. Many students are struggling with virtual learning or are now returning in-person half of the week. To remove even more instructional days from our students will be devastating. We are taking more and more away from our children. How can we expect them to learn and to thrive?

These proposed furloughs would be devastating to our teachers and our students. It is unacceptable and I hope that you will do what's right in fighting for our teachers. If you believe that education is important, start to show it in the way that we treat our teachers.

Thank you,
Angela West
First Grade Teacher
Keolu Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kilo Kia'i <hawaii808surfer@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:28 AM

Aloha--

I'm just putting in my two cents here. I work for one of the four Unions that represent public sector employees. Prior to that, I worked with the public schools teachers, counseling and support staff and the VPs and Principals--along with many special-needs kids .

The other day, I received a call from a middle school teacher--with 30 years of service--who said she can't take it anymore. The uncertainty of the SARS Co-V-19 epidemic, the uncertainty of the lump sum issue and now the furloughs have made it so she thinks it's no longer worth working. 30 years in a Middle School setting. I would think that she has some dedication and cares--or she wouldn't have been around for 30 years. She tearfully told me she's retiring. She's torn because she thinks she could have put in at least several years and she loves her job. She pays for child support and takes care of grandchildren after work; a customary thing with many local families, in this day and age. QI don't even work for the HSTA.

I've seen this scenario played out too many times over the past ten months. This deception/smoke/mirrors/uncertainty situation is a very bad thing that has to stop NOW. It's a flat-out nasty situation. The future of Hawai'i's public school-attending 'opio bears more weight than initiating furloughs. Please consider all DOE employees' situations--from the teachers, to the maintenance and janitorial personnel, to the EAs, to the counseling and student support staff, to the Vice-Principals and Principals. The vast majority of them do a helluva job and they do it because they're dedicated to their professions. Mahalo...



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Testimony in Favor of Furloughs

1 message

David Smith <david.smith@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:30 AM

My name is David Smith, I'm with the Communications Branch, Video Production section, Hawai'i State Dept. of Education.

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.**

This will be the second time in my 23 years with the DOE that I have been faced with furloughs. Though they may be a hardship, I managed last time when it was 4 days a month and I assume I will do the same this time! I understand that the State faces unprecedented losses in revenue & that difference must be made up. At least with furloughs we are still employed, we still have our much needed health-care and we have hope for an eventual end to this and a return to normalcy!

What I desperately fear is a RIF!

Trying to find new employment at 59 and in this economy is beyond terrifying!

I have an elderly handicapped mother I am the sole care-giver for and the good people at my office have always been understanding of my situation. Where else am I going to find that except within the DOE family!

Please do consider allowing this short-term pain to take the place of the permanent loss of a career!

Mahalo,
David B. Smith

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony from Juan Espinal at Konawaena Elementary

1 message

Juan Espinal <juan.espinal@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:31 AM

Aloha BOE,

Your tireless work this year to bully and manipulate educators has extinguished my hope in a brighter future for our keiki.

Fund our schools!!

--

Juan Espinal

[Entertaining Educator](#)

"Consciousness is education and knowledge."



[@artof.chris](#)

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Ms. Teresa M. McAveney

2029 Nu'uuanu Avenue 1103

Honolulu, HI 96817

(808) 349-7505

teresamcaveney@yahoo.com

15th December 2020 **TEACHER TESTIMONY**

Board of Education

State of Hawai'i

1390 Miller Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Board of Education Members and Governor David Ige,

My name is Teresa McAveney, and I am an unmarried educator who has been a devoted teacher and public servant to the State of Hawai'i since 2004. I am a master teacher, school leader, and have 20 years of total teaching experience.

When hired, I committed to a hard-to-fill school on Oahu for seven years of my career. During my first six years of teaching, I received NO increase in pay due to a contract reached during the teacher strike in 2001. Imagine, working for six years, experiencing the already high cost of living increase, watching your bills grow, but not your yearly salary. But, I stuck it out, did the best I could, thinking it WILL get better for the teachers of Hawai'i in the future. I am a born teacher, and my students are worth it.

Then, came 2010 and Governor Lingle's furloughs. Salary wise, I and thousands of teachers never recovered financially. Those furloughs created a wage disparity for teachers where teachers, hired 7 years after me, are currently making the same salary. It also altered my abilities to gain a higher "HIGH 3" for my state pension for retirement. But, again, I stuck it out. In my mind, I thought it will get better, and Hawai'i teachers will get what they deserve. Give it time.

Come 2011, Governor Abercrombie announced his 5% pay cut for state workers. Although short-lived, it was another hardship our Hawai'i teachers to endure and fight to get back. And, to find out the state pay cut could have been avoided altogether with federal loans, proved the State of Hawai'i might NOT have teachers' best interests at heart afterall.

But, hey, continue to stick it out for the students. It has to eventually get better for teachers and their families right? Our union will finally reach salary and benefits contracts that reflect our importance to society, our communities, our keiki? Maybe? No, teachers finally receive a contracted raise in pay only to find out that our portions of health care benefits increased- just barely enough to cover the added costs with our raises.

Hawai'i teachers have been hoping and hanging on for too long. We use the love of our students, our schools, and our profession as constant excuses for dealing with our continual neglect and poor treatment. At any sight of an economic downturn, it is Hawai'i teachers and the quality of education of our kids that is targeted first for balancing a budget.

Here we are, 2020, and teachers (and of course, many others) again are on the chopping block. I am a single, unmarried teacher trying to make it work on one income, in Hawai'i, on a teacher

salary. Covering costs of living is already tricky enough, and with my salary, savings are nearly made impossible even without the looming pay loss.

My reality, living on a single income, includes a mortgage, homeowners association - going up another \$150 a month starting January 1st, by the way - student loans that I cannot seem to get forgiven no matter how much I try. Increased utilities costs-electric bills, cable, phone-all going up. State car registration costs are ridiculously high for the 16-year-old junker I drive because, again, I'm a teacher working in Hawai'i and I cannot afford a newer, safer one.

I do not live a lavish, excessive lifestyle; I never expected to. However, being a professional with degrees, years of experience, a school leadership role, I DID think my quality of life would allow me to cover my living costs and be able to plan for a comfortable future retirement. These furloughs have yet again doomed me further. I am left to the reality that even my monthly basic needs will not be financially covered now. I am scared.

This is the part whereas a teacher I'm supposed to point out the negative effects furloughs will have on my students, how furloughs would have a direct negative impact on my students, but I'm not. It should be obvious to the State and the Board without me going through that list. Excuse me for once in my career I am a bit selfish and would like the State of Hawai'i, the Board of Education, and Governor Ige to focus on ME too- a teacher's needs and the negative impact on a teacher's life.

Year after year, I turn a blind eye to the fact that the State of Hawai'i and its government leaders continuously neglect the needs of teachers. They do not hear our pleas for relief, for help, a fair-decent wage, fixing wrongs that should have been dealt with years ago...Will the wage gap and disparity continue for teachers like me and get worse with the new furloughs? Will my union be able to tackle this? HSTA can't tackle the first wage gap for teachers. In 2017, HSTA and teachers claimed to have a great victory for teacher salaries of a pay increase of nearly 14% over four years. A 3.5% yearly salary increase is the most basic yearly raise for any worker, in any profession, that covers yearly cost of living increases. Victory? I think not. Teachers have to have our unions bargain for us for this? Threaten strikes? It's deplorable.

I have given the State of Hawai'i and its keiki and families all I have to give. I have met every role demanded of teachers - educator, mentor, counselor, nurse, stand-in mom, tutor, volunteer, curriculum builder, software developer, teacher of social emotional needs, tech support, protector, data collector and analyser, student cheerleader, communicator, custodian, and the list can go on. This year, add hybrid teaching while putting myself at health risk during a global pandemic to my ongoing list of duties. But, I am proud and happy to do it all. I am a teacher. I just wish it was recognized and rewarded accordingly.

I've been holding on to make my 30 years of service as an educator for the State of Hawai'i. I am unsure how these furloughs will affect my life in my final 10 years as a Hawai'i educator. I am broken and facing the unknown; my morale gone. I am looking at other possible options, including selling my home and moving. State of Hawai'i - wake up. You are about to lose one of your best and brightest educators here. And, I know for a fact, I won't be the only one.

I urge any who are listening, find alternative ways to balance our state budget and ways to avoid these furloughs. And please, think of teachers, like me, when the next contract negotiations begin. Happy Holidays.

Sincerely, **Teresa M. McAveney**



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Melissa Montoya <miss.melissa.montoya@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:36 AM

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

Budget cuts are detrimental to students. Teachers are leaving and will leave because they cannot afford to live here. It is not sustainable for Hawai'i's future. Who can afford to live here on a \$48,000 starting salary? Please fight for our students.

--

Melissa Montoya

Waipahu High School

Science Teacher

(808)859-3218

missmelissamontoya@gmail.com



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

jocelyn bertovich <jocelyn.bertovich@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:38 AM

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Jocelyn Bertovich. I am an experienced educator and currently enrolled in a masters program at Chaminade University, planning to become a secondary science teacher when I finish in 2022. As you know, there is a large deficit of qualified teachers, especially in high need subjects, such as science.

Learning recently about the expected budget cuts and teacher furloughs is quite discouraging. Teachers in hawaii already earn significantly less than their mainland counterparts. This makes it harder and harder to stay here, and like many before me, I am also considering moving to the mainland to work as a teacher in a county that prioritizes education.

There has to be another way to make up the budget shortfall that does not add to the teacher deficit and negatively impact our keiki. These budget cuts and furloughs appear premature, especially when Congress is on the verge of passing legislation that may help relieve Hawaii's budget crisis and just before a new presidential administration begins.

I implore you to rethink these furloughs.

Thank you,
Jocelyn Bertovich



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jonelle Romualdo <jonellevr@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:39 AM

I am writing regarding the DOE furloughs, schedule, and impact that the furloughs will have. This news is very upsetting to me as well as many others that work in the DOE. Our office staff has worked through the last 9 months of this pandemic with no extras, no restaurant cards or anything of that nature, and definitely no extra \$600 a week! If I am being honest that is more than I even bring home!!! Our office has stepped up to the plate... filled in the gaps wherever we were needed and really worked hard through this pandemic. I feel that it is unfair for us to take the cuts when we were the very people holding it together. I also feel as a 12-month worker it is unfair for us to have 10 furlough days while 10-month workers only have to take 6. That is the equivalent to half a month's salary. Here in Hawaii most people including myself are juggling bills and mortgage/rent. This pay cut will definitely mean choosing between one bill or another for most people and could even mean going without food, necessities, or housing. As a DOE employee working 40 hours a week I bring home around \$1700 a month. Please tell me where you can find anything to rent under \$1000, plus utilities, food, gas, insurance, medical, a car. We are the working people that barely (or don't) make enough to get by but do not qualify for help and we are the people taking the cuts. Please take this into consideration.

Jonelle Romualdo
Bargaining Unit 3



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony, item V. B.

1 message

Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:39 AM

To Chair Payne and Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education:

My name is Ashley Olson, I am a teacher at Lahainaluna High School on Maui. I am writing today to express my deep fury at and disgust with the proposed furloughs, to be discussed under 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.

Let me first acknowledge the craptastic financial situation in which the state finds itself. This is still no excuse to further decimate public education in our state.

I don't even have the patience to be polite at this point.. Beyond the furloughs themselves (way to further destroy public education in Hawai'i- well done, people!) the incredible cynicism and utter disrespect demonstrated by selecting paid teacher workdays to cut is... par for the course. The HIDEOE would utterly collapse were it not for the MILLIONS of unpaid hours of teacher labor. This is not an exaggeration. And once again, those making these decisions are betting that teachers will not just continue to work hundreds of unpaid hours to keep their classes functioning, but they will take the cut in pay without any actual reduction in workload.

Earlier this year, the teacher crisis in Hawai'i was finally being addressed in a meaningful way in an attempt to put a bandaid on a gaping wound. And today, you are receiving this letter because... well, you know why.

If the intent is to kill all optimism and joy within teacher ranks, again let me say WELL DONE people. If the intent is to destroy the basic foundations of public education in Hawai'i, you are absolutely on the right path.

A teacher's day does not end when the kids go home- as proven by the tens of thousands of extra hours teachers have spent "pivoting" in 2020 to deliver quality instruction to students via laptop. A teacher's workload does not diminish when a preparation day is cut. Teachers work loads far exceed what can be accomplished during the contractual, compensated work week.

Public education furloughs are a terrible idea. It was a horrible idea last time, and it is a horrible idea this time. You **MUST STOP** balancing the state budget on the backs of teachers and our students.

We know it.

You know it.

Do something.

Do the **RIGHT** thing.

Do not allow teacher furloughs to stand.

Ashley Olson
Lahainaluna High School
Maui



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough no for teachers

1 message

Daniel Toves <danieltoves@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:39 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha BOE,

I have a special needs "Autistic" child and humbly request that you do not furlough our beloved teachers.. being autistic it takes great deal of time and effort to get them into a routine and for them to learn and grow, we've seen our son "Cody" grow so much with the help of his teachers and has learned so much to adapt to everyday life.. The last furlough really put a hamper on Cody learning and actually resulted in him reverting back to old ways without the positive leadership that he was getting at Waikiki elementary.. My son is now 5 years old and is now starting to actually say a few words now due to tremendous and tedious work that all the teachers do there.. please do rethink this matter, as a very concerned parent who only wished the best from his child.. please do reconsider not to furlough the teachers please. If you have any questions please do contact me at 702-332-3579

Warmest regards,

Daniel Toves
"Cody's daddy"

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawai'i
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
Atherton YMCA
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
*Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
* Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Native Hawaiian Education Council
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Punahou School PUEO Program
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu

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



December 17, 2020
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

We would like to comment on Discussion Item V. B., and Action Items VI. A. and VI. B.

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

We thank the Board for asking the Department for specifics regarding furloughs, impact on schools and communication to families for the next two school years.

We are particularly concerned about point five, furloughing teachers in the classroom, as they are closest to the students and should be a top priority. In addition, we are concerned about point 7, how school hours and days will be maintained according to HRS 302A-251. In fact, we are not clear on the definition of school hours under the current distance/hybrid learning scenario. We ask the Board to get clarification on this point.

VI. A. Board Action on findings and recommendations of investigative committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 92-2.5(b)(1)) concerning Board policy positions and legislative reports for 2021 Legislative Session: Board policy positions for the 2021 Legislative Session and Board legislative reports for the 2021 Legislative Session (annual charter school report)

We support the Board's two policy positions regarding the Department of Education as listed below. Because HE'E Coalition continues to strongly advocate for equity in education, we would respectfully like to add the underscored language below which prioritizes resources for our high-needs students.

- The Board of Education ("Board") supports proposed legislation that preserves funding and resources for student learning at the classroom level.
- The Board supports proposed legislation that fulfills the needs identified in the Department's Board-approved biennium operating and Capital Improvement Program budget requests for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023.
- The Board supports proposed legislation that preserves funding and resources for our high-needs students, those who are economically disadvantaged, English learners and students receiving special education services.

VI. B. Board Action on Superintendent's evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year: Superintendent's Priorities and strategic plan indicator targets

We are pleased that the Superintendent proposed SMART goals for the two mutually agreed upon priorities mutually agreed upon for her 2020-2021 evaluation.

Regarding priority 1, we think that the metric calculation should start from Q1 of this year versus Q4 of last year. The reason is we believe the Department did not have complete and accurate information about devices and connectivity in Q4. HE'E asked for this information in our letter dated April 27, 2020; the Superintendent's response back did not include any data around these two issues. We think that the Department had better information about devices and connectivity in Q1. **Assuming we keep the Superintendent's stated percentage decrease targets the same, we would seek a 50% decrease in the device and connectivity gap, respectively, from the end of Q1 to the end of Q4 of 2020-2021. We would also be interested to know how the Department determined the gap for both measures.**

New Target: Decrease of 50% in device gap from Q1 to Q4 2020-2021
Decrease of 50% in connectivity gap from Q1 to Q4 2020-2021

Regarding priority 2, we learned from the December 9, 2020 Star Advertiser article entitled, "First-quarter grades reveal Hawaii public school students' struggles in adapting to learning during the pandemic"¹ that there were a fair number of students who did not receive grades because schools did not issue Q1 grades, distance learning students did not receive Q1 grades, and other reasons. **For this reason, we feel a fairer comparison would be a quarter where 100% of students received grades, which would be Q2.**

New Target: Decrease of 2.1% in elementary school language art gap measured from end of Q2 to end of Q4
Decrease of 1.1% in middle school language art gap measured from end of Q2 to end of Q4
Decrease of 1.4% in high school language art gap measured from end of Q2 to end of Q4

Regarding the strategic plan indicator targets, **we strongly oppose the Superintendent's proposal of average daily attendance instead of chronic absenteeism.** The reason is chronic absenteeism is a more comprehensive measure compared to average daily attendance when addressing at-risk students.

According to a Chronic Absenteeism overview published by the equity advocacy organization Education Trust:

Chronic absenteeism is a measure of how many students miss a defined number of school days (often around 15 or more days) for any reason. Research shows that chronic absenteeism is associated with a number of negative consequences for students, including lower achievement, disengagement from school, course failure, and increased risk of dropping out.

. . . .

Average daily attendance measures the average number of students who show up on any given day. Most schools have very high average daily attendance rates — often above 95 percent — so this measure does not meet the "meaningful differentiation" requirement in ESSA. Additionally, average daily attendance masks which students are at risk of academic failure due to chronic absenteeism.²

¹ <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/12/09/hawaii-news/first-quarter-grades-reveal-hawaii-public-school-students-struggles-in-adapting-to-learning-during-the-pandemic/>

² <https://studentscantwait.edtrust.org/resource/chronic-absenteeism/>

Therefore, we strongly urge the Board to change the metric to chronic absenteeism and ask the Superintendent to present an appropriate target for reducing chronic absenteeism for the system for the 2020-2021 year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawai'i
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
Atherton YMCA
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
*Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
* Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Native Hawaiian Education Council
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Punahou School PUEO Program
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu

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



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE Testimony 12.7.2020

1 message

BA Paul <bethann.janine.paul@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:41 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.](#)

Aloha Board and thank you for acknowledging our testimony today.

I have been an educator for nearly 15 years. I have worked in two different states, and Hawaii is my forever home. I want to give you some honest perspective of stark differences I have noticed in the educational system and the way that system works with teachers.

In New York, with a Masters' Degree and 5 years of experience, I left the state making \$78,000/year. I was a 10-month employee. My mortgage was \$1,000/month for a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom home. I lived by myself and easily afforded all of my own bills, and even paid off my Bachelor's Degree. During the most stark financial times (I was teaching there during the Great Recession in '08 and was a relatively new teacher), there were a few layoffs. Programs that were never touched included special education and college preparation. Programs that were cut included sports, extra curriculars, and specials that were not necessary to the Common Core curriculum.

Fast-forward 12 years. In Hawaii, I live on the island of Oahu. I have been a teacher for 7 years here (with 5 years experience). I have my Masters and additional courses towards higher degrees. I currently make roughly what I had made in New York (slightly less) as a **12 month** employee. My rent (we cannot afford to purchase a home) is \$2,000/month (and a steal in our neighborhood). We have cut back on many items and goods and services so we can afford to live here. When I first moved here, I had to live with roommates for the first time since I attended college. I was making less than \$45,000/year. That's a 42% paycut. A 42% cut to live in a place that has a higher cost of living. This current furlough proposal emphasizes the reality that we all must face and resolve. Teachers in Hawaii are the lowest paid as per cost of living of any state in our union. On top of these furloughs, the budget proposed has us cutting important programs such as special education and college preparation, and we are losing teachers and support staff in these high-needs areas.

The day that the BOE met last, I was working until 9:00PM on plans for students and teachers that I work with. On the night Ige announced his furlough plan, I was working until 8:30PM sending emails and drafting behavior interventions for high-needs students. The next day, when the Superintendent sent her email, I took a deep breath and calmly worked until 8:30PM once again in order to complete drafted emails and schedule observations. Our work does not turn off when we leave the building. Last night I conferenced with one of my related service providers over the phone from 4:00PM-6:40PM about a student, discussing plans of how to tackle challenging behaviors during provided services. I wonder if you might think of your own work schedules. How many of you who are not teachers or support staff can say that you put in 14, 15, 16 hour days on a regular basis for a salary which cannot afford you any savings, and can barely pay your bills? My fiance tells me that I work too hard, too long of hours, and for thankless pay. He reminds me that I would make much more money in a different line of work with my experience and skill set, and he is right. He reminds me that we are attempting to save for a wedding that has been further delayed by the imposed pay cuts. The problem here is that I love my job and my colleagues, and I especially love the students I work with and helping their families and our community. I already work two jobs to keep afloat. I just want to

be respected and paid a living wage to do it, in one job. I do not seek riches and have never been motivated by money. I crave what every human craves: safety, security and community support. I feel teachers are receiving none of those three in this state at this time and it is incredibly heartbreaking.

I am not just thinking of myself. I have been in consultations with multiple teachers who have broken down crying over the stress that this school year has put upon them since Ige and Kishimoto's announcements. Our teachers, support staff, and service providers are breaking. We have already lost many good teachers that I work with because of COVID regulations that have not been thorough or clear, and that have put others at risk. I have been in classrooms with adults that choose not to wear masks around vulnerable students. I have been in classrooms with sick students, sent in with high fevers, and then not tested for COVID, leaving the rest of the staff seeking their own testing for their own health and the health of their families. I have seen schools continue to reopen even as there are infections on their school property and rising infections in their community. I have seen administrators struggle over making impossible decisions that they will be responsible for, as the state leaders back away with their hands raised, stating that individual schools should have the "power" to make these decisions in their communities. What this means is that leaders want to abdicate any responsibility, and therefore any blame, if things go south.

I had heard a discussion recently during a BOE meeting that it was a relief that teachers did not leave en masse over COVID. I am not sure if they are examining the numbers as a whole, or at individual schools, however, I personally know of roughly a dozen educational assistants, support staff, and teachers (many of which were vital to the instruction of our special needs population; the population that has been in school during COVID for the most lengthy amount of time) that have left the profession for other careers that consider their health and well-being for a decent salary. Their students suffer and the school suffers. Those of us left struggle to find coverage and to train that new person to be with the student(s) within a day's notice. This furlough plan has placed more undue stress upon those teachers and professionals that have stayed, learned new methods of teaching within a week or so of training, and dealt with COVID on both a professional and deeply personal level.

It was shared that although pay will be cut by 9% (which they cannot cite their power to break that collective bargaining agreement, located in the Hawaii State Constitution, anywhere in the law, although news organizations have pressed state leaders on this issue), we will not be working 9% less days. The days break down into 6 days furloughed for 10-month employees and 10 days furloughed for 12-month employees. That averages to a little over one (not two) days a month for 10-month employees and 1.43 days a month for 12-month employees. This, in plain English, means that we will be working on days that we will not be paid for. Let's be painfully honest, we will be working on the furlough days as well. Our special needs students will still need to receive services in accordance with their educational plans; we will still be creating lesson plans, sending emails, completing paperwork tasks that are completed behind the scenes, and our other students and families will still need help accessing online curriculum work, etc.

Let's be clear as a community. We need other sources of income besides tourism. This infection has made that clear. This is not something to be resolved at this table, but something that can be influenced by those at this meeting. Something that can be resolved by those sitting here right now is the dismal mistreatment of professionals in the educational community by those in power. I hope you all stand unified behind those that you represent on this board. I can tell you that the support has not been felt on the ground for a long time. You all have a strong influence on how the Governor and the Legislature treats those in this field. Without your support, the children suffer. These children are not offered the same opportunities or dedicated professionals as they might find in another state, not because those working with them are not trying and capable, but because we are all stretched so thin and given so little that the same services cannot be awarded to those under our wings, even with 16 hour days put in on a regular basis.

Thank you for your time and energy.

Respectfully.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - BOE Testimony 12.7.2020

Bethann Paul



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Daniel Skousen <coachskousen@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:43 AM

**Testimony in regards to 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.

My name is Daniel Skousen, I am working as a physical education teacher at Lahainaluna High School on the West side of Maui, and have been with the State DOE since 2005. I am a father of 4, and sole provider for my family. My wife stays home with our 3 children under 4 years old, the youngest is 3 months.

Cost of living, including rent, food, and taxes have grown exponentially over the last 5 years for my family. The pay increases from our negotiated contracts have been very helpful, but have not come close to keeping up with my families needs, especially housing costs, (largely due to increases in property taxes and failure of the government to keep up with the demands for affordable housing permitting).

Our State and County governments are more of the problem than the solution. The State mandated shutdowns have destroyed my second income, which is essential for my ability to provide for my family. I have been forced to work a second job over the past 4 years to supplement my income. Teachers already do not rise above the "low income" level if they choose to have a family, and I am closer to the "poverty income" level according to the federal guidelines.

Due to the insane State and federal rules, I was denied unemployment and pandemic unemployment assistance because my 10 month teacher contract is considered "Full Time"? Go figure, most teachers I know rely on the income from Summer to sustain themselves, and many work second jobs during the school year. I pay unemployment tax through my small vacation rental cleaning business, which I work after my teaching job and during Summer and Christmas breaks.

About 40% of my needed income comes from my second job, and the State refused to give me assistance because I have this "Golden Goose" Teacher position?

To add insult to injury, the recent news of teacher furloughs is devastating for my family. I am already in significant debt personally from this Pandemic. I had no personal debt and lived within my income responsibly before the government shut down, however the Governors "energizer bunny" economy killing interventions kept going beyond belief. My savings helped my family through the first few months, but the continued government mandated destruction of our economy forced me to apply for help. After months of waiting and waiting I was only left with more disappointment with the denial of my claims.

These planned furloughs are a slap in the face to those of us who provide reliable teaching and mentoring for our future generations. Those of us who have stuck with the profession during the last 5 years, when income potential elsewhere was more significant, are now being told we have to suffer because the State failed to budget and save surpluses during times of feast, and when the famine came, the peasant State employees will take the brunt of the punishment.

Please do everything you can to resist the Governors plans to furlough teachers and further hurt our students.

Thank you for your time and empathy.

Daniel Skousen
808-248-8286



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

1 message

Lisa Gualdarama <lisagualdarama@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:43 AM

I had to go through the furlough for 4 years when I first started it was very hard I almost lost my house I was getting hard times to make my mortgage and other monthly bills. Hopefully it will not affect me in that way this time. It seems like our Governor has been have a hard time with his budget for most of his term and has been taking it out on his employees every time. We haven't received our negotiated raise since like the early 2000's because he keep complaining about the budget



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tigerof2000 <tigerkama2005@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:44 AM

General Business Meeting

V. Discussion Items

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

As the furlough implementation is proposed, it is a human rights violation. Article 23 *of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is workers' Rights: including 2. The right to equal pay for equal work. We should not be mandated to do equal work for less pay.

This is not an "emergency," it is a problem of institutional structure which has existed for decades. Hawaii is the only state which does not use property taxes for education. Over the past few years, HSTA has proposed numerous changes to tax structures to address school underfunding. Each of these efforts has been defeated. Public employees should not be the scapegoat for a lack of quality budget planning.

Meanwhile Hawaii's biggest philanthropists seem related to propertied interests. External investors are not paying their fair share. Hawaii's revenue stream should be analyzed to address a better balance of priorities. Our legislature should be involved in addressing shortfalls.

Our head of household has been unemployed since March. We prioritized our expenditures for home maintenance, vehicle repair, and groceries. We are seeing savings from reduction in travel, other than for Grandma's mainland funeral. Governor Ige's tight deadline has a direct impact on our budget. Our only "Christmas" expense is rescuing kittens which were abandoned nearby. We remain grateful for one employee in our household, and our home.

Our schools are struggling, families and communities. Adding an even greater load at this time is another straw on an overburdened and tired camel. Keiki are our future, and deserve much better!

Mahalo for listening!

Sincerely,

The Anderson 'Ohana of Hilo



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony.

1 message

Brett Mchenry <brett.mchenry@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:47 AM

My name is Brett McHenry and I am a Special Education teacher at Kailua High School. What Governor Ige fails to understand is not only has he proposed a 10% budget cut to my school with another 9% directed at Special Education, that these furloughs will directly impact my students with Special Needs. So now with a budget cut that will probably cut two teachers from our department, he is now cutting direct services that are federally mandated by a student's Individualized Education Plan. Parent's can sue the state for failing to provide federally outlined services, which will potentially cost the state more. This needs to stop as the students and their families are being negatively impacted. Put the students first, and with these furloughs and budget cuts, we cannot.

Do the right thing Governor Ige.

Sincerely,
Brett McHenry

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



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony/Furloughs

1 message

Lisa Lessing <lisalessing@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:56 AM

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

My name is Lisa Lessing and I was raised in Hawaii and have taught here 32 years. I would like to retire in 5 years. The furloughs will hurt my retirement as they take your top 5 earning years to decide your pay. I am still recovering from furloughs and strikes and directed leave without pay from past years. We have a huge shortage of teachers here. At my school they had to hire student teachers who have not even graduated as emergency hires to cover classes. Many days if a teacher is sick students sit in the cafe as there are no subs. Moral is the lowest I have ever seen. Please consider letting us at least have our raise until our contract is up and we have to negotiate again. Better yet consider investing in our keiki our future by helping create an environment where we can hire and retain good teachers!

Sincerely,

Lisa Lessing

US History Teacher

Kahuku High and Intermediate School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Kacie Shirai <kacieraeck@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:59 AM

TESTIMONY

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kacie Shirai and I am an elementary teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii. I hold a Master's degree in teaching and have been teaching for four years. As a single mom, my teacher salary is barely enough to make ends meet, and my 5-year-old daughter and I have to live at home with my mom and step-dad (also both teachers) in order to survive. I knew going into the teaching profession that the pay wasn't great. However, my love and excitement for teaching future generations of Hawaii's keiki, especially in my hometown, outweighed the negatives. But that was before COVID-19 and the threat of furloughs.

Throughout this pandemic and the distance learning process, my job as a teacher has not gotten easier. In fact, it has become much more difficult and stressful. I plan lessons, grade assignments, communicate with families, and collaborate with colleagues almost around the clock. It has become so stressful at times, that I've questioned my ability to do this for the next 25-30 years as I had planned, and always hoped to do. The pressure that teachers are under to deliver content and social-emotional skills to students in an online setting is becoming too much. And now, with furloughs on the horizon, it has brought me back to this thought: "Why am I working so hard and making so many sacrifices as a teacher, when I am not valued or fairly compensated for the work that I do?"

The governor's blatant disregard for state employees, especially teachers, has been evident since the pandemic started. He's threatened furloughs since the beginning, and it's ridiculous that with one mark of a pen, he will be able to cut the pay of thousands of teachers and staff. People who put money into the economy and have been working through a GLOBAL PANDEMIC. People who already sacrifice so much of their time and income to support students and families, and make sure that what the STATE cannot provide, we can.

As far as I know, Governor Ige has not considered any other options or come up with any other solutions besides these furloughs and that is unacceptable to me. As a state, we must do better to take care of our people, especially the children, and when we cut the pay of teachers, we are showing them that their education is not as important as the bottom line.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Kacie Shirai



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

HIDOE furloughs are illegal and will hurt students

1 message

Anamica Bedi de Silva <anamica.bedi@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:11 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To the Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am a Hawai'i resident and registered voter. I am submitting testimony to voice my stance against the proposed furloughs for Hawai'i's educators. Cutting hours and pay will only add to the fatigue of an overburdened school system.

Thank you,

--

Anamica Bedi de Silva



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Courtney Fullmer <courtney.c.fullmer@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:13 AM

I am begging you please don't do this!!!

I have been teaching kindergarten for over 10+ years at the same elementary school on Maui. When you first threatened pay cuts back in May I broke out in hives for a week, I started interviewed for jobs on the mainland - I was so stressed out!! I started selling items because I was ready to move ASAP. However, Hawaii is my home. I didn't want to leave and I was able to buy a home on Maui to continue in my teaching career and build my life here.

We have a teacher shortage already, we're already the lowest paid in the country and then you're going to furlough us when teacher with 10+ years were supposed to get a pay raise. WE CAN NOT Survive on a 2 year furlough. I know the state is struggling financially but so are teachers. Please, don't make us make up for your deficits off of the backs of hardworking teachers. We didn't do anything to deserve this!!!

I don't have a 2 income household. I work 2 jobs. My 2nd job is at a wedding company but that's been shut down due to your orders so, I haven't had any income from them since March. I NEED that income. I had to get a 3rd job at Whole Foods and work on the weekends just to survive. Your furlough would cause me to work 7 days a week and if a wedding comes up then I'll work on the nights too til who knows when. You need to realize who you are affecting by YOUR choices. We are real people who are struggling to just get by. When you look at the budget, look at our stories and our names - we are real people not just numbers and a budget. You are affecting the food we can put on our table, the small business we can no longer afford to purchase from because every penny will need to be stretched even further than before.

We show up everyday and do our job, we're working harder than ever before and then you're going to cut our pay. Now, besides the financial impact you will have on teachers you've completely destroyed our hope, faith and trust in the educational system. You have crushed our spirits and our desire to teach.

Now you are affecting the students education. They are suffering too. Students don't deserve teachers who are beyond frustrated and burnt out.

WE ARE FED UP!! You cut our pay 10%, just watch what happens. You are going to get what you pay for.

In the holiday spirit, you're a mean one Mr. Grinch

STINK
STANK
STUNK

Sincerely,

A very disappointed kindergarten teacher :(



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Mrs. Diccion <bddiccion@hes.k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:14 AM

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

Aloha,

I am writing to the Board of Education to tell you about my life situation, and the impact that these furloughs will have on it. I am already struggling financially. I have over \$260,000 in student loans. Teaching is my passion. Teaching is my love. I am at my happiest when I am with my students, knowing I am making a positive impact on their lives and ultimately helping create a better world for us, them, and future generations to come. My monthly payments are a total of \$2300 a month. I barely keep my head about water now, and my husband is to pay our bills, such as rent, renters insurance, electricity, water, sewer and wifi. I try my best to pay for groceries every month as well, but it would be near impossible if these furloughs were to take place.

On top of that, I am also a part time worker at Domino's in Kailua (O'ahu). I work there a few times a week, and with that, I am without a doubt - exhausted. I get home these nights anywhere from 11pm-12am, and wake up at 5:30am the next morning to teach my lovely third graders. Some days it is exhausting. To keep up with my bill payments, faculty/grade level meetings, both jobs and managing a household of three roommates, my husband and dog, I typically have to drink three shots of espresso everyday in order to avoid burnout. I am trying to cut down, since I know continuing this path of coffee is not great for my health, but at the same time I have very little energy if I do not. I always want to give my students 100%, and if I have to work every weeknight in order to replace the money that this furlough would cut, I do not feel as if I would be able to.

A furlough would create even more problems and exhaust for me, as my student loan payments seem to be rising as well. College tuition kept increasing during the time I was at school. I initially attended a four year university in New Jersey, since that is where I am from, but tuition was a huge setback, so when I decided to transfer to Hawai'i Pacific University, I was actually saving money on tuition. My husband and I have talked about moving back to the east coast, due to a low teacher salary here in Hawai'i. I do not want to move back, since I know there is such a teacher shortage here, and I love the community, environment, and students here on O'ahu. I already know that I will not be able to start a family and have kids based on my income currently, but a furlough to my family would put my husband and I back even more.

I appreciate all the support you have given to our wonderful school district throughout this hectic pandemic.

With aloha,
Brianna Diccion



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony from a Teacher

1 message

Cynthia Van-Kleef <cvan-kleef@iaoschool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:20 AM

Aloha BOE,
Testimony from a Maui Middle School Teacher

I oppose the implementation of furloughs for teachers because:

1. The bargaining process of including HSTA in the conversation was not followed.
2. Students are already behind in their educational process due to the late start to school this year and because there was a big learning curve for educators and students as we adapted to the distant learning platform.
3. All of our futures depend on having an educated younger generation who know how to think, problem solve, work together in teams, get along with others and develop their higher-level, critical thinking skills. These qualities are developed and honed when they are with their teachers.
4. In addition, teachers depend on our paychecks to buy food, clothing, pay our mortgages and for transportation to get to work. If teachers have to get 2nd and 3rd jobs, we then arrive exhausted to school making it more difficult to be our best.

Please, delay the implementation of furloughs until all other options of balancing the budget are explored.

Kindly,

Cynthia Van Kleef
Peer Mediation & Communication
SEL Coordinator
727.5150
Cynthia.Van-Kleef@k12.hi.us

Be Kind and Carry On!



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Kimberly Ciser <kimberly.ciser@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:21 AM

My name is Kim Ciser & I am a 7th grade PE teacher at Kalama Intermediate school in Makawao, Hawaii. I have never testified or made a statement in my 15 years of teaching but at this point enough already. How many hits can one person take? I will be brutally honest when I tell you that last year before Covid even started I began to think about changing my career path for many reasons. As someone who has taught in another district for 10 years making \$16,000 more a year than I make now, Hawaii DOE demands so much of its teachers & in turn barely pays it a livable wage. Fast forward to this year, like everyone else, I am in straight survival mode, completely exhausted, mentally & emotionally drained & working harder than I ever have in my previous 14 years teaching. The most important thing in my life is my family & what I have left for them is an exhausted step mom, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, or friend & that's not fair to anyone.

As if distance-learning during a pandemic isn't bad enough, now with furloughs I feel like someone punched me in the gut. To be clear, outside of teaching I have my own personal training business as well as a third job at the hotels that I work some nights & weekends. Yet I am still struggling to pay the bills & with my fiance losing a job due to covid I feel inclined to step up by working more. I am also getting married in June which should be the happiest time of my life yet I find myself forced to make cheap choices or not invite many people because I literally can't afford it even with working two other jobs. I guess what I'm trying to say here yet again is that working this teaching job is not sustainable by any means or a proper use of my time to be able to provide for myself & my family. If I have to take a pay cut or get furloughed I will be forced to decide if I can continue teaching which I already know in my heart is a no I cannot continue on like this. The saddest part of it all is that I come from a family of teachers & it is in my blood. My grandmother, mother, aunt & brother are all teachers too. I don't teach because of the money but at the same time I have a family who depends on me to provide for them & I am struggling to do just that with minimal time left for them. I want to be better for them but most importantly I deserve a lot better than these pay cuts & furloughs for me. I would love to be seen, heard & shown even the slightest bit of appreciation for the hard working & dedicated teacher that I am for the keiki of Hawaii.

Sincerely
Ms. Kim Ciser

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs

1 message

Kehau Kaho'ohanohano-Brooks <kkahooohanohanobrooks@kkhs.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:28 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

[I am submitting testimony for 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 was born and raised on Maui. I attended public school from K-12, stayed in Hawai'i for my post-high school education, attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and am now a public high school teacher on Maui. I have been a public school teacher on Maui for 19 years now. I stumbled into teaching accidentally, and after teaching my first year, discovered that I love it and never left. I worked hard to earn my Master's degree in Secondary Education along with my Teaching degree, all while continuing to teach.

I survived the furloughs of 2009 simply because I was in my early years of teaching and had just myself to take care of. This school year, (2020-2021) however, is an entirely different story. My husband was laid off from his job two months ago due to the pandemic. We have a house mortgage, electricity bill, food, and a 7 month old baby to take care of. We are already struggling trying to survive financially on a one income household. The news that we teachers will be hit next with furloughs, lay-offs, and budget cuts is devastating. I'm already worried about how my family is going to survive 2021 with added cuts to our household income. I don't know how we'll be able to continue to pay our bills even with finding creative ways to cut costs. We don't want to lose our house - we have a baby to raise, pets to love, and a loving home to nourish. The first semester of the 2020-2021 school year has been beyond stressful already. Adding furloughs to plate is already putting a tremendous burden on education and the professionals that take care of all of Hawai'i's children, even through this pandemic.

Furloughs will not only have devastating effects on teachers, it will also have everlasting effects on my students. So many of them are already struggling with coping mentally through this pandemic - being away from school, their teachers, a safe zone, and their friends since March! If the teachers suffer, the suffering will trickle down to the students. There are already not enough hours in a typical school day for teachers to get all our work done. The pandemic, distance learning, and new online platforms have just added to our

already heavy workload. We all take work home - work at night, when our kids are sleeping, on the weekends, and holidays. We don't get paid for this extra time we spend on school activities, planning, posting, communicating with our students, and grading. Taking away even more of our paid work time is simply ridiculous. We will still be expected to get our work done, but now with even less time.

At my school, we've already been warned by our Principal of the looming budget cuts and have been preparing to continue forward, planning to have less classroom supplies yet still deliver the same curriculum to our students. We were also recently informed of positions that need to be eliminated as well. This one hits harder. This means people - whole families - will be further impacted by losing their jobs. We will definitely lose some great teachers, and some amazing Hawai'i residents if these furloughs move forward. Teachers are already on the bottom end of the pay scale, struggling to survive day to day, and underappreciated. Enacting these furloughs illegally will definitely push some of us out the door, searching for a new profession, and possibly a new place to call home.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget without hitting education. Education should be a top priority for our state and the teachers should not take a hit when we are already struggling to survive ourselves.

Sincerely,
Kehau Kaho'ohanohano-Brooks



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Brandy Henderson <pumehana137@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:28 AM

Aloha mai kākou,

I am a mākuā of 3 keiki at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Ānuenue and kumu at Ka Waihona o Ka Na'auao, PCS. I speak from both personal experience from both a mākuā and kumu perspective.

It bewilders and frustrates me that in a time where kumu have been working tirelessly delivering instruction on a new platform, providing social emotional check ins when we are not physically with the students, tracking down students who are not showing up to class, providing quality instruction and feedback while closing learning gaps, emailing all hours of the day, turning a normal 10 hour work day to 20 hour work day because that's how important the work we do is, how important our haumāna are to us, all while our own personal 'ohana suffer, losing precious time with us because we understand and auamo kuleana.

The government has the audacity to turn around on the one profession who plays an integral part in the building of society and say this is how much you are valued, how much our children's future is valued. Saying that there is no other choice, means that every other option has been exhausted, which we know that not to be true. When the Governor's office was questioned on what options were explored, discussions with the affected unions, no comment was given.

There are contracts in place, agreements which are in breach with the furloughs, and the furlough dates chosen. The furloughs and cuts the BOE/DOE is pushing on educators is not acceptable, and further more, the calendar dates proposed by Superintendent Kishimoto is a breach of contract, as any communication regarding pay and furloughs should be directed directly to HSTA, not its members. 2 dates on the calendar are contractual dates agreed upon, Jan. 4th and June 1st are semester closers, choosing those dates speaks volumes about the value you folks have for educators. This speaks volumes to say, we are going to cut your pay, but expect the same if not more work from you, but you will not be paid for it.

The cycle of defunding education needs to stop, this is the future we are investing in, and when decisions like this are made, we are setting up our society to be only as good as we invested in it. Is this the message we want to send to our students, our posterity??? They are not worth investing in? I have heard from many teachers across the island that they are thinking of leaving the profession mid-year due to burn out, lack of support, and now cut in pay, just when we were starting to make gains.

I humbly submit my testimony to the Board of Education members, requesting action by the members to stop the furloughs, as this will have detrimental effects on our keiki and society. Choose our keiki, choose our future. Mahalo, me ke Akua pū!

Mahalo nui-
Brandy Henderson-De Ramos



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

mary Bonnetty <missionready09@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: mary Bonnetty <missionready09@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:37 AM

Dear Chair Payne and Esteemed Members of The Hawaii Board of Education,

I, Mary E. Bonnetty, a member of the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and Special Educator at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School (QKS) within the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE) am testifying on behalf of :

Action Item: Notification to Employees of School Year 2020-2021 Furlough Plan

I am testifying today as a very concerned Special Educator and tax paying resident of Hawaii. I implore that members of the BOE take a firm stand and deny Governor Ige's request to furlough all state employees. In respect to Governor Ige, a concerned leader would not request a budget cut for state workers while not considering the socioeconomic and psychosocial elements that the furlough impact would cause to Hawaii's Public School System and future teacher retention rates. Subsequently, Governor Ige has not stated to the dedicated tax paying residents of Hawaii that he intends to reduce his own wages to support the projected \$1.4 billion budget shortfalls. Educators are struggling to support their students and parents during this critical time in history. Teachers do not have the adequate technological equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and administrative support that Superintendent Kishimoto endears to the public.

Governor Ige's proposed furlough plan does not align with the HDOE 2030 Promise Plan nor does it align with the only answer to deter the projected \$1.4 billion budget. Please do not jeopardize the lives of our students, families, and educators by approving Governor Ige's plan to furlough state employees. Instead, please support the Governor to budget the CARES Act monies received and other government provided funding to reduce the projected \$1.4 billion budget shortfall in the state's general fund.

Respectful yours,

Mary E. Bonnetty



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Ryan Yoshizawa <ryoshiza50@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:41 AM

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 Hawaii Board of Education Members,

My name is Ryan Yoshizawa and I am testifying today against the furloughs being imposed on teachers by Governor Ige and the Hawaii DOE. I understand that the State is experiencing a budget shortfall as a result of COVID-19's effect on the economy. But, furloughing teachers and cutting positions at the school level will only make a difficult situation worse for our students who are already struggling during this pandemic.

Teachers at my school have been looking to add more time to meet with students who are struggling and could benefit from extra individualized instruction. And now they are being told to expect even less opportunities to meet with students. Additionally, many teachers have commented on how much more difficult and times-consuming it is to prepare for virtual classes when compared to in-person lessons. The extra, unpaid time that teachers were spending to better serve their students is now being rewarded with furloughs and budget cuts.

When everyone else was being told to work from home, teachers were declared essential and many had to fight for their right to be safe and work from home. Now, teachers are being told they are not essential because it is convenient for the State to fill the budget gap. I am disappointed that Superintendent Kishimoto is not advocating against furloughs considering how much it will affect student health and learning progress..

Governor Ige said that he does not want to borrow the money from the Feds to help with this economic downturn because it will affect the State's bond rating. It is great to think about the future; but, we need to deal with the present too. Individual citizens are struggling to make ends meet and teachers are some of the most compassionate and caring individuals I know. Still, there is a limit to how much one can give without compensation or support. All we are asking is that the Governor and the DOE provide us with a glimmer of hope that they support us as much as we support our students..

Ryan Yoshizawa, Librarian
Waipahu High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Plan

1 message

Aaron Day <a.day@seariders.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:41 AM

Honorable Chair and Board Members,

I am not going to debate the furloughs nor talk about the negative impact they will have for me personally or for our economy. What I am going to share with you is the severe negative impact of having the first furlough day be the contractually negotiated between semester teacher work day. This is a day that is used to finish out the first semester and prepare for the second semester. I am a math teacher at WHS, which is on a 4x4 block schedule. This means that our one credit courses only last for a semester. This means that all of my courses are starting from the beginning when we return after the winter break. In a normal school year, I spend the between semester work day finishing semester one grades and setting up my classroom for my second semester classes. I did not initially think about the additional impact this year would have for how I need to spend that day. In the middle of the night last night I woke up and tossed and turned as I finally realized what this means to me this school year. You see, my students will not be walking into my classroom on Tuesday, January 05, 2021. They will be walking into my virtual Google Classroom. This virtual Google Classroom does not exist until I make it. Anything I want to hand out to the students needs to be added manually. The students need to be invited. The calendar needs to be created. All of these things are things that are above and beyond the prep work I would normally do on the between semester day. There is currently nowhere for the students to show up to on Thursday until I spend the time to create it. This is the year that the State of Hawaii decides to tell me that while I am an essential worker and cannot telework all week, I do not need my contractual between semester work day. I have been asked to do more work in unfamiliar ways all year and now I don't even rate a day to prepare for a whole new set of classes? This creates far more hardship than the considerable financial burden. This is what is making me lie awake at night when I should be preparing for my students' finals. Please reinstate our between semester work day. If furloughs must happen, do not add this insult to the already grievous blow. It will hurt me to lose the pay, but it hurts me and my students more to not give me the time to create the classroom that they have to enter on their first day back.

Respectfully,

--

Aaron David Day
Waianae High School Mathematics Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furloughs

1 message

S475-Michael Ching <s475-michael.ching@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:49 AM

Im for it and i think its a great idea

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 <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Miriah Petruzzi <miriah.petruzzi@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:51 AM

I Miriah Petruzzi, a current Hawaii DOE teacher, strongly oppose the furloughs because of the negative impact it will have on teachers, students, and the community as a whole.

With lower pay, many teachers will not be able to afford basic things like groceries and utility bills, let alone paying for things out of pocket for students (which has become the norm). A lack of planning for teachers will cause excess stress, and inevitably have a negative impact on student learning.

Test scores will go down, which will impact college admissions and student self-esteem. Small communities like ours depend on college graduates to come back, seek employment, and bolster the community. By underpaying teachers we are creating a domino effect that benefits no one and weakens everyone's quality of life.

This will certainly insight teachers to leave and possibly leave the islands altogether. Those vacancies might not be filled, or will be filled by unqualified candidates, as we have seen many times. Students, parents, teachers, administration, etc. are still adjusting to distance learning and throwing furloughs into the mix is a recipe for disaster.

Teachers are always expected to 'just find a way to make things work' but we are tired of being stretched thinner and thinner, and now during a pandemic? It is not the time to discourage people from entering the education field, but that is exactly what furloughs will do.

Sincerely,
Miriah Petruzzi
Kohala High School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Maui science teacher

1 message

Lacey Brandt <lacey.brandt@mauihigh.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:52 AM

Aloha, My name is Lacey Brandt and I am a science teacher at Maui High School. I want to quickly share with you my experience in teaching with regards to the furlough; I appreciate your time.

I am a marine biologist with a masters degree, turned teacher (I still practice marine biology on the side). I taught in Hawaii for 5 years full time under the classification of 'substitute teacher.' because I thought teaching was temporary as my life's work was in marine biology. You can probably imagine how low my pay was for those 5 years of full-time service. I called my job "community service," and I also ran a Maui animal rescue for free during those same 5 years.

I finally completed an amazing teacher credential program and now I'm a first year science teacher with a masters degree, starting at the bottom as a year one teacher, in my actual 6th year teaching. Upon beginning teaching in Hawaii, I received a flyer that I still have from HTSA. "Our Plan to End Hawaii's Teacher Shortage Crisis." It connects the crisis 100% to teacher salary.

I am actually in a full load of continuous personal development courses to increase my pay. I am paying for those courses, and still paying for my bachelors and masters degree. During the Covid crisis teachers have risen up and worked even harder, and it's not over. I'm so proud to stand united with these teachers and students; neither of us have given up during this difficult time.

I don't have the answers to our state debt, however, in my humble opinion, cutting back on teacher income is the wrong way. Especially Hawaii teachers that already rise up every day and do a great job for lesser pay. Some of the best teachers are teachers like myself, who don't even have tenure, or a loud voice, but we continue to serve and are the future of education in Hawaii. We will be the ones most severely impacted financially by changes in education and we will also be the ones who lose our jobs if things get worse. Please continue to think of us.

Thank you for your time.
Lacey Brandt



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony about Furloughs

1 message

Nicole Huffman <nicole.huffman@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:52 AM

Aloha to the members of the Board of Education,

My name is Nicole Huffman, and I am the music teacher for Pohakea Elementary School. At my school I service a fairly small population of roughly 450 students, but based on my time this year I can say that this year has been incredibly difficult for all of us (teachers, students, and parents).

I am a probie 5-6, meaning I am currently in my 3rd year as an educator and I'm about to hit tenure. Unfortunately, due to the announced budget cuts my position is going to be eliminated for the 20-21 school year, meaning I will be unable to reapply for my current position. As a music teacher, I am in a unique position where I am a part of my students' lives for several years until they leave the elementary school. Just imagining saying good-bye to my students one final time at the end of the year is heartbreaking. In a time when people are looking for ways to cope with the tramas brought on by these circumstances I think the loss of music in my school will be felt greatly next year.

With the budget cuts that will be implemented in the coming school year of 20-21, there is very little hope left in the people who are supposed to inspire young minds. I personally use more than half of my paycheck just to cover mortgage, and the idea that my very small salary is to be cut is very daunting.

With the implementation of furloughs and budget cuts, I will most likely be pushed to move to a different field outside of education. I am fortunate that I have other skills that can be applied outside of teaching, but not everyone can say the same. Our state does not produce enough teachers locally, and as a person just about to reach tenure it's hard to think of reasons for more people to join the education field especially when we are told that we are essential, but then are told through the actions of the state that we are not valued.

I hope that the Board of Education will help us in this great time of need.

Sincerely,
Nicole Huffman
Music Teacher at Pohakea Elementary School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for 12/17/2020 BOE Meeting

1 message

Kate Wood <cubfankate@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:15 PM

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

Aloha members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kate Wood and I am a fourth grade teacher on the Big Island. I am also a parent of a kindergartner and a third grader. My husband is presently not working so that he may stay home and do his best to facilitate our boys' asynchronous learning. We made the decision for him to stay at home because I am a probationary 4th grade teacher. We cannot financially afford for me to take a leave or risk losing my current teaching placement near our home by interrupting my probationary period.

I love teaching. I finally feel like I am doing what I was meant to do but I am exhausted. Not just new teacher, not used to the routine exhausted. I have intensely prepared for 4 different jobs this year (all variations of teaching fourth grade) and as I understand it, am about to undergo another transition as our school considers trying an asynchronous pilot program after ceasing use of Acellus in November. Since our school's departure from Acellus, I have been teaching math and science asynchronously to 76 fourth graders. It is not realistic for me to be able to plan my lessons, record content, design assessments, monitor student progress, give individualized student feedback, provide interventions, follow up on absences, host live SEL sessions for students to connect with each other, meet with my whole grade level team weekly, my asynchronous grade level team weekly, the school wide asynchronous team weekly, in addition to participating in weekly staff meetings all exclusively during my daily and weekly contract hours. I am already working at least an extra 2-4 hours every day and frequently 6-8 hours on the weekends. I cannot keep up. I cannot keep it up.

At present, furlough days are scheduled to cancel out teacher workdays whenever possible to minimize the impact to students' learning. I understand the rationale but I am not in favor of a decision that will have the end result of asking overworked teachers to work even more unpaid overtime hours. A furlough day for educators does not have the same effect as a furlough day for a many state employees. Let's look at a DOT road crew worker. Certainly thousands of people rely on them completing their job but a DOT road crew worker is largely incapable of performing their job off hours. Nor would they likely feel any obligation to squeeze in a few hours of paving after the kids go to bed. They wouldn't be likely to cancel their workout plans after work to restore or hang road signs or get a sitter or set up a weekend playdate for their kids so they can get a head start painting stripes on the road before having to go back to work on Monday. DOT projects have targeted completion dates but frequently run past their due dates. It is expected to happen. Educators are working towards a now earlier project completion date of May 28, 2021, teachers' last day per HIDOE 2020-2021 School Calendar. We are not allowed to run past our due date. Our "project" must be completed on time. We can't just postpone grading student work for a few weeks or record extra asynchronous lesson plans for a few days or weeks into June to make up for our lost days.

A furlough for educators is asking us to do even MORE work for free. We are already working well beyond our contract hours to figure out how to best meet the academic, emotional, social, and physical needs of our students. Please don't ask us to do even more of it for less money. It is unquestionable that a furlough for educators will save the state money. It is also unquestionable that I, and thousands of others, will ultimately work each of those furlough days regardless of whether or not we are being financially compensated.

Please do not furlough educators. Do not furlough educators if you respect and value our work. Do not furlough educators if you truly merit the mad scramble and constant adjustments we have made and continue to make to accommodate the ever changing landscape teaching this school year has become. Do not furlough educators. Just don't.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Kate Wood
Kea'au Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kat <kathyabrew@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 11:38 PM

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I started to draft a testimony regarding public education funding and furloughs. However, quite honestly, I am too exhausted. In my 20 years of being a special education teacher, I have never felt more beaten down and overwhelmed. There is not enough time in the day to fulfill the additional duties teaching during a pandemic has brought (planning and preparing distance learning activities, teaching virtually and in-person, additional documentation, sanitizing, helping with additional school functions to ensure the health and safety of students, etc.). It takes every ounce of my conviction and belief that what I do matters to leave my family at home as they struggle with distance learning (emotionally and logistically) and expose myself to Covid-19 and in turn potentially expose them. Now, in this moment, the Board of Education has the opportunity to show through their actions that they truly support teachers and what we do and have been doing, especially during the pandemic. We have risen to the challenges of distance learning and teaching during the pandemic. However, the loss of funding and furloughs will only stand to further demoralize educators who are already holding on by a thread. Myself and many of my colleagues are unsure that given the risk to our health and safety, the overwhelming workload, and loss in pay that we can continue in the profession that we love.

My hope is that the Board of Education will recognize the sacrifices educators and our families have made. My hope is that the Board of Education will support educators and the important work we do. We need that recognition and support now more than ever.

Respectfully,

Kathryn Miyamoto
Special Education Teacher
Pearl Ridge Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Inga Park <ingapark@me.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:15 AM

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am writing regarding discussion item: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, and communications with families and employees

My name is Inga Park Okuna, I am a school counselor at Kalihi Uka School and the parent and grandparent of public school children. As the HSTA Honolulu Chapter President, I hear from teachers in the Honolulu District who are very concerned about furloughs. This is a very rough time for pretty much everyone. Many teachers are barely making ends meet as it is. It's especially exacerbated if their spouse/partner is out of work because of the pandemic. I personally know teachers who are retiring or moving away because they can't afford to remain in the field, at least in Hawaii anyway. A teacher friend is now considering taking a leave without pay because she can't afford childcare if there are furloughs, she might as well stay home to care for her very young children (one of which is only a month old). One of my best friends, a special education preschool teacher, has decided she needs to retire at the end of this month. Your school employees are really giving it their all during the pandemic. Teachers at my school are teaching online and in person every day. We are constantly reminding our students to keep their distance when walking in lines, stay at their seats, and pull their masks up. Looming furloughs add a level of stress on top of overly stressed educators who have had to step up and become masters of technology and video. If you haven't witnessed teachers trying to teach online to a group of young children who have limited attention spans, you've missed out! Add a few students in the classroom at the same time, and it's even more impressive—and exhausting! Teachers are not in the classroom to become rich, but I believe it's only fair that they make a living wage. A living wage that would allow them to pay for their needs and to get a home.

I am sure you want to do what's best for the students in Hawaii. It's clear we are facing an economic crisis. But are furloughs truly unavoidable? Are you willing to fight for all of us who are working harder than ever and protect our jobs and our ability to survive here? Please honor the contract we have and step up to protect your educators and school personnel.

Thank you very much,
Inga Park Okuna



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony to the Hawaii State Board of Education regarding Furloughs

1 message

Marina Keizer <mkissawookiee@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:23 AM

Testimony to the Hawaii State Board of Education regarding Furloughs

Aloha Members of the Hawaii BOE,

I have been a public school teacher in Hawaii for 16 years. I teach 5th grade at Holualoa Elementary School. My two children are public school students.

I am asking you to represent the best interests of our keiki by fighting against the furlough of Hawaii public school employees.

People may question, "I've lost my job, my health insurance, my business-- why are teachers complaining about losing 6-10 days of pay?" The question is understandable and valid. The public needs to understand that teachers and the HSTA are fighting for the rights of all Hawaii keiki to a quality public education.

As a veteran teacher, I witnessed the effects of teacher furloughs following the 2008 recession which led to an exodus of teachers from our schools-- early retirement, teachers finding more lucrative jobs outside of public education, teachers leaving to the mainland seeking higher pay and lower cost of living. These furloughs directly led to our *current* teacher shortage crisis. The current plan of HDOE budget cuts and furloughs will cause an exacerbation of this crisis.

If furloughs are implemented, the current teacher shortage crisis will balloon into a nightmare. Our keiki will face understaffed schools, larger class sizes, and will be taught by an increased number of emergency hires who are not trained or qualified to teach.

It is common in education for teachers and schools to be asked to do more with less. It's time for you to realize that despite our most passionate efforts, teachers can't do more with less. We can only do less with less.

Support Hawaii public education. Advocate for the schools our keiki deserve.

--Marina Keizer
Teacher, Holualoa Elementary School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

ALICIA MIYASHIRO <boolahboy@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:27 AM

Please help us protect our public education funding by supporting us in stopping furloughs from happening. Haven't our keiki and their education suffered enough? Haven't Hawaii's public school teachers been working double time all these months transferring their instruction to digital teaching? How can we even think of cutting their pay? Teachers are already underpaid for all that they do for their students. Why would we want to take away pay from them? Teachers' families are hurting too from this pandemic. Why would our governor want to cut from education funds to balance the budget? Please help us in our fight for public education! Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Disgusted and terrified

1 message

Bridget Hogan <bhogan@kiheicharter.org>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:08 AM

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

Aloha,

It's 2 am and I'm wide awake feeling disgusted and terrified by the actions the DOE and the BOE plan to take against me and my fellow teachers (and all government employees).

Did you know, according to cost of living vs teach salary, Hawaii is the WORST state in the country to teach? I'm sure you do but instead of using this time to find solutions to those financial problems, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that students in Hawaii are the most diverse in the nation, making this the hardest state to teach inclusively? I'm sure you do but instead of finding ways to help teachers meet the needs of students with different backgrounds and needs, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that many students and teachers live in multi-generational homes? I'm sure you do but instead of securing enough PPE for everyone and building outdoor classrooms, such as the ones in California, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that teachers usually spend between five to ten UNPAID hours per week grading and preparing at home? Did you know that if you take two of our teacher work days along with institute day we'll have to work for free? The day before the semester starts in NEVER a day off (and usually the Sunday before isn't either). I'm sure you do but instead of proving us time to prepare and clean, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that 75% of teachers are women, many of them moms, and that we are the ones being hit the worst by this pandemic? I'm sure you do but instead of providing childcare, stipends, or other solutions, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that many teachers' spouses are ALSO teachers or other government employees, therefore losing 20% of their salary? Did you know that many of their spouses (like mine) work in tourism and have been out of work since March? I'm sure you do but instead of finding other ways to cover this deficit such as adding a small fee to every flight or hotel booking, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

Did you know that five of my coworkers quit last December? Do you think about how the few highly qualified and experienced teachers will be forced to leave Hawai'i? I'm sure you do but instead of finding any other solution, no you decide to take almost 10% of our pay.

When you take from Hawaii's teachers, you take from Hawaii's kids.

No aloha left,

A teacher

--

Ms. Bridget



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

1 message

Harmony Seivert <hseivert@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:13 AM

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

To the members of the Board of Education:

My name is Harmony Seivert, and I am a Special Education Teacher at Waimea Elementary School, on the Big Island. This year has been an intense one as I have adjusted to distance learning for my students. Since November, I have been bringing several of my most vulnerable students on campus for in-person services, in an effort to reduce the impact of school closures and to help my students progress. We have had additional documentation piled on, with additional meetings with parents to create Total Distance Learning Plans, School Closure Contingency Plans, and to discuss COVID-19 Impact Services. All of my efforts to comply with these new pandemic-related initiatives this semester have added to my workload, while my husband watches our 3 children during the day and supervises their distance-learning at home. We have been stretched financially since my husband's work is tied to visitors to the island. Only recently has he been able to contribute to our family's income again. It has felt like our reasons for being here are shrinking. My husband looks for housing in other states on a daily basis, thinking of where Plan B might take us.

The news of furloughs is yet another blow. Our school has already been making adjustments based on budget cuts and are already working with fewer EA positions with plans to start with one less Special Education Teacher next year. Two of my experienced colleagues are looking into retiring early after this year because the stress of the job is no longer worth it, which will leave us with vacancies. While I understand that there are difficult budget decisions to be made, HSTA gave several suggestions as to how to reduce the DOE budget without cutting teacher pay. Please consider other options. As a teacher who was here during our last furlough period, I remember how many people left. That is what got us into the mess of way too many vacancies, especially in Special Education. If we continue down this road, it is not a question of if, but when we will find ourselves in the exact situation we were in before. I urge you to consider other options to reduce the budget. Our teachers can only take so much.

Thank you,

Sincerely,
Harmony Seivert, MA Ed, NBCT
Gr 5 Special Education Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Amithea Love <amithea.love@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:28 AM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am strongly opposed to furloughs. As a mental health worker in the DOE I support some of our most vulnerable youth. The demands are high and we never have enough staff. It is already impossible to complete all of my responsibilities within my working hours and I find myself frequently spending nights and weekends to get work done. Additionally my department recently had several individuals resign and due to budget concerns no one is being hired to fill the positions. The solution is for those of us remaining to take on extra duties without compensation. I only just got my step increase that I should have gotten a year ago. So now I am looking at less working hours to do more work, that I was barely compensated for in the first place, and with a pay cut. If this goes forward I will absolutely be looking for other opportunities for employment.

--

Amithea M. Love, Psy.D.
Hawaii-Licensed Clinical Psychologist



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

"NO PERSONAL Information

1 message

jessica cabilin <jessicacabilin2001@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:52 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: senkanuha@capitol.hawaii, repkapela@capitol.hawaii.gov

I'm writing to the board as testimony to the proposed furloughs. I'm humbly asking that we hold off a little longer. I know you all have pushed off what some are saying as inevitable, but can we wait at least until our newly elected President is in office.

He has publicly and repeatedly shared that he plans to make sure funding for state and local governments available.

The general public have their opinions. Many of them say that "teachers haven't been working, so why should they get paid" however, I'd like to also remind them that our job description, duties, and skill set changed almost overnight. We did not sign up for this, yet we have NOT given up. At our school, teachers have learned how to teach 100% online. They have learned multiple online programs, stayed in contact with families, and had to try and keep the attention of our little ones. We had to compete with the television, online gaming, TiKTokers, and YouTubers to keep these kids engaged and learning. So far, we have! and even if we aren't in school, we are still making sure our Keiki are learning and we are teaching as best we can.

Proposing a furlough now, is just another blow below the belt and the biggest impact will be on our Keiki.

I invite any of you to come to my school do a virtual walk through and see what we teachers are doing and what our Keiki have been learning.

Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Robin McDonald <robmcdonald808@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:50 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed furloughs. I implore the Board of Education to support educators, school facilities, and most importantly, students. I am a twenty three year veteran of teaching in Hawaii. I believe that the State should honor its contract with teachers. Teachers have been working with commitment, creativity and diligence, especially during the last year.

I have been challenged to employ technological skills, that, prior to distance learning, I would not believe could reach my students. Yet, with additional hours of preparation (of which I am not compensated) I am teaching virtually. Teachers have contributed their skills and knowledge (again, with no compensation), to inform and streamline virtual curriculum and instruction. This is my first year as a general education inclusion teacher. I have experienced dedicated special needs teachers and aides, that provide support and encouragement for learners. Yet, I am incredulous when I hear of budget cuts that will result in decreased funding for these classes.

I ask the Board of Education to advocate for students, the schools, and the educators that teach. I live simply on my annual salary. I have family members that I anticipate, I am obligated to assist financially. Furloughs will result in monetary stress. Even before 2020, teachers are known to work a second job. In years prior, I had worked in the service industry, while teaching. It was exhausting.. ..I woke at 4 a.m. and went to sleep at 11 p.m. This is the reality of fiscally compromising education.

Sincerely,
Robin McDonald
Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

2 messages

Lauren Taketa <lmtaketa@gmail.com>
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:42 PM

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

Sent from my iPhone

Lauren Taketa <lmtaketa@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:45 PM

[Quoted text hidden]



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony from A.Skal Concerning Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Adam Skal <skal@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 10:34 PM

Aloha BOE and All Stakeholders,

RE: Adam Skal's written testimony regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

First I would like to thank all stakeholders and especially the Governor for reading my personal declaration.

I have considered the calling to teach an honor Hawaii keiki for ten years. Although I passionately love my calling, there has not been a day in which I did not think about changing careers. The draconian pay scale set forth by the state and lack of respect for the profession that ironically inspires all future societal progress has been an abomination.

I became an educator with the mindset of not being a traditionalist, with the mission of being a 100% student advocate. I dedicate my mental health to all my students' well being! This is very common with educators without any acknowledgment from stakeholders.

Having family and friends who work in school systems in the northeast, I continuously swap stories about the perils of education. My friends and family cannot fathom how underpaid and underappreciated our teachers are by lawmakers. For example Boston school teachers on average make 20% more than Hawaii teachers and they live in a comparable economic zone. In recent years I have grappled with job opportunities on the mainland that would actually benefit my family, but I am stubborn and love the community, school, and principal that I work with (Aliamanu Middle School). Shout out to Mr. Hetrick!!!! I LOVE WHERE I TEACH AND DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE! Although my passion and wherewithal to raise my daughter within the Hawaiian culture she was born into is strong, it does not make sense to live in abject poverty and ethical disrespect from lawmakers henceforth.

In regards to the upcoming furloughs I am certain any pay reduction would be the last time I will accept the disrespect for our profession. Being a single income household and raising a four year old I simply cannot make the economics work anymore. I have endured years of renting places in neighborhoods that are not safe (prostitution, drug dealing, domestic violence) all on a teachers salary.

Everyday it is my job to inspire students, yet I am constantly conflicted that I would not want my students to "live in my shoes." Talk about hypocrisy. Hypothetical question; why would a student care about their education when their teachers are just struggling actors? We pretend as if we are valued yet our payscale and potential furloughs are continuous reminders that we are just cogs in a wheel, expecting to perform miracles. It pains my pride that my title is an educator, yet I would not push any students into teaching in this state.

I find the passion of my colleagues and other educators as an inspiration. If one Google's "teacher furloughs" the first ten or so links are all Hawaii related. This is not a distinction that any lawmaker should be proud about. Shame on our political leaders for continuously perpetuating the notion of the teacher pariah for the sake of our students' future.

I will take my ten years of exceptional service towards the community I served and put forth the same effort into a new community in which I can adequately provide a safe environment for my kids' future. The backroom stereotypes of Hawaii's educational system will continuously be prevalent if the same status quo of our BOE and lawmakers continue as the power players who make decisions. I love my job, but the pay cut and lack of future pay increases will lead my career towards a mainland position that actually cares and pays me for my services.

Lastly, I respect your time and consideration to alleviate the furloughs, but even if the furloughs are not put into action, we teachers are collectively paid a penance in comparison to mainland school districts with comparable economics/systems. Our communities' futures are dependent on the students of today. If we cannot inspire those who will teach future generations then we will fail or just meet the status quo. You may be content with the status quo as it's a means to satisfy a budget, but I am done. My child and every child in Hawaii deserves an education that is not predicated on a legislative budget but is focused on the PAYING educators who "ironically" have the most benefit on society.

12/16/2020

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony from A.Skal Concerning Teacher Furloughs

V/r

Adam Reid Skal

Proud Aliamanu Middle School ELA Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tanya Pang <tanyapang808@yahoo.com>

Tue, Dec 15, 2020 at 5:12 PM

Reply-To: Tanya Pang <tanyapang808@yahoo.com>

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

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tanya Casil and I'm a teacher with the Radford Complex. Usually, when I type out my testimonies I keep it brief and direct. Because, honestly, I don't have time to type out a well written letter, work, and be a mom. This time I'm putting more thought and time into this. Not saying previous testimonies were not important but because this is a major concern that needs to be addressed.

This year has been chaos. Pure and utter chaos. I have not cried and broke down this many times before. At one point, I was on the verge of quitting. This year has been rough on so many teachers. So many of us are over it. We are over the public complaining, the lack of information and guidance, and the lack of leadership from our state officials.

On top of all our other issues that we are currently dealing with- teacher shortage, old facilities, lack of support, big class sizes, lack of materials, etc. We have to now deal with furloughs and budget cuts! We barely have enough as it is. My husband always asks me at the beginning of the school year, "So how much money are we spending for your students this year?" Think about that for a second.

Furloughs are the icing on the cake. Really? I understand we are in a worldwide pandemic. I understand we are broke. I understand we need alleviate this situation. How can we do this to an already broken department though??? We are barely holding it together as it is. You want to add this to the teachers' plate? We pivoted, we adapted, we did everything that was asked of us. Now you would like to take away from not only us, but our KEIKI. They are our future. Why would do this? Is this truly necessary? Is there not another way? Where is our money going? It for sure is not going to teachers and schools. When you can share with the public a breakdown of the state's finances, let us know. This cannot be the way.

Thank you for your time.

Tanya Casil



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by the
Hawaii Government Employees Association,
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

December 17, 2020

Relating to the Board of Education's questions regarding the Department of Education's furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communication with families and employees

Three months ago, Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO, submitted testimony to the Board regarding the DOE's COVID-19 guidance for schools. The issue we raised then was the DOE's failure to consult the union on the health and safety guidance they released that very morning. Now, here we are, three months later, with the DOE announcing their furlough plan to employees via an email sent at 9:00 p.m. on Monday night to unilaterally impose furloughs. Many employees woke up the next morning to hear of the DOE's furlough plans on the local morning newscast.

Furloughs are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is a protected constitutional right of all public employees. The DOE never informed HGEA of its furlough plan and never made any attempt to negotiate the furlough plan with HGEA prior to announcing it to affected employees.

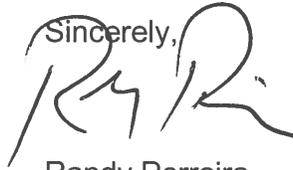
To make matters worse, Superintendent Kishimoto lied in the memo she sent to all DOE employees announcing the furlough plan, stating that "The Department's furlough implementation plans were shared with the...Hawaii Government Employees Association...in a good faith effort to mitigate the impact on all employees." That is a blatant lie.

HGEA learned about the DOE's furlough plan from affected members. As the exclusive representative of over 7,000 DOE employees, the DOE is in violation of HRS Chapter 89 and the collective bargaining agreements for unilaterally implementing furloughs without negotiations and mutual agreement. Three months ago, we questioned the DOE leadership's commitment to engage in good faith bargaining with HGEA and expressed to you that these are words without meaning and how difficult it is to build trust under these circumstances.

For instance, our Unit 6 Negotiations Team has yet to receive a response to their proposal for mid-term bargaining which was transmitted to the DOE on August 5, 2020. In the Board's June 18, 2020 resolution, the Board authorized mid-term bargaining to identify and negotiate any changes, exemptions, or modifications to the Unit 6 collective bargaining agreement as deemed necessary for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-21 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic. Here we are at the end of the first semester with no response to our Educational Officers who have carried the overwhelming burden of the reopening of public schools on their shoulders.

This testimony serves as notice to the Board of Education that the HGEA will take all necessary actions and seek all appropriate relief to address the DOE's unilateral implementation of furloughs that were never negotiated with HGEA, and are in clear violation of existing collective bargaining agreements and laws .

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony.

Sincerely,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony For Teachers regarding Furloughs

1 message

Jessica L Ford <jessica.l.ford@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:02 AM

Testimony For Teachers regarding Furloughs:

I am asking that our state protect public education funding by asking for the board's support in order to prevent furloughs. The furloughs will require me to seek out an additional job to cover my household expenses. I have been giving everything I have to my students and I can't imagine how I am going to manage an additional job at this time. I have never asked to be compensated for the additional hundreds - yes HUNDREDS - of hours I work for free to serve the children in our community. Teachers don't get paid overtime, we work for free because our students need our help. The lack of appreciation, respect, even acknowledgment of our importance and service to children makes me want to give up.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ford

--

Jessica L. Ford
First Grade Teacher
Pomaika'i Elementary School
808-727-4800
jessica.l.ford@k12.hi.us

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony re: furloughs

1 message

Nikki Morishige <nikki.morishige@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:03 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

My name is Nikki Morishige. I am the Academic Coach at Waiahole Elementary, and I am testifying 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 disheartened and incredibly frustrated by the impending furloughs for teachers. I have poured my heart and soul into this profession, planning during breaks, taking professional development opportunities on my weekends, remaining on campus hours after the school day is officially over, taking work home with me, night after night. I have heard the governor and Superintendent Kishimoto say, ironically, at the start of this school year, how essential we are and how urgent it is that schools and classrooms remain open for our keiki. And yet, here we are, not only getting paid one of the lowest salaries in the nation for teachers (when factoring in cost of living), but also facing another round of furloughs.

Over my 12+ years as an educator, I have learned that fair is not always the same as equal. To say that almost every state worker needs to equally give up part of their pay in order to balance the budget is definitely not fair.

Is it fair that even one day of instruction needs to be taken away from our students? Our students have already lost so much this year with the rocky and delayed start at the beginning of the year, to dealing with half day schedules on campus (due to social distancing logistics), to sometimes missing out on entire lessons simply because their WiFi is spotty. In schools, we are grappling with how to best support our students academically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and physically, knowing that gaps in each of these areas have widened due to the current pandemic situation. We are already struggling to find enough time to do it all, and to take even one day away from students is unacceptable.

Additionally, is it fair that our planning days are being taken away? Unlike many other jobs, work doesn't just get pushed to the next day...we still need to plan regardless of whether it's an official work day or not. Planning time is just as important as time with our students. Effective instruction is entirely dependent on effective planning..and effective planning takes time. Having our planning days taken away makes me feel wholly unappreciated. We already plan without getting paid...we plan on weekends, on breaks, after hours when our own keiki are asleep in bed. Now the few days that we actually get paid for planning, which is incredibly important and a necessary part of our profession, are being taken away. This is a sure way to lower the morale of all teachers across the state.

Not only do the furloughs impact our students, our classrooms, our schools, and teacher morale, but they impact our personal lives and communities as well. As an educator, I have maxed out on Class Movements, have earned my National Board Certification, and work multiple jobs. I have done everything that I can to grow as an educator and increase my pay, yet my partner and I are still unable to afford a single-family home (despite aggressive saving, denying ourselves trips, treats, and even dinners at restaurants), and I worry about the time when daycare costs for future children becomes necessary because it's likely that we will struggle to afford that as well. Is it fair, when I am already underpaid, that my pay gets cut? Sometimes fair means taking a little more from those who have a lot, rather than taking an equal percentage across the board.

With these furloughs, students will lose out on days of instruction that they need and deserve. Educator morale will continue to drop as we work as hard as we have ever worked (if not harder) while getting less pay. Spending and putting money back into the economy will suffer, as many educators cannot afford a dip in pay. If there is any other way to balance the budget, we need to find it. We should not be trying to balance the state budget on the backs of our students and teachers.

Thank you for your time in this matter.
Nikki Morishige, MEdT, NBCT
Academic Coach
Waiahole Elementary



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Ezra Witsman <yoshitoshi2@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:05 AM

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

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education Members,

My name is Ezra Witsman and I am a social studies teacher at Kealakehe High School in Kailua-Kona. I have been teaching for 17 years.

Teachers are essential workers and cutting teacher pay via furloughs makes no sense. We are already experiencing a teacher shortage crisis. Instituting furloughs will just exacerbate that situation.

Before this school year, many teachers worked diligently to prepare for distance learning. This was a quick pivot for teachers, but we were able to meet the challenge. Teachers are often the stabilizing factor in the lives of many students. How are teachers being re-paid for this Herculean effort? They are being re-paid by having their pay cut. How much more will teachers be able to endure?

Teachers are stressed and tired. I have spoken to teachers who have burst into tears because of the level of stress they are experiencing. Rather than cutting teacher pay, another alternative should be found.

People are already starting to get the vaccine. Why should we take such a drastic measure at this time? Life should return to normal in late spring or early summer. With life returning to normal, the economic picture will quickly improve. This economic recovery will also mean the level of tax revenues will increase dramatically.

Sincerely yours, Ezra Witsman



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Trisha Kehaulani Watson <watson@honuaconsulting.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:06 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Trisha Kehaulani Watson. I am a business owner here in Hawaii.

I am a private school graduate, as are both my parents. My son also attends private school, although he attended a DOE school for one year.

As a taxpayer, I simply want you to know that I gladly support our public schools and our public school teachers. I am horrified and embarrassed by these furloughs. We need to be paying our teachers more, not less. The signal we are sending our teachers and students is terrible. These are some of our most valued members of our community - we are not treating them that way.

Please stop these furloughs. I firmly believe that the legislature has other options for balancing the budget. I urge you to explore those. **I would recommend immediately convening a task force on the DOE budget that includes the legislature to identify other ways to address the budget shortfalls that resulted from the COVID shutdowns.**

Know there are many people, like myself, who are not public school graduates and are business owners who want to help increase the budgets for our teachers. I sincerely hope you find a way to make that happen. We are here to help.

Mahalo nui,
Dr. Trisha Kehaulani Watson

Trisha Kehaulani Watson, JD, PhD
Honua Consulting
[4348 Wai'ala'e Ave.](#)
[Honolulu, HI 96816](#)
+1 (808) 392-1617
www.honuaconsulting.com



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:07 AM

Hello Chair Payne and BOE members,

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.**

Please do everything in your power to fight these furloughs. A wide-ranging and indiscriminate furlough on the entire DOE workforce is not the answer to our problems right now. My entire household will be under furloughs if this happens, and it will adversely affect our ability to afford our bills.

Many schools are already facing the threat of budget and position cuts. Combined with further teacher loss due to furloughs, this will adversely impact our students by diminishing the quality and overall quantity of available teachers to work with our students in need.

In addition, two of these furlough days fall on already scheduled teacher work days. In effect, the teacher's first work day of the spring semester will be the same day as the students first day. It is not logistically feasible to have teachers and students show up at the same time when the teachers have not had time to review their class roster or figure out social distancing measures in their classrooms for their new students. Similarly, the last day of instruction for students is now also the last day of work for teachers due to these furloughs. Expecting teachers to finalize grades and finish closing up their classrooms for the summer within 30 minutes or so after student instruction ends in order to get off campus by the end of their contracted work day (and work year) is not feasible, logical, or fair to teachers.

Our students need us now more than ever in these trying times. This is the time to lean in and support our teachers and school staff, not stretch their resources even further.

Thank you for your time,

Brandon Cha

--

- Brandon



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Leila <maheas75@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:12 AM

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

To whom it may concern,

I am sharing my testimony regarding the Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.

During this time of uncertainty and now with Furloughs looming over our heads I echo the concern with many others. As a single mother this is the second time that I'll have to endure Furloughs. In 2009 it was rough having a 5% pay cut and it was a struggle financially. Worrying what bill to pay and not to pay. Having to cut corners along the way sometime things that needed to be cut wasn't the wisest but had to be done. Knowing the sacrifices that I needed to make and knowing it was hopefully going to benefit my family in the long run actually made my matters worst. I had many bills that went into collection which then resulted in court appearances for those outstanding bills. It took me years to clean up that ugly mess but I did it.

I just started to regain a financial handle on my life situation and now I am starting to have worries because we are facing a 9% pay cut. That pay cut is twice the amount as the last one. Looking over the days that was shared as possible stay home days I cringed. What was Governor Ige's administration thinking when they put out that possible dates. How are families going to survive when you put two or three furlough days into one pay period. How are families going to make it? Are other people in the State offices with higher pay scales taking the pay cuts and Furloughs?

I am already working a part-time job and with the decrease in tourism; days aren't always consistent. The impact of Furloughs will be tremendous for myself along with many others for years to come. I am aware that the economy is not in a good place, however for some of us that have been working the entire time it really seems to be unfair.

Although I may live with my parent I am the sole contributor in my home. My dad is retired with health issues on a minimal income. One of my children is attending college (virtually) and her job has been affected. She has not worked since the start of the pandemic and as a result had to move back home because she was not able to afford her apartment. Two of my other children has been doing virtual school since the pandemic started. Who am I suppose to turn to when I am unable to provide like I have been doing?

This will be a big blow to my family as well as many others. The Ige Administration did not set things up for the people in Hawaii when COVID-19 occurred and now we are responsible to make up for his down fall. The poor planning on his part and the wishy washy daily briefings got us to where the economy is today.

I am hoping that this Furloughs will be looked at again and viewed differently. With the Holiday season upon us, COVID-19 number rising around the world, and Furloughs to deal with. This is not the way anyone would want the year to end nor start. It really will be starting off badly for many if this is put into place.

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony on this matter.

Mahalo,
LF



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

no furloughs

1 message

David Nahuina <david.nahuina@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:12 AM

My wife and I are both teachers. That's a true 10% of our total income. How do I tell my daughter you can't apply to an off island college. Mom and Dad can't afford it. That feels really horrible. I know teaching did not pay well but the quality of life made up for it. I'm not so sure any more. We are seriously thinking about leaving education (25+years) because we can't support our family on the current pay, much less with a 10% decrease.

G. David Nahuina and Mindy Nahuina
Kealakehe Intermediate School teachers



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Nick F. <nico.d.friedman@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:13 AM

Aloha Board Chair and members of the Board of Education. My name is Nico Friedman, and I am a High School Social Studies teacher at Kealakehe High School here in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island. I am testifying on agenda item V. B, the impending furloughs announced by Gov. Ige and the schedule announced by Superintendent Kishimoto.

My teaching experience began officially here on the Big Island in 2016. I came to the island as part of a teacher prep program designed to address needs and gaps in education across the nation; ultimately I was assigned to the Hawaii region. In all honesty, I was hesitant to join the teachers here as the commitment to move to the state is an expensive and deep undertaking for someone who was under 25. Despite these initial misgivings I remembered my purpose for entering education and did everything I could to prepare. I moved here in the heat of the summer with no help from family, no connections, newly married, and with the news that I would be a father for the first time. We packed up our lives and left behind our families, our connections, and everything we had built to be part of the courageous and dedicated teaching force here in Hawaii.

Right now, I am being put in the most difficult position. Our family has not one, but two educators. My wife is also a teacher in the Hawaii DOE system. We are both relatively new teachers and will both be up for tenure this coming school year. And yet, we are so uncertain about what this next year will bring. We live in a tiny, cramped, and frankly overtaxed studio apartment for which we pay \$1200 a month. This is half of my pay. We have a car note, utility bills, wifi and phone bills, and student loans. Our beautiful daughter has special needs and requires care while we are at work, as well as medications, therapy, special dietary needs and other services that are NOT all covered by insurance and cost us a significant amount of money. I personally have been diagnosed with severe Crohns and face a lifetime of pain and lifestyle management that is costly and considerably pervasive in everything I do. Our options have already been limited, with the ambiguous telework options and safety precautions, the designation of us being "essential" to work but not "essential" enough to pay, and our continual reminder that we need to "be present for the kids" foregoing our own familial needs and responsibilities.

We live paycheck to paycheck, barely squeezing by, and have even at times been forced to work multiple jobs and positions, some PTT through our school and some in the world of retail and have STILL been over drafted before. Even as I share with you now, we are less than \$100 in our checking account with no savings to speak of. We have budgeted, and cut, and cut, and CUT again... nothing has prevented our situation from remaining the same. And yet, we managed. We continuously overcame and joined the many other educators who experience the same hardships day by day as a resilient force of reckoning. No matter the situation or need, we always turn up to our job with smiles, open hearts, and solid plans to bring learning and knowledge to our students to better prepare them for the world and beyond. The current furloughs would hit my wife and I so hard, we may never financially recover. There's little we can do to alleviate this crisis too. Aside from costly borrowing or bank loans and other predatory lending practitioners, there is next to no financial assistance for educators. We are salaried, and even with the furlough cuts in the eyes of the powers that be we are too over paid to qualify for assistance. No food stamps, no TANF, no Housing

voucher or Section 8. Even if we are unable to pay our bills, the answer is too bad... there is nothing we can do. We are ultimately responsible despite our lack of control over this matter.

Since the beginning , I have worked tirelessly from the very bottom as an emergency hire, juggling my own Masters education and training, teachers prep programming, constant changes and development of my school and district, the birth of my daughter, and the diagnosis of a lifelong debilitating health condition. In the year following the birth of our daughter, As I said before, my wife also joined us here in the DOE as an elementary school teacher, immediately adapting and shifting her experiences. We are both committed educators who, even after the end of my program, committed to remaining here and continuing our work in the community of Kona and with the amazing teams we have here addressing the needs of our keiki. There is not one day we do not discuss ways we can continue to learn and grow as educators!

And what do we show for it? I started with the Hawaii DOE in July of 2016. I received my first paycheck in late September. We went through our entire savings because we were asked to “be patient” and “wait for the system”. As an emergency hire, I was required to go above and beyond my contract to be considered “effective” and “committed”. I was constantly belittled and mocked, labeled as a deserter before I began because of the state’s history with new teacher turnover. I was challenged and questioned, my credentials were under scrutiny constantly and I felt the pressures of my personal life mixing with the anxiety and tiredness of my job. I worked for a pittance of pay because in the end, the money was just a result of the beautiful work I had before me, being a support, being a mentor, and being a connection for these wonderful keiki as well as a teacher.

I worked endlessly to provide support for my Special Education students and their specific needs, as well as the kiddos in my inclusion classes, Gen. Ed. And Sp. Ed. alike. And finally, I got to the point where we are now, finally somewhat stable, able to be a part of the school with my whole soul, not tied to multiple places of work, juggling typically out of reach expenses and the high cost of living. We are both doing this, my wife, who is also a teacher works with her school’s ILT and ART team, dedicates her time and energy as a Grade Level Chair and a dedicated SEL educator. And now this. We are both being told we will receive a pay cut being that we are both teachers in the Hawaii DOE; the furloughs that will be taking 9.2% of our pay do not just affect us once... they affect us TWICE. And we are not alone. We are not the only educators to be affected this way. Countless colleagues even here on the Big Island are facing similar drawbacks. There are many educators who share their careers with their spouses, with their relatives, and family members. There are generational members, there are even single educator households and many more people that will be impacted by these furloughs in a way that will decimate our teaching force. We cannot afford them. We did not have an excess of income to begin with. I have seen so many members of my own faculty with such sad smiles, hiding the truth of their struggles every day. And even now, we are facing a financial crisis (both personally) and statewide that will continue to erode our community wellbeing, even more so if these furloughs occur. Our students will lose teachers.

Many of the teachers who are struggling are being forced to consider their futures. We are all being asked to do something no one should be asked to do—to balance our futures and wellbeing and that of our families compared to the future of our students. We are being forced into a corner that is asking us to sacrifice our very livelihood for the sake of our keiki rather than being supported and given the tools to successfully address their needs and protect the safety of our home. Our schools are cutting staff from almost every department, we are losing necessary and valuable people with expertise and specific training that is vital to the delivery of resources for our kids’ needs. We are being asked to deliver quality instruction with less time, with less prep, with less support, and now ultimately with less pay. We are being directed to give 200% effort, and 300% effort where there is already 100%. And again, for less pay. What will our families do to survive? Who will think of our needs if not the BOE/DOE? What can we do to offset the financial discrepancies we will all face? Ultimately, we will not be able to. And we, as a state, as a

department, a school system, as educators, as mentors, and as the few lines of support for our keiki, will all lose.

There are other options, and, as even members of the state Legislature have said, there is time to consider other things. We need to consider more carefully. We need to wait

Thank you for your time.

--

Nico D'Angelo Friedman

Cell:(541)-951-9961



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - furloughs

1 message

Amy Suzuki <amyclbustamante@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:13 AM

DOE Furloughs

My name is Amy Suzuki and I am a special education teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School. Please consider supporting the idea that furloughs in DOE will be **detrimental**.

Because the population that I serve is considered vulnerable and high need, I cannot in good conscience allow my students who opted for 100% distance learning to work asynchronously. Therefore everyday, I teach both my distance learners and my face-to-face learners simultaneously. Each morning I plug my computer into the projector and document camera and have my distance students join my lesson through Google meets while my face-to-face students learn from their desks. We get through only 4 math problems everyday. We cannot get through more than that because having to teach without proximity slows the process incredibly. My 5th graders are already moving at a ridiculously slow pace to no fault of their own. It is not easy to learn from a computer when you require curriculum to already be presented in an alternate way due to a disability. To take away more instructional days would be seriously detrimental.

Furthermore, the described situation above requires extra preparation. I am currently working double the amount of duties I previously was working. Teaching a class of distance learners requires me to anticipate the difficulties students might have ahead of time and have virtual solutions available on the go. All the while, preparing to work with the students I have physically in front of me. And on top of it all, I must keep in mind safety procedures for COVID-19. One of the dates for furlough announced was a teacher work day. A day that I would have used to help me prepare for my upcoming semester. Already as it is, I give about 1.5 working days every weekend of my own time to make sure I am prepared for the coming week since the approach of teaching during COVID requires it. Not paying us for the serious preparation this year requires, sends a negative message to us teachers; and now, paying us even less.

This year, my class is full of students who are underprivileged. I have a handful of students who live unfortunate lives. They come to school for the food. They are blessed by staff who bring them essentials like clothes and toothpaste. They beg not to be sent home on days they're not feeling well. School is a safe place for them. Furloughs increases the days they are at home in bad situations.

I am fortunate that with the intended pay cut, I could be okay financially because of a combined income with my husband. While we are only FINALLY really just getting on our feet this year, losing the income would suck, but it wouldn't kill me. However, I can't help but think of my educational assistant, my best friend, whom I've worked with for 6 years now. Every stress and struggle in the workplace that I've gone through, she's gone through it right with me. She's worked through the difficulties of a special education learning environment and for about half the pay that I get. I remember the day that she told me her pay raise finally gave her \$1000 to take home in a single paycheck. She is single and pays a mortgage and car payment. She has to sell her crafts and babysit every weekend just to make it. Same stress, half the money, and yet we are going to cut her pay even more with furloughs upon us.

Please also continue to keep in mind that we have been asked to work in a high risk environment in regards to COVID-19 exposure. We lack ventilation in our classrooms and can't maintain "ohana bubbles". We are acknowledged as high risk workers as we are prioritized for phase 2 of vaccinations. Therefore, it is no secret that we are in a tough situation everytime we show up for work. However, a pay cut and less time to do our jobs efficiently remain in our future.

There are so many reasons as to why these furloughs are a bad idea. It has been reported that there are other ways to solve the issue of lack of funding. Please help us to encourage the use of these other strategies so that all of this can be avoided.

I hope the holidays find you well and thank you for considering these concerns and thank you for always listening to teacher voices this year. I have listened to many of your Board meetings and appreciate your honest consideration.

Thank you,
Amy Suzuki
Aliamanu Elementary School
Special Education Teacher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

avoid furloughs

1 message

M Young <mmwyoung@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:16 AM

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

Hello--I would like to ask that the BOE do everything possible to avoid furloughing teachers. As a parent, I want my child to have as many instructional days as is feasible and I'm also concerned for the welfare of my child's teacher and other public school teachers.

I would like the DOE to consider significantly reducing standardized testing requirements in the schools for the long term as a cost-saving measure and because it's better for the teachers and students to not dedicate so much classroom time to testing.

Please communicate the expectation for the superintendent to act with respect for principals and teachers, and to not assume they will keep sacrificing to the point of burnout. I know many teachers feel distressed and demoralized by the extra burdens they have had to take on by transitioning quickly to distance learning, having scant communication from administration, and having to fear for their own health and lives and in some cases acquire their own PPE.

Taking care of the public school teachers ultimately results in taking care of the students. Please emphasize to the superintendent that she must make decisions **with** her staff, not just for her staff.

Michelle



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Do not lessen teacher pay

1 message

Karen Sheff <sheffk@khswoverider.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:17 AM

There are so many other areas and positions salaries can be shaved, particularly the upper rank and file and or the resource people who are like shadows floating about.

Hawaii state teachers are underpaid as it is. Teachers like myself do not deserve any kind of pay cut whatsoever. If the state wishes to cut some Days off, so so without any reduction in pay! We are nit merely your teachers for our next generation and leaders of our society but also the babysitters and day care center supporting the community and families.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Parent and student testimony against furloughs

1 message

Red Earth Massage <redearthmassageandwellness@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:17 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To whom this may concern,

My name is Melanie Ng Sullivan and I am writing on behalf of our ohana. Our 4 year-old son, Greyson, is part of the Waikiki Elementary's SPED preschool. He has been enrolled since the fall quarter of 2019. He has been diagnosed with ASD and prior to his time with Waikiki's SPED program had been completely nonverbal.

We cannot emphasize enough, how essential the DOE preschool has been to Greyson's development. Before being enrolled in the DOE preschool program, Greyson had been attending a general education preschool. Though they meant well, the teachers at his first school were not equipped to handle a nonverbal child with ASD.

In the care of the Waikiki staff, we have watched Greyson's development flourish to the point where talks of integrating him into general education is now on the table. Our biggest worry with the talk of furloughs is the disruption to Greyson's steady progress, which feels like is violating our rights under IDEA.

Thank you for your time.

--

Melanie Ng Sullivan

Red Earth Massage & Wellness

www.redearthmassage.com

(808) 942-4325



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Melekai Jenson <melekaijenson@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:21 AM

Aloha BOE,

My name is Melekai Jenson, I was born and raised here on the island of Maui. I am currently a public school teacher here in the DOE. I have taught First grade here at Pōmaika'i Elementary School since 2012. I love the fact that I am able to teach the community I was brought up in with a passion for the keiki of this island. I am able to instill my love of art, reading, nature, place based learning and my love of this 'āina within them. Throughout the years I have supplemented my classroom with materials from my own pocket. There is never enough money from the school to buy what is necessary to teach my students. Cutting funding to the schools that are already underfunded is detrimental to all students and staff. Our classrooms will be more crowded, there will be less supplies, tech for all and space is limited as it is. Quality public education is a right and should not be something that is bargained with or discarded. We are already an understaffed state as far as teachers go. We can never keep teachers due to the low pay and high cost of living here. How can someone make it? I have seen time and time again new teachers come in with light in their eyes ready to take on the world, only to see it snuffed out as they realize they can't make it on the salary that is already in place. With the proposed furloughs and cuts NO one will be able to survive on this. Like I mentioned above I am from Maui and with the proposed furloughs I will not survive financially. I will be forced to either leave this profession, find a part time job or move out of the state I was born and my family before me to continue teaching and doing what I love. Forcing this kind of life choice upon someone due to a cut in pay is not fair or the right thing. Cutting educators wages should never be the answer. This is a very short term solution for the state and will only lead to more problems in the very near future. Many studies have shown that cutting pay on state workers actually hurts the whole state as this is less money being spent in the economy. Teachers will leave, students will not receive quality education and the cycle will start all over again. Please rethink this option and vote not to cut our pay.

Mahalo nui,
Melekai Jenson



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Furloughs

1 message

V Pires <hawaiiankolea@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:23 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good morning,

My name is Val Pires, and I'm a 8th grade science teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate on the Big Island. I have been teaching since the 2000 on Oahu and recently on the Big Island.

Negative impact of these furloughs cannot be overstated. The furlough dates given by the Department of Education are linked with days that we teachers need to collaborate with departments or team members that we otherwise do not have the chance to meet throughout the course of the year. We meet to address the needs of students and try to find avenues for success.

Our school leadership has already informed teachers hired 5 months ago that their position is not open next year. There has also been notification sent to families about furlough dates. The level of stress, to an already stressful year of teaching, borders on breaking. As a reminder, we did NOT have the summer to plan for this school year. We learned about 100% virtual learning 48-hours prior to students arriving.

Monetarily, this will force out new teachers who can barely survive on their entry-level salaries to leave the profession (which is the OPPOSITE of what we need), and for those of us like me, whose "high-3" or "high-5" would have been the last 4 years... has me thinking "why stay?". With mortgages (yes, that's plural), bills, and family expenses, this has caused me to pause and reassess what I should be doing with myself. Many of us are only recently feeling the relief from the Lingle-administration furloughs, only to be hit with another round.

I ask for leadership of the Board, the Department, and our employer to find a way to preserve the integrity of our bargained contract and the integrity of the profession.

Sincerely,
Val Pires

Regarding 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.

My name is Christine Russo and I'm a teacher at James Campbell HS and the parent of a student attending Ewa Elementary. I'm extremely concerned about the state's plan to implement furloughs on teachers. The consequences of these furloughs will have long-lasting and dire implications on the future of public education.

Prior to the pandemic, there were already alarm bells sounding on the state of public education in Hawaii as schools struggled to recruit and retain qualified educators. To further squeeze what has become a barren landscape will create irreparable harm on our keiki and the future of Hawaii's economy. One of the reasons we are in this mess is our reliance on tourism to float our economy. We've put too many of our eggs in one basket and we are suffering as a result.

How can we diversify our economy and create a sustainable and strong workforce with graduates that do not have the skills to contribute to it? Providing our students with access to a high-quality education is the best way for us to prepare highly skilled and well trained professionals and technical workers to grow our economy and move away from an overreliance on tourism. Perhaps if we did so earlier, we would have been better prepared to whether this storm and the tourism shutdown. Reacting to this lack of planning by further cutting teacher pay through furloughs will exacerbate the predicament we are in now and further erode the public education system in Hawaii. Adding furloughs on top of the deep budget cuts will cause a ripple effect that schools may never recover from.

As a parent, I am concerned with the future of my child's education in this state. Will she receive the education she deserves after all of this is said and done? As a teacher, I wonder if it is time to leave the profession and seek a job elsewhere that will provide more stability and less turmoil. I am just one among many who may walk away from teaching and I fear what we'll leave behind are classrooms full of keiki wondering "where is my teacher?"

Christine Russo
James Campbell High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

dereksurfkona@aol.com <dereksurfkona@aol.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:25 AM

Reply-To: dereksurfkona@aol.com

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

Why is it that come election time politicians and boards extol the virtues of supporting and improving education, but when it come crunch time our kekei are treated like another commodity? When will y'all finally stand up and demonstrate that the future of Hawaii's children is more important than filling a room at the Hilton or keeping another redundant employee on payroll?

Hawaii consistently ranks at the bottom of our nation for the number of instructional days and % of the state budget's expenditures.

How will our public school children compete with the private schools and mainland schools who value education? The governor's 10 furlough days this semester represent 3 missed weeks on our schools schedule, the Superintendent's 6 is two weeks of lost instruction. This is especially harmful for our 300+ students trying to pass AP courses/exams. Our fewer school days already compresses what we have to cram into each class, now you plan on reducing that even further. For these students the AP maybe their best ticket into being the first in their family to attend college.

Pay wise for teachers, this will be another pay cut. Long term teachers have never recovered from the last furloughs and reductions. We are already short over a thousand qualified teachers, more cuts will only exacerbate this and probably increase early retirement of highly qualified mentor teachers.

For once I hope education is truly shown to be a priority in Hawaii, but that is up to you.

Mahalo

Derek Monell

Kealakehe High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Noelle Garcia <noelle_garcia@pes.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:29 AM

Aloha,

I am a 5th grade teacher on the Leeward side. I am a single mother of four children with a mortgage and bills to pay. The proposed furloughs will break me mentally and physically. The past few years I have been working hard taking PDE3 courses to move up the pay ladder. Prior to that, I worked two jobs to make ends meet. I was also on food stamps. With the proposed cuts, I will start back at the bottom. I will need another second job to make ends meet. I do not have family alive to help. Working two jobs takes a toll on my children. This is wrong! Teachers have higher education and are certified. We live in the highest cost of living, yet teachers are the lowest paid in all 50 states. Three teachers at my school have decided to retire this year, along with our principal. I have teacher friends from other schools planning to move out of state this summer. I myself am debating on putting aside what I love (teaching,) and going back to college to pursue a career that is stable and pays well. My mother was a public school teacher. I support public education. However, I cannot understand how the first funding cut is schools. Our keiki need a quality education. They are our future! Our teachers need to feel respected and valued. Kishimoto and Ige.... I do not feel valued or respected for my hard work. During this pandemic, teachers have worked many extra hours of unpaid time to prep and make sure we reach out to our students, thus meeting their needs to our best ability. It has been emotionally draining. Often taking time away from my own children. This action you are proposing is a final blow to our well being. We love what we do. Please think of our keiki, schools, and teachers. With all of the COVID relief money, where has it gone? New police cars, restaurant cards, the rail project. What about education???

Respectfully, Noelle Garcia



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough

1 message

maria lorena gabaon <nancy_hi2003@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:30 AM

Aloha! My name is Maria and I'm working as an EA at Farrington High School. I don't know why Governor Ige wants to furlough us wherein he knows that everybody is struggling right now. My husband is working in a small restaurant and even though he went back to work last June we're financially struggling because they cut his paycheck by \$1,000/month and that's a huge sum that they took out from him. But he can't do nothing because the restaurant is also suffering financially and the owner is telling him the hardship they're facing right now. He can't apply for partial unemployment because his working for more than 20 hours. He doesn't even have a health insurance so I took him under me. So if I will go furlough I will have only a little bit of net pay and we have mortgage payment, personal loan, maintenance fee, utilities and credit cards to pay so I don't know how we will survive for the next months. I hope the Governor will going to consider looking for some alternative sources.

Mahalo,
Maria

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on furloughs

1 message

Jill Jacobs <jillybean05@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:32 AM

Dear Board Members,

My name is Jill Jacobs. I teach third grade at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kona. I am writing today to plead with you all to not support furloughs and stop them from happening.

I have been teaching in Hawaii for the last 7 years. I moved here from Arizona. When I moved here I did not make that choice lightly. I researched. I looked at the pay scale, cost of living, cost of insurance, ect. This was not a flippant decision. When I did this research I looked at the pay scale according to that I would be making about \$7000 more a year then I was in Arizona. I thought that would be enough to cover the difference in the cost of living. Little did I know. There are so many more deductions taken from teacher pay here that I was making only about \$100 more a month then I was in Arizona. To survive I had to borrow money from my sister, I got two additional masters degrees and took out a ton more in student loans to live on. I worked multiple jobs in addition to teach. I got a roommate to share my 1 bedroom apartment. Now with three masters, reclassing to class 7, a roommate to share the bills, and hard to staff money I am finally not stressed about money and only working as a teacher. However, if furloughs are imposed and continue in the future that will no longer be the case.

If we have furloughs my roommate and I will both have to take additional jobs again. We will no longer be able to focus only on educating the students. We will also always be stressed that we can not pay rent. Not to mention the stress that us having to take on part time jobs is possibly taking away a part time job from our students' families. So not only will furloughs impact students' education but it can also impact their families income.

I beg you to please stop furlough and find any other means to balance the budget then on the backs of education.

Thank you

Jill Jacobs



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Rebecca Marsh <rebeccamarsh108@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:34 AM

To Members of the Board of Education,

I am currently in my 15th year of teaching high school history at a public school in Hawaii. I believe that the furlough of educators will have a direct and detrimental impact on public school children.

Teachers are aware of the fact that many people throughout the state have lost their jobs, health insurance and are struggling to survive. We understand the argument that furloughs are a way to save jobs in the "long run."

But what people may not understand are the direct impact furloughs will have to our children. Here is some of what I've seen:

1. Every year, my school has a turnover of 20+ percent (before furloughs and Covid). We have to fill positions with teachers who are brand new, inexperienced, and often, end up leaving anyway. We can't work on refining our practice or new initiatives because we are just trying to "stay afloat."
2. Shortages impact our most vulnerable populations of students. The hardest teaching positions to fill are special education and ELL. I taught a special education inclusion class for five years, and often, the person who was supposed to be my special education co-teacher was brand-new (and didn't understand basics like classroom management or maintaining a gradebook), a long term sub (who didn't have credentials), or, at its worst, a different sub every day.
3. I've already seen the impact of this latest furlough conversation, which hasn't even been finalized. One of my friends, a passionate elementary school teacher, just accepted a position at a private school because she doesn't know if she can survive long term on a public school salary. Another friend has decided that with the uncertainty that comes with teaching in Hawaii, it is wiser for him to move to the mainland. Both were skilled young teachers, potential long term investments, and now, both have been lost.
4. Budget cuts swiftly and directly cut our enrichment programs. For many schools, the first programs to go are the programs that keep many of our kids engaged in school - music, art, language, technical and career programs. It's not just theoretical. Within a week of the current budget being adopted, my vice principal (regretfully) informed me that we could no longer afford to offer the art elective that I teach (in addition to my history classes). Now, at Kealakehe High School, students will no longer be able to sign up for a crafts class (weaving, jewelry, print-making) in their free period. It's gone.

12/16/2020

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I hope that you will consider the negative impact furloughs will have not only for teachers, but to our students.

Thank you,
Rebecca Marsh
Teacher
Kealakehe High School

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 <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

phone: 808-268-1073

[85 Mokuahi St.](#)

[Makawao,](#)

[Hi, 96768](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Dawn Shirota <dfaith808@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:37 AM

Reply-To: "dfaith808@yahoo.com" <dfaith808@yahoo.com>

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

To Board of Education Members, My name is Dawn Shirota and I am been employed with the Hawaii Department of Education for 23 years in various position from Teacher to Counselor and Student Services Coordinator. I am writing to you today ask you to please not furlough Public School Educators. This year has been the most challenging year in my 23 years of service. There has been an unprecedented number of students and families in crisis. Our children need us now more than ever. At present many more children need counseling support services and I have been putting in 10 to 14 hour days to support students and families due to covid impacts. If the DOE furloughs educator beware of the impact it will have on our keiki's and 'ohanas lives literally.

This past week at our faculty meeting we were notified how the budget cuts will affect our school. We were told that we need to cut over a million dollars from our budget which will lead to about 10 or more staff to be cut. I believe this cut will affect our counseling department as historically this is the department that gets hit first. I am anticipating that we may lose 2 counseling positions and the counselors left behind who are already overburdened will look for other employment opportunities. The ripple effect is that students will not get to access the appropriate counseling services and social service referrals needed. It will also impact Career and College Counseling service for students.

Lastly, I am one of the educators that had been majorly impacted financially by the previous furloughs and strike as I have been with the DOE for 23 years. This past year HSTA had advocated for our pay increases as you had been made aware of. Teachers who have been teaching about 10 years are making nearly my salary. It is very disheartening that I have sacrificed so much of my time as an educator and I do not get compensated adequately. Prior to the pandemic finances were a challenge , now with the anticipated furloughs I am forced to seek additional ways to get income. How will this impact my family and my health? Can I afford to live and work here on Maui? Please stop the furloughs for Educators.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Stephanie McLaughlin <smclaughlin808@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:38 AM

Stephanie McLaughlin, Teacher
Moanalua high school

Furloughing teachers is a bad idea. It is like a slap in the face to teachers who are already stressed out and working overtime because of online distance learning. It sends the message that you do not think a teacher's job is important (and that the rail project is more important because the state continues to pour our tax money into this project which keeps going up in budget). Students are already having a hard time with distance learning and taking away more days from their instruction will not be beneficial in the long run. There are several teachers at my school who have decided to retire this month because they have had enough. I have been with the Hawaii department of Education since 1990, over 30 years. I have been through our teacher strike and furlough Fridays. A reduction in my monthly paycheck will make it harder for me to pay my mortgage and other bills.

--

Stephanie McLaughlin

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

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

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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 <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Ms. O <teachermichellerose@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To: "TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

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 <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Raechelle Villanueva <rvillanueva@wailae.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:47 AM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to urge Governor Ige to not go through with the proposed furloughs. Along with the 10% cut to the Student Weighted Formula and 9% SPED funding, I am so fearful of what this will do to our children. I am a public school teacher and public school parent. I shared the news with my class today and they are devastated. Our children have been through so much with the COVID school closures. How is closing school even more going to be any better? Is it really worth saving that money at the cost of our children?

My students and my own children want to be in school. Enough is enough. My heart is so broken and I do not know if our educational system will ever be able to recover from this. Where will that leave Hawai'i? Consistently through this pandemic, actions have been taken by our leaders that show just how little they value public education in Hawai'i. We are currently learning about the Plantation Times in our class and the students could see connections to what happened then, to now. Why are private schools adequately funded? They get the glowing medical coverage while our public schools have to fight for every dollar? We educate the majority of our state's children!

Even the Governor deemed educators as essential workers. We were told so many times to open up schools because people needed to go back to work. How does closing schools 2 days a month help people to go back to work? It just does not make sense. Please think about our children. They do not deserve to have their public schools closed even more. Take care of our keiki. That is the island way. We can and should do better. Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,
Raechelle Villanueva

--

Raechelle Villanueva | 3rd Grade Teacher
Wai'ala'e Elementary Public Charter School

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Adrienne Hale <adriannahale@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:48 AM

To the Board of Education:

I am a fourth grade teacher at Holualoa School on Hawai'i Island. I ask that you support education by not supporting Governor Ige's proposal of furloughs on our state educators. As you know, HSTA has fought hard to attract and retain teachers in the state of Hawai'i. The action to furlough educators will further hurt our ability to provide quality education for our state's keiki. A 10% reduction in educator's salaries will be devastating to our education in Hawai'i. Many already struggle to make ends meet. Though these furloughs have not been negotiated I would even suggest a 5% salary pay cut over a 10% cut. This may be the difference for many educators in their choice to remain as a public educators in the State of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Hale
Holualoa Elementary



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Una Burns <burns@whea.net>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:49 AM

Una Burns
WHEA Teacher/Registrar
Meeting (Student Achievement, Finance and Infrastructure, Human Resources, or General Business Meeting (full Board))

In these crazy enough days **of covid**, furloughs will severely impact not just teachers but more importantly our students, our families and our community. More teachers will be really tempted to just give up, move or retire early. I recognise that you are trying to do most furlough days on teacher work days so kids will not be affected but we really need these days. We already do enough work at home. I guarantee you every single teacher will be working on Monday 4th Jan *and not getting paid* as there is simply **not enough time to do everything we are supposed to do as teachers in the 1st place**. You may have forgotten but we don't get paid that much to begin with , I am still scraping by after 16 years of being a teacher in Hawai'i.

I urge you to find other ways to balance the budget than the backs of the workers as Ige is trying to do. **I suggest a wealth tax!**

Thank you for your time.
Una Burns



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Kula Elementary 2nd Grade

1 message

Kristen Lawlor <klawlor@kulael.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:51 AM

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am emailing you to please reconsider the DOE pay-cut. The effects will be long lasting and detrimental to the entire state. Studies show that the school districts with low financial funding result in extremely low graduation rates and low teacher retention. These factors are already a crisis for the state of Hawaii. Our salary already is the lowest in the country when taking cost of living into consideration.

On a personal note, Kula Elementary began transitioning to hybrid. I have been working over 50 hours per week trying to balance these two positions (online teacher and in-person teacher). Unfortunately, my salary alone is not sustainable enough to live in Hawaii so I also need to babysit on the weekends, and make/sell products on Teachers Pay Teachers. On top of the extra work, I am currently taking 3 PD courses to climb up the slow progression pay scale.

I am one of the lucky teachers that has a partner to help with bills and currently no children. I cannot begin to imagine how single teachers, teachers with children, or teachers with an unemployed spouse are handling this. This is just a glimpse into the struggles teachers are already facing with the **current salary**, let alone a pay-cut.

I am a newly certified National Boards Teacher. I have taught for 7 years. I love my school, my students, and coworkers. I truly love my profession; however, with the already low salary and additional pay-cut, I am worried (and considering) that I will need to change professions in order to keep Maui my home.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony,
Kristen

This email is the property of the Hawaii Department of Education



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony In Opposition to Proposed Teacher Furloughs

1 message

Michael Golojuch Jr. <michael@hawaiidemocrats.org>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:54 AM

Aloha BOE Members,

The LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Hawaii's oldest and largest LGBTQIA+ focused policy, legislative and political organization in the state.

We want to go on record opposing the purposed furloughs for Hawaii's Public School Teachers.

Hawaii needs to start treating our teachers like the educated professionals that they are, instead of the way the State has been.

Everyone says they support education and now is the time to show it.

Mahalo for your time,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair
LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

--

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (He/Him)
Co-Chair DPH Membership Committee
Chair & SCC Representative
LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Kanoe Rillamas <krillamas@kaaawaschool.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:54 AM

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

Furloughs are incredibly harmful for educators and students. The decision to furlough harms me as a student trying to further my education with a Masters degree to be a better professional. Hawai'i is home and I want to raise my family here and contribute to my community. It is honestly heartbreaking to see so many family members and friends leave because it is incredibly difficult to survive here. Financially, any cuts would cause extra stress to me and my family. The fact that I have to write this testimony to defend my pay as a professional disgusts me. We should not be making any cuts to education.

The decision to furlough mostly harms our students. They have been deprived of so much since the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. We were required to use our professional judgment to teach to the best of our abilities with what we have. It would be detrimental to cut their education even more! Most of my students have shown growth in academic areas. I am so proud of them! They have such a positive attitude and excitement in their eyes when we log on or meet face to face. If we furlough, we are sending the message that education has the least priority. The economy and money has greater weight than the education of our future leaders? I don't hold those beliefs. Education of young children should never be on the discussion table when making cuts. They are our future!

Please consider making cuts elsewhere. Educators and students have been working so hard to keep a sense of normalcy and we have been consistently showing up to meet the needs of our students and families.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

No Layoffs, RIF, furloughs

1 message

J W <jawiehl@msn.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:54 AM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

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 \$29000 a year. You are leaving all of us at poverty levels and you don't see the trickle down of this problem.

Thank you for at least reading this.

Ms. Janine Wiehl
HGEA Unit 3 @SR08



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

"Testimony"

1 message

24dwrb <dwr235@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 11:55 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a single mom and my child and I are surviving on ONE income. I am not a teacher but a Health Assistant at one of the schools here on the Big Island of Hawaii. My pay is already small to begin with and doing this furlough will add more strain and stress to our lives.

I have no other income (i.e. PUA, Unemployment or state assistance) and I feel that if this decision goes through I will probably be forced to take another job or even move away from Hawaii. In my line of work there have been 5 or more Health Assistants that have resigned from their jobs (which they did not want to, but had to) to work at the hospitals and some have moved elsewhere and even away.

I love my job and my school and I really do not want to make that decision to go elsewhere to survive, and it's not fair to my students and staff and also me and my child.

I worked really hard to obtain this position.

Please take my Testimony into account.

Respectfully yours,

D. Rodgers



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Lisa Bolton <lbolton@kkhs.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:02 PM

Board of Education
December 16, 2020
Re: Testimony

Aloha,

I am Lisa Bolton and am currently teaching at King Kekaulike High School on Maui. I moved here from California to teach Special Education in 2018. Overall, this is my 19th year teaching. Previous to moving to Maui, I was an Activities Director and have my Master of Science, as well as my credential, in Educational Administration. It is with great despair that I learned that furloughs will begin taking place in 2 weeks. With this reality, I will no longer be able to afford to live in Hawaii. I stand to lose between \$400 to \$800 a month, depending on what is actually decided. I am a single mother with a child in college and took a paycut of MORE THAN HALF my income in California to teach in Hawaii. I was prepared for this discrepancy in income and have worked 2 jobs (for the first time in my life) to make ends meet. I have done everything the HDOE has asked me to do in order to move over and up on the pay scale. It has been worth it, until now. It is now impossible to financially stay here as my other employer-Maui Brewing Co.- is not fully reopened. I have seen many other educators at my school make what would be impossible situations to others, a reality. We are: teaching online and in person simultaneously; creating multiple lesson plans (daily) in order to help students who are lacking support at home; helping students who are having many technical difficulties; becoming emotional support systems for our students; teaching students whose screens freeze mid-lesson; watch students fight with their parents during lessons; see parents take students away from the virtual lessons to do chores; receive emails from students about how they are so stressed from NOT being able to learn online; students who are also stressed from their own abuse at home; contacting administration

and counselors to get social services to help these students; parenting our own children who are feeling the effects of the pandemic and getting them to school; have our own children at home while we have to teach from school; spending endless hours after school at home to perfect curriculum, only to find out the next day that the students are not able to obtain access to the format and have to create a new lesson on the fly to help the students learn; assist students long after the school day has ended; spend countless hours consoling other staff members on the stress of our new format and collaborating in order to learn new teaching platforms, just to name a few. This list of new jobs can go on and on.

In California I worked at the district office and trained teachers across the nation for several programs. I have experience working with creating and balancing school budgets, activities budgets and being responsible for executing those budgets. I have never experienced a district having to cut pay and positions as steeply as Governor Ige and HDOE is doing today. You are crippling the teachers and students in this state. Hawaii's keiki are already suffering a HUGE educational gap with their peers across the nation. This current teaching and learning environment is already difficult. By implementing teacher pay cuts, taking away MORE precious learning days from our keiki, creating an environment in which teachers have to choose working additional jobs (taking time away from their students and family), leaving this noble profession, or moving off island is treacherous to the current state of Hawaii and the future of these precious islands. It will take generations for our ohana to bridge this gap. This is not acceptable from the individuals- YOU- who have pledged to create a better future for these islands. Your kuleana is to make today and tomorrow better for all who call Hawaii their home.

Educators are the real SuperHeros today. I implore you to not take our super powers away and yet expect us to continue performing acts of heroism. I am hopeful that you will do the right thing for all Hawaiians and NOT implement furloughs in the form of depleting our keiki and teachers of the right to obtain and give quality education.

I would be honored to engage in conversations and further explore other options. I look forward to your response.

With hope and aloha,

Lisa Bolton
Instructor, Study Skills/Test Prep
King Kekaulike High School
HOME OF THE NA ALI'!!
121 Kula Highway
Makawao, HI 96768
808-727-3500



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Teresa Shimizu <teressa.shimizu@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:02 PM

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I respectfully ask that the Board of Education support HSTA and education professionals in this critical fight to prevent the furloughs proposed by Governor Ige. His virulent focus to balance the budget is certainly ill-timed and peripheral at this particular intersection on the road to recovery from the pandemic.

I trust in the research and findings noted by HSTA President Corey Rosenlee regarding the State's *manageable* current and future fiscal situation. Deep budget cuts and furloughs are not appropriate at this time. Furthermore, I feel that Governor Ige is attempting to terrify workers with yet another threat of budget cuts and furloughs for public employees. Many State employees are still recovering from the effects 'Furlough Fridays' from a decade ago.

Students will be the ones most affected by these deep budget cuts and furloughs. Our students have not been in a seemingly normal learning environment since March of 2020. We have just begun to adapt to a *new* normal with distance learning and schools have developed plans for eventual return to face-to-face learning. Implementing furlough days for DOE employees will stymie much of the efforts toward recovery.

Personally, I will face compounded financial hardship with the estimated 9% pay reduction if furlough days are implemented. Currently, I am the only income-earner in my household as others in my household are among the thousands of people trying to collect unemployment benefits/payments due to them by the State.

The Governor's plan blatantly violates collective bargaining agreements currently in place and would be devastating for students across the State. Again, I implore the Board of Education to publicly oppose the implementation of furlough days.

Sincerely,
Teresa Shimizu
Educator, GWR Farrington High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Corie Sakai <cdelapena@waialae.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:02 PM

Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to strongly urge you and Governor Ige to not go through with the proposed furloughs, and protect public education funding. I am a public school teacher and public school parent. These proposed furloughs will have a long lasting, disastrous impact on our keiki and teacher workforce. Our children have been through so much with the COVID school closures. It's really hard to understand how having further school closures is helping everyone.

How can you say that improving public education is a top priority when actions are proving otherwise? All of our keiki deserve better! High quality education should be provided to all of our keiki as they are the future of Hawai'i. My students and my child want to be in school. Our keiki should be at the forefront, and it is our job to take care of them and do right by them.

These proposed furloughs will also impact the teachers many of whom are barely getting by, myself included. It was a struggle even before COVID hit, but now we are surviving on my one income because my husband lost his job. Many sacrifices have been made, including not being able to send my youngest to preschool. We are still in the midst of a teacher shortage crisis, unable to fill current positions with qualified teachers that are so urgently needed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. The time is now to do better, to be better, and think about our keiki and their futures.

Mahalo,
Corie Dela Pena

--

Corie Dela Pena | Teacher
Wai'alae Elementary Public Charter School
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816
(808) 733-4880 ext. ____
<http://www.waialae.edu>



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December 17, 2020

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit comments today. My name is Lara Bollinger and I represent Together For Our Keiki (T.F.O.K.), which is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Hawai'i organization whose mission is to advocate and create a diverse and inclusive community for our keiki by empowering parents and caregivers, and educating local stakeholders.

- We recognize the need for financially surviving a very difficult year. We respectfully disagree that furloughs are the way to recoup these lost funds. Our teachers are already overburdened with ever-increasing responsibilities, particularly during the pandemic. We believe these missed days of education will have substantial and long-term detrimental effects for our students, their teachers, and our already woefully underfunded special education programs. We are disappointed to learn that the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) was not consulted regarding teacher furloughs, which have been proposed. We strongly support open, transparent communications to identify resolutions and we see this as the only way forward.
- As noted in our last letter to the Board, one way the Hawai'i DOE can secure additional funds would be to effectively establish the Medicaid School-Based claiming system, which was mandated in Chapter 465-D in 2018 by the Hawai'i Legislature. It is estimated that over \$50 million in federal funds would be available to the state annually for employing and contracting appropriately licensed and credentialed Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs), Occupational Therapists (OTs), Physical Therapists (PTs), Clinical Psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs).

We would like to formally offer our expertise and assistance in supporting the Hawai'i BOE and DOE in establishing this system and securing these federal funds. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate and appreciate everyone coming *Together For Our Keiki*.

Mahalo,

Lara Bollinger, JD, BCBA, LBA
Vice-President, Together For Our Keiki
forourkeiki@gmail.com
www.forourkeiki.com



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

B. Nakamoto <honukahu@icloud.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:07 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: "Rosenlee, Corey" <crosenlee@hsta.org>, Inga Park <ingapark@icloud.com>

Chairperson Catherine Payne
Hawai'i State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Aloha Chairperson Catherine Payne and the Board of Education Members,

My name is Brian Nakamoto and I work as a teacher at the only deaf school in the state, Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind. I am submitting this testimony of opposition to the furlough days.

First of all, this is not the first time I have heard of furlough days, as it did happen during the Lingle administration, which many schools have furlough days on most of the Fridays in the school year. The result of that is the severe decrease of instructional time for our keiki. Now, do we have to go through this crisis with our keiki? Our keiki should not be punished by having the instructional time be taken away from them.

Evermore, since I work at Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind (HSDB) as one of its teachers, all of our students have their individualized education plans. Each and every keiki in HSDB has an IEP in place because of their diagnosis as deaf or hard of hearing. Therefore, each of their IEPs have specific minutes of special education that we must provide in the frequency indicated in their IEPs. If we are to proceed with furlough days, then that decision will conflict with many of their IEPs as we would have to lose an entire time of instruction if there is a furlough day. Also, it will make an impact to teachers and service providers to allocate the time lost due to the furlough day on the instructional days before or after the furlough day.

Second of all, placing a furlough day could cause chaos among not only the teachers, but to the principals, school personnels, and the payroll because all of these groups will have to adjust their tasks. For example, as a teacher, I will have to shift the instruction set in place away from a furlough day and bump it to other instructional days, which can delay the learning process for our keiki by a day or two, or six if we have all those 6 furlough days that Superintendent Christine Kishimoto announced recently.

Third of all, this is a serious violation to our contractual agreement that was already in place between State of Hawai'i Department of Education and the Hawai'i State Teacher Association. Our contract is still in place until June 30, 2021. I believe that this violation is totally unnecessary and unethical for our governor to neglect by proceeding with the summon of furlough in place, contradicting with our contract.

I am really worried about the furlough days because that will make an impact to my paycheck, as well as other teachers' paychecks. I am already aware that there are many teachers who are already living on paycheck to paycheck. That is something that we truly do not need to have, especially with the holiday season approaching amid the horrendous pandemic that has caused so many uneventful things happening this year alone.

Please take your time and consideration about the furlough days. I strongly recommend you to vote against the furlough days and seek another way of keeping our public schools open, allowing our keiki to earn 180 instructional days as expected. They already lost two weeks worth of instruction and this is definitely not worthwhile to consider when it comes to losing a day or two more instructional days for our keiki.

Think of our keiki, as they are our future. They are our future leaders that will take over our places as we age. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Aloha,
Brien Nakamoto
honukahu@icloud.com



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for December 17th BOE Meeting

1 message

Chris Pascual <chrispascual79@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:07 PM

Beth Giesting from the Hawai'i Budget and Policy Center has laid out specific ways that the state can recover tax revenue and taking it out of the pockets of educators and increasing the burden on families and students was not included.

There are two choices that can be made here that speak to the values of the Board of Education membership:

1) Decide on budget cuts and furloughs that will widen the socioeconomic gap, place hardships on families, and force educators out of the state.

2) Decide on supporting public education and take a stance on this perpetuated discrimination.

True character is revealed during times of tough decisions. Let us stand together and restructure the way our public schools are being funded. This is an opportunity for great change and you all will be named for achieving such a tremendous feat in turning things around for our students, teachers, and communities.

-Chris Pascual



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Sarah Tochiki <sarah.tochiki@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:10 PM

Subject: Testimony in Regards to Furloughs

Dear State of Hawai'i Board of Education,

Last week the Hawai'i State Governor announced that almost all public sector employees, including educators, would receive furloughs starting in January. The bottom line is the state does not have money. Hundreds of thousands are unemployed and numerous businesses had to close. I do not mean this post to be insensitive to those in this situation because I empathize with the hardship this pandemic caused. It will take years for us to recover. However, as we have seen over the last few months, people still want to come to Hawai'i and the tourists will return. It is not as if all the money on the earth vanished because of COVID-19. It still exists. It stopped circulating. The very rich have actually made more money off of working people during this pandemic.

Here is the problem with furloughs for educators. The state is promising minimal loss of instruction time for students. The state is promising that students will not lose out because of these furloughs. Furloughs mean a reduction in pay with a proportional reduction in work. It is IMPOSSIBLE to expect that students will not lose out due to these furloughs. Furthermore, it is IMPOSSIBLE to expect educators to do the same amount of work in fewer days for less pay.

Even before the pandemic, educators put in many more hours outside of the workday. Educators paid for their own training and did it on their own time. Educators spent their own money on supplies for their classroom or food to help feed their students. Our educators in Hawai'i were the lowest paid in the nation when cost of living is factored in. We knew these problems existed before the pandemic and did not do anything about it.

The governor is asking educators to take a pay cut but provide the same amount of services. What other profession would this be acceptable? Would you ask a doctor to see the same number of patients but every 10th patient must be for free? Would it be acceptable to make a landscaper work on your entire property but only pay them for 90% if their work? Would it be acceptable to order a venti latte at Starbucks but only expect to pay the price for a grande? No, this would not be acceptable but you are asking educators to do this, "for the sake of the children."

We care deeply for our students. All educators take on this profession because we want to make a difference in the lives of future generations. That does not mean we are devoting our lives to working for free. We are highly educated and skilled professionals. Even if furlough days for educators are taken on non-instructional days, students will still lose out. What do you think we do on those days? We prepare to make sure students have the best experience when they are in the classroom. We grade student work so they can improve.

Lawyers bill for all the hours they spend working on a client's case. We would not expect them to just charge for the time when they meet with the client. We receive professional development to improve our practice. If new equipment was provided for nurses to use, are they expected to learn how to use it on their own time for free? Most likely they are provided time during the work day for that training.

Ultimately students will lose out and what they are asking educators to do is unethical. Will the paycuts hurt educators financially, definitely. Many are struggling right now due to the state of the economy, not just educators. This is about the ruse of furloughs. This is about exploiting the kindness of educators with a justification for what is best for students.

The economy will recover one day. Having gone through furloughs once, I know we will repeat the cycle again. Educators will have to fight really hard to just get back the sacrifices they took, let alone actually have their working conditions improved upon. People will forget about how educators, given the circumstances, worked as hard as they could to provide for our keiki. We will be made out to be villains for asking for better working conditions. It is no secret why this profession has a perpetual shortage of people willing to take it on. When will enough be enough?

Sincerely,

Sarah Tochiki
Band Director
Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School
Vice-President of HSTA Kaua'i Chapter

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