

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 7:51 PM

### Name

Caton Gabrick

### Organization

Kapolei High School Science, Technology, Engineering & Math Learning Center

### Position/Title

Alumni and Mentor

### Agenda Item

VI. Finance and Infrastructure Committee oral report on October 22, 2024, meeting

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

State of Hawai'i Board of Education Members,

My name is Caton Gabrick and I am a community member who actively supports the Science, Technology, Engineering & Math Learning Center at Kapolei High School. I am providing written testimony today strongly opposing the proposed elimination of funding for learning centers across the state.

One of the most challenging things for students to figure out during their high school years is what they want to do once they finish school and have to enter the real world. They have a seemingly infinite number of choices of what they want to do. Some will choose to go to college, some may take up a trade, others may pursue artistic ambitions. While the standard curriculum in school teaches students the basics of many topics, the students who are fortunate enough to attend schools with learning centers get the unique opportunity to get a head start on a career path they are interested in. Not only does this help them decide if that path is right for them, it provides a massive leg up in that chosen career path.

I was one of those lucky students who attended a school with these learning centers. When I attended Kapolei High School, there were multiple academies that you could select for your junior and senior years with focus areas such as Business, Fine Arts, and Health. Many students had to choose between multiple academies that all seemed interesting to them, but the only one that piqued my interest was the Learning Center for Applied Technology (LCAT).

In the LCAT academy, we got to take classes like mechanical drafting, computer aided drafting, and electronics. The skills taught in these classes directly translate to industries such as electricians and engineers, and I was surrounded by likeminded students. These classes ignited our passion for learning, made school fun, and significantly increased student attendance. Many of my classmates had always struggled through school and were known to skip class on a regular basis, teachers looked at them as delinquents. However, once they started attending these classes that interested them they came around to enjoying school and took challenging classes that they never would have signed up for in the past like Physics or Calculus. Some of them even started up a robotics team with the electronics teacher as a mentor, and that team has persisted since 2008.

The teachers in these learning centers not only helped the students find their passion, they helped guide them into what to do after school. Myself and 7 other students from Kapolei all were accepted into an engineering and math

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summer internship at Kapi'olani Community College after we graduated. In our sophomore year, nobody would have expected for any of us to attend college and strive for an engineering degree. Thanks to our experience in LCAT, all 8 of us (and many others) started college the following semester.

I went on to achieve my goal and obtained a Mechanical Engineering degree from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and have been working as a Nuclear Engineer for 7 years now. I owe my success to the dedicated teachers at Kapolei High School who believed in us and pushed us to become the best version of ourselves. They made such an impact on me that I became a mentor for others throughout my journey. I mentored underclassmen during my time at UH Manoa while I was there and in the years since I have graduated, and have spent the last 10 years giving back to the program at Kapolei and mentoring for the robotics program and various others such as students senior design / STEM projects to the tune of hundreds of hours per year. I am also a member of the Engineering, Design, and Energy Advisory Board at Kapolei High School. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for learning centers in public schools.

My story is not unique. There are dozens of students just like me who were positively impacted and come back to volunteer every year with the robotics program at Kapolei. Thousands of students have gone through these programs just at Kapolei since I have graduated, and it has made a positive impact on so many of their lives. Multiply this by the multitude of other programs and other schools that have these types of programs, and you will see that defunding these initiatives will leave a massive void in the public education system.

Members of the Board, I urgently request for you to reconsider the elimination of funding for learning centers in Hawai'i. Your mission is to develop the academic achievement, character, and social-emotional well-being of your students to the fullest potential. Removing funding for these programs goes against that mission, and would be an extreme oversight at best and gross negligence at worst. Please continue to allow the current students to have the same support in their education that I did, so that we may develop strong community members who can help solve the difficult problems that we face today and into the future.

Thank you for your time in considering this issue, I hope you will decide to do the right thing for our Hawai'i's keiki.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 9:03 AM

### Name

Erika Allred

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Committee Chair,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) related to realigning resources. This reduction will have a significant and detrimental impact on the vital learning opportunities offered to students and the community at Kahuku High and Intermediate School.

The funds allocated to EDN100/BQ (16770) are crucial for supporting a wide range of programs and initiatives that enhance student learning and prepare them for future success. These programs include:

**HOSA Future Health Professionals:** This program provides students with valuable hands-on experience in the healthcare field, fostering their interest in pursuing careers in medicine and related disciplines.

**CTE Health Services Pathways Classes:** These classes offer students the opportunity to develop essential skills for employment in the healthcare industry, including medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, and patient care.

**Forensics Class:** This class engages students in scientific investigation and problem-solving, equipping them with critical thinking and analytical skills that are applicable to various academic and professional pursuits.

**Medical Club:** This club provides a platform for students to explore their passion for medicine, participate in community service activities, and network with healthcare professionals.

In addition to these programs, the funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) are essential for purchasing supplies and materials needed for instruction, competitions, and extracurricular activities. These resources are vital for creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment that inspires students to excel.

The proposed reduction of funds will inevitably lead to the following consequences:

**Limited program offerings:** The reduction in funding will force us to curtail or eliminate valuable programs, depriving students of opportunities to explore their interests and develop essential skills.

**Reduced student participation:** Fewer resources will limit the number of students who can participate in these programs, hindering their academic and personal growth.

**Diminished quality of instruction:** The lack of adequate funds will impact our ability to provide high-quality instruction, limiting students' access to state-of-the-art equipment and materials.

I urge the committee to reconsider this decision and maintain the funding for EDN100/BQ (16770). By doing so, you will ensure that Kahuku High and Intermediate School can continue to provide exceptional educational opportunities for our students and contribute to the development of future leaders and professionals. Lets stop cutting from education and areas that benefit the future of our keiki!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:43 PM

### **Name**

Sophia Rose

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I support the Moanalua High School's World Language Learning Center (WLLC) because this program has positively impacted my school life in many ways. The WLLC provided me opportunities to teach my native language to underclassmen, and to build a support system with the officers working with me. The events and fundraisers planned out throughout the year is thoroughly organized and executed smoothly, making the school year a fun one. Joining the WLLC as a student officer has allowed me to build leadership and teaching skills that will help me with my future. The WLLC is a great place for people of all backgrounds and abilities to come together and learn about each other's cultures. Thank you for your consideration, and I kindly ask for your support for the WLLC.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:14 PM

### **Name**

Matthew LoPresti

### **Organization**

Parent

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

STRONGLY OPPOSED to eliminating Learning Centers.

These are the only programs of excellent in Hawaii High Schools across the state.

If you want to expand career readiness, then expand the number of learning centers. The funding for these centers are meager, at just \$17,000 a year, and they do amazing work with so little support. The proposed cookie-cutter wall to wall approach will cost far more and do less, but if you want to fund it, find some way other than killing one of the few truly excellent things about our public high schools. The 2024 teacher of the year is a Learning Center coordinator and Agriculture teacher for goodness sake.

More specifically, this proposal will disproportionately impact and eliminate performing and theater arts programs across the state. These programs teach career readiness not just in the arts - which are a growing industry in Hawaii, but also imparts valuable communication skills and also prepares students for careers in areas like construction because of the skills learned by students working stage crew, lights, sound systems, electricity, etc.). Theater arts should not just be for rich kids who can afford private schools and programs - but this proposal will practically ensure that it likely the only way Hawaii kids will have these opportunities.

This is the worst idea I have heard out of the DOE for a quite a while. Do not do it.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 10:42 PM

### Name

Anne Dominique Malig

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Anne Dominique Malig, and I'm an alumni of Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Through the MHS Science Club, I became part of a community that shared the same interests and encouraged each other to do well in our passions. As a former president, I was able to practice my leadership skills. The events I competed in with Trojan Pride helped me discover what I wanted to major in, and in turn helped me realize what career I wanted to pursue in life. Without the SLC, we would not have been able to have the machinery we needed to excel in the events we competed in. I also wouldn't have made long-lasting connections that have positively influenced my upbringing.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Anne Dominique Malig  
anne08dmnq@gmail.com

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:08 PM

### **Name**

Anonymous NA

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha members of the board,

I am writing in opposition to agenda item seven with specific regard to reducing funds for the learning centers. I would like to share how vital these initiatives are not just for students, but for families like mine.

I have family members who work closely with students in learning centers, specifically performing arts, and I've seen the joy and fulfillment these programs bring. From theater productions to musicals, these performances are celebrations of creativity and hard work. They foster a sense of community, create lasting memories, and help students develop essential skills like teamwork, confidence, and resilience.

As a community member, I urge you to continue to support these programs and with the proposed budget, that will not be possible in the near future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High .

Mahalo for your time and consideration. School is an investment that deserves your



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School  
continued full support.

Sincerely, Matthias ten Berge

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:02 AM

### Name

Melanie Reyes

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Alumnus

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. I am a proud alumnus of Mililani High School writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 1670) along with the cuts to the HAWAII SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND (Attachment A, Row 83, REF #8993, Program ID 17201) and SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM (Attachment A, Row 88, REF #8898, Program ID 15179).

The Learning Centers provide essential academic support and foster a community beyond the classroom. For me, my peers, and countless other students, they opened doors to hands-on learning, access to industry-standard equipment, and meaningful experiences that shaped our college and career paths.

I vividly recall each Science Fair project I completed and the excitement of applying classroom learning to real questions I was passionate about. The Learning Centers gave me a space to be curious, use critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and explore endless possibilities—this is where I found my passion.

Even in middle school, at Mililani Middle School, I participated in Science Olympiad. The connections I made there, the community of hard-working and brilliant minds I was immersed in changed my attitude about education. When I was approached to join the team by a good friend, I was slacking off a little academically. I did not put as much effort into my schoolwork as I should have, but after joining the team, going to competitions, and seeing people in their element, I realized that I could do so much more than I thought was possible.

As someone who ultimately found their passion in a STEM field, I recognize the importance of programs like these for other students who may be on similar journeys. Eliminating funding for this program would be detrimental, not just to today's students but to our community's future. The Learning Centers are a crucial resource for growth, creative exploration, personal development, and cultivating young minds.

In addition, the cuts to the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind along with the Services for Children With Autism serve critical roles for students and families who already have enough obstacles and barriers to success and



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opportunity. Though I may not be directly affected by these services and this school, reducing their support would only harm the disabled community. As someone who has friends in the Deaf and neurodivergent communities, stripping resources from these programs shows a lack of care. While mainstreaming (sending a deaf student to a hearing school) is often done, the option for a Deaf School creates opportunities for the student to connect with the Deaf community. ASL is not often seen at all nor are many teachers prepared to provide those accommodations in mainstream classrooms. Pulling resources like this shows blatant disregard for these students with disabilities and puts them in an environment where they are an afterthought.

Respectfully, I urge you to reconsider these cuts, bearing in mind the long-term impact on our students' futures. Supporting these causes is an investment in the success, well-being, and innovation of our students, our communities, and broadly, our future.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:30 AM

### **Name**

Julie Iezzi

### **Organization**

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

### **Position/Title**

Professor

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I write to officially register my opposition to the proposed HDOE budget being presented, which will reduce funding for the Learning Centers across the state for is being SY2025-26 and cut all funding, including those in positions at the Learning centers, for SY2026-27. These centers are crucial spaces for young people (adolescents of jr. high and high school age) as they not only offer a critical sense of community that is needed so dearly in high school, especially in this post-covid era, but are also valuable places where young people can discover their own creativity, whether that leads to finding themselves as artists or providing a sense of accomplishment. I find it disturbing that as a culture we so readily support business and sports, but are quick to neglect or even negate the arts, which are central to finding life balance for so many. Furthermore, the amount of money for the arts is already so very little. Surely if the budget needs trimmed, a small percentage from elsewhere could do the trick.

October 30th, 2024

Hawaii Board of Education

Re: Opposing Budget Agenda Number 8 VII: Request to Maintain Funding for Central Theatre Arts Academy and State Learning Centers

Dear Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts that would eliminate all funding for Hawaii's State Learning Centers, including the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA). Removing this support would not only dismantle valuable arts education opportunities for Hawaii's students but also undermine the mission of creating well-rounded, capable, and inspired citizens who will be our future leaders.

The Central Theatre Arts Academy provides transformative experiences for students, fostering skills in communication, teamwork, confidence, and creative problem-solving. These are skills essential not only for arts careers but for any profession that values leadership and innovation. Our students are inspired by the chance to explore and express themselves, and they gain valuable life experiences in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment. Without funding, CTAA's doors could close, cutting off access to these developmental benefits for students in our community.

My daughter has been a dedicated participant in the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) for the past four years, a commitment that has profoundly shaped her development in ways that extend far beyond the stage. Through her involvement—performing, helping with set design, and assisting with program coordination—she has grown not only as a student but also as a young professional.

CTAA has taught her valuable, lifelong skills in teamwork, communication, and responsibility. I've seen her step up to challenges, coordinate with peers, and support her fellow students with a maturity beyond her years. The confidence she's gained from this program is remarkable, and she has learned how to carry herself with the professionalism and commitment required to succeed in any field she may choose to pursue in adulthood.

This program is more than just an extracurricular activity; it's been a foundational part of her education, teaching her practical skills and fostering her creativity and discipline. Losing CTAA would mean taking away an environment that has been instrumental in helping her and countless others develop essential skills and find a true sense of purpose and belonging.

Beyond CTAA, the Learning Centers' funding supports essential Agriculture, STEM, and Performing Arts programs across Hawaii, which aim to nurture diverse interests and skills in our youth. These programs enrich students' lives and offer them the chance to explore potential career paths. They engage students who may otherwise struggle to find connection or passion in a traditional curriculum, providing vital alternatives for engagement and learning. Removing this funding would leave a gap in our education system that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fill.

I respectfully urge you to prioritize the continuity of these programs by preserving their funding. Hawaii's children deserve access to an education that extends beyond textbooks, offering

opportunities to thrive in programs that promote creativity, discipline, and a strong sense of community. For students like my daughter and so many others, CTAA has been life-changing. Please support the future of our keiki by ensuring CTAA and other Learning Centers can continue shaping Hawaii's future leaders.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Krystal Carman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Krystal Carman

## Student Testimony

Testimony Submission Link:

<https://boe.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony/submit-testimony-october-31-2024-general-business-meeting/>

#Organization: Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

#Agenda Item Number: [VII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027]

#Position: Oppose

#Testimony Type: Written

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To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Engel Hicks, and I'm a Junior so 11th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Personally, I love musicals and any sort of drama art. They help me keep my mind off of some bad things and they are a safe place for me. It started when I was in kipapa elementary school. I had an interest in 4th grade but was too late so I decided to join during my 5th year of elementary school. It was the best decision of my life. I didn't do much with friends or go out after school so this was my social group. We had a lot of fun building, painting and also moving the sets for shows. Me and my friends would sing while the actors were singing when the play was going on. We would also mess around during rehearsals, which I still have pictures of. A vivid memory was during rehearsals near lunchtime I smelt the foodland fried chicken and other foods they were bringing for us to have lunch from all the way in the back of the stage and ran down with my friends to go eat. Which leads me to high school, originally I was planning on taking this class for 4 years in a row but I couldn't find the class. So during freshman year I didn't see it on the paper or where the class was and that remained the same until November of my sophomore year. I finally figured out where Ms. Geneva's class was signed up immediately for junior year. This program had gotten me to try new things like watching new musicals, knowing how to build things and use certain tools, knowing how to do sound and light things, all in all It broke me out of my shell that I have been hiding in for about a year. My dad passed away a year ago in September and I refrained from going out and only went out when needed, but this program has become a place where I can laugh and socialize freely without having bad thoughts.

So if these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Engel Hicks  
(808)-341-3698



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's the operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to our students' specific needs and interests. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Trisha Kim

Career and Technical Education Resource Teacher

Windward District

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:59 PM

### **Name**

Mariko Holmberg

### **Organization**

Moanalua High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Committee Chair,

Hello. I am writing to you today to express my feelings of opposition towards the reduction of funds from EDN100/BQ (16770).

I am a MeneMAC student from Moanalua High School. I have been in this program since my freshman year and it is currently my junior year. This program means a lot to me and my peers because of the experience we gain and the friendships we create.

If you were to defund this program, along with many others like it, many students will be impacted. Many people think that filmmaking is just an art and you don't gain anything from it. But it is so much more than that, in my classes, I have learned way more skills than just how to hold a camera. I have learned how to communicate, work with a team, and think of bigger ideas. In this society, all of these skills have been lost and not taught anymore and I strongly believe that these skills are vital for our futures. In classes like math or english, we don't learn such skills even though communication and working together is how all, if not most careers operate on.

This program provides a future towards many students like me, so defunding it will really impact our future. With the money you so graciously give us, the teachers have used it to buy better equipment for us so that we are able to create more and better videos. We constantly win competitions through our hard work and experience with this money as well. So, as I speak for many other MeneMAC students, I implore you to rethink this decision so that my peers and I, can continue to pursue our passions and learn much more about film and teamwork.

Thank you for giving your time and consideration to read my statement.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:35 PM

### Name

Vy Tran

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Science Club Student President

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Vy Tran, and I'm a Junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Through the MHS SLC I have joined several opportunities they provide such as Science Fair, and Science Olympiad. Despite the experience and education that they already provide much of, the people and the community surrounding it has got to be what has affected me the most. After the COVID-19 pandemic I lost my confidence and self-esteem. However, joining the Science Olympiad and Science Fair has brought it back, I've made so many life-long friends and it helped me become more comfortable around teachers and with myself ultimately. When I was in freshman year I had no friends from recently moving, and with Science Olympiad I gained new teammates to compete. We had so many funny moments together competing, and we became one of the best as they encouraged me to continue learning in SLC while having a good time. These teammates turned out to become my best friends. Without them I would've quit the Science Olympiad which has provided me various opportunities and helped me find my passion which I have struggled with. It has broadened my perspective and helped me grow as a person. I would not be the same without MHS SLC.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach

11/01/2024

their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Vy Tran  
(808)679-8078  
26tra.vy@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:52 PM

### Name

Kiana Burnett

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Organization: Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

Agenda Item Number: [VII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027]

Position: Oppose

Testimony Type: Written

—

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kiana Burnett, and I'm a senior at the University of California Irvine studying Computer Science. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Back when I was a student at Mililani High School, I would always be excited to end the school day and head to my FIRST Robotics and Science Olympiad Club meetings. These clubs were one of the ways where I met some of my closest friends and found a passion for STEM. Throughout the years participating in both clubs and competing as a student, I felt that I had an opportunity to learn and explore things that were not a part of the standard classroom curriculum. Through FIRST Robotics I got hands-on experience with industry tools such as SolidWorks and AutoDesk. In the Science Olympiad, I was able to dive deeper into the center of the earth by competing in different geology-based events, deciphering code, and even going back in time when the dinosaurs walked. The Learning Centers at Mililani High School drove me to pursue a career in STEM and gave me the motivation to step outside of my boundaries and explore more. The moment I became the president of the Science Olympiad club and the captain of that team in my senior year, I realized how much I owed these programs for getting into college. Looking back on high school, the Science Learning Center has helped me a lot with my education and with helping me choose the path I want to go down. By taking these programs away from these current high school students, they might not have the chance to go above and beyond and be able to further their education and learn new things about themselves.

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If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kiana Burnett

Email: [kianaburnett03@gmail.com](mailto:kianaburnett03@gmail.com)

Phone: (808)436-5855

Testimony Submission Link:

<https://boe.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony/submit-testimony-october-31-2024-general-business-meeting/>

Organization: Mililani Science Learning Center

Agenda Item Number: [VII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027]

Position: Oppose

Testimony Type: Written

—

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Ethan Picardal, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I have always dreamed of pursuing mechanical engineering, but my school's engineering elective did not provide me with the hands-on experience and skills that I need in order to pursue that dream. My school's First Robotics Team, 2853 Hot Spot Robotics, is allowing me to learn in depth what engineers do in the real world through a 6-week competition in which our club has to work collectively combining multiple disciplines in order to create a competition ready robot. By contributing to this team through my role on the mechanical subteam, I am able to help bring the designs that the systems integration subteam creates in 3D modeling software to life through the use of many tools and machines to fabricate and assemble parts. I would never have access to these tools and machines without my involvement in the club, so the club is very valuable to me because it gives me the opportunity to have hands-on experience for my future career that I can get nowhere else.

My favorite memory from my experience at Hot Spot Robotics so far was the first time that I measured and prepared a part for fabrication correctly and precisely on my first try for the first time ever. I was assigned with measuring out the right amount of material from a stock piece of aluminum that was going to be assembled into a cascading lift mechanism that our robot could use to hang for points at the end of the game. In order to fit all of the sections of the lift into the space allotted, the different segments needed to be fabricated accurately with a precision of no less than 1/64". Up until that point in the season wherever I was done measuring and marking a part for fabrication, the person that was checking it would always find that I was 1/32" of an inch off, meaning that I would always have to re-measure it two or three times. Getting it right on the first try after all that practice and seeing it used successfully in competition was a great feeling that I think every student that is interested in mechanical engineering should experience at our club. To feel like I was part of something bigger than myself and just my GPA was something indescribable.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ethan Picardal

(808)-897-4251

[ethanpicardal808@gmail.com](mailto:ethanpicardal808@gmail.com)

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 5:51 PM

### Name

Lansford Ryan

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Parent

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. I am the parent of an 11th grade student at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

My child has been a part of the MHS SLC since her freshman year, participating in Science Olympiad and Science Fair. These programs have allowed her to experience her interests in real settings and in depth. She has been able to interact with professionals in fields that interest her and have engaging conversations about her passions, like with judges at the State Science Fair who validated her interests in Data Science. She has also been able to learn and see her developments over the years. I know in her freshman year she was very passionate about Science Olympiad, despite her not winning any medals the entire year. While that may have discouraged other individuals, her passion for science motivated her to keep going, and massive improvements were shown in her sophomore year. At the State Competition, she ended up placing top 3 in all 4 of her events. These experiences have not only benefited her academically, but she always talks about fun moments she has had with her fellow Science Club members, who really are some of her best friends. The MHS SLC has allowed her to do what she loves alongside people who make her genuinely happy and has been able to make amazing memories through this program.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

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Thank you for your attention to this important issue.



## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 5:51 PM

### Name

Carly Omori-Kealoha

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I'm Carly Omori-Kealoha, a college freshman studying musical theatre in New York. I would not be here today without the help of these learning centers. They helped shape me into the person I am today, and I would not be where I am right now without them. We need these programs to help students grow. These programs can change lives, as they can help students who are still discovering themselves find a passion.

I first started performing with a learning center in 2018, with the Castle Performing Arts Center. I was a shy performer, but CPAC helped me not be afraid and burst out of my shell. Being able to perform in front of all the different feeder schools in the area had been so scary yet so rewarding. I learned a lot through CPAC, and I have made such strong friendships through this program that I still hold near and dear to my heart. It has been so much fun getting to grow up alongside these people and learn with them. CPAC has built such a loving community of people, and it would hurt to see it go. Not only that, but this program has been around for 61 years. Hurting this program would mean hurting a significant part of Hawaii's theatre history. This program started with barely anything and became something big. It has seen countless people grow up, and it's seen their kids and grandkids grow up too. Cutting the funds to this program is the same as cutting the tradition and sense of community it built. CPAC also has alumni on Broadway, so the skills we learned in this program have helped take us far, no matter what we do.

I didn't just perform with CPAC; I also performed with Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA), and Kaimuki High School (KHSPAC). Something special about these public school learning centers is that we're allowed to audition for other productions. We can do other shows instead of just our complex one, which is so special. A lot of schools on the mainland don't do this. This creates such a strong sense of community here, as we even watch other school's productions to support them too. This is another way I've made lifelong friends too. While I can't say too much about CTAA because this was during COVID-19, and I was only there for a brief period of time, I can say that I had a lot of fun, and I learned a lot through their program. KHSPAC will always hold a special place in my heart though. This program stood out because the community of students there was so vastly different compared to Mililani and Castle. The difference with Kaimuki was that there were a lot of football players trying theatre for the first time. I remember having a conversation with one of my cast mates during our production of "The Addams Family," asking why he auditioned. He said, "I hated theatre first, but fell in love with Kaimuki's production of Footloose. I loved it so much I watched it every show." There is a low chance he would've had this revelation without KHSPAC. These learning centers can ignite a fire in people they didn't know existed. The arts doesn't just teach keiki skills on how to be more confident, it also unites us as a community. This sense of community is strengthened by the strong relationships these programs have with each other.

On the topic of agriculture, any good Hawaiian knows how much the land means to Hawai'i. It sustains us as long as we take care of it. It is important that we teach our keiki how to grow and sustain our land, and these learning programs are one way to teach kids. Given what happened with Lahaina also, removing an opportunity for kids to learn how to care for the aina is extremely detrimental. Removing Lahainaluna High School's program hurts even more because that was one way that schools could teach kids how to care for the land.

These are my thoughts. My point is that Hawaii would be hurt if these programs were hurt too. These programs help everyone, kids, and adults. We need these programs because they benefit Hawaii in so many ways. Without them, a

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lot of good learning opportunities would be taken away. With these learning programs, I realized I wanted to pursue a career in the arts. I got opportunities to help me grow, and it helped prepare me for what college theatre/professional theatre would be like. These programs have also helped young students find their passions. They are so amazing, and they help emphasize what makes Hawaii special.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:15 PM

### **Name**

Payton Mukkada

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Do not cut funding to the learning center in the state of Hawaii.

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Emmett Miyahara, and I am a former student of Mililani High School, currently an undergraduate student attending Stanford University. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

During my time in Mililani High School, I was part of their FIRST Robotics team, one of the programs covered under the Mililani Science Learning Center. As a former assistant project manager for that team, I can attest that we have always yearned for better equipment and more resources in general, to design and build robots that my peers and I would ideate. We would hold fundraising events to gain additional funding, but most of our funding came from the Science Learning Center. Losing that, I can imagine, would be detrimental to the program.

My experience in FIRST Robotics led me to find great passion in engineering, fostering technical skills such as fabrication and computer-aided design. I also learned a great deal of soft skills, such as project management and communication. The way the program incorporates these teachings into its function of building a robot was something that I have never experienced in a classroom and to this day, I believe it was the most important experience for the advancement of my education and career. Many of my friends in high school also were in different programs covered under the Learning Center program, and they have mentioned similar things.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Emmett K. Miyahara  
emmettkm@stanford.edu

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:06 PM

### **Name**

Arabella Cruz

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Though I am a mere spectator, I can see the passion in the eye's of the students who participate in the arts. Limited funds will limit the happiness of my classmates, and most importantly my friends. They are so enthusiastic about our school's future theater productions as well as what our arts center has to offer. These productions that our school offers each year also gets the audience excited. These productions are a way for people to get together and connect, even making friends. This future plan will set people apart, encouraging less participation among each other and school activities.

Limited funds also results in limited futures. Students are so passionate about these learning centers that they see a future in them. The cut of funds will cut their dreams, limiting their knowledge in the field and cutting their readiness for college. In these learning centers, they are also learning important life skills. Though just a small act, cutting funds will directly affect the futures of our passionate students.

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Douglas Chan, and I'm a Freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As a participant of FIRST Robotics I have come to appreciate the importance of these clubs that I have been involved with. It has appeared that these clubs have shaped the person whom I have become and will further influence the characteristics of my future self.

I think back to the great times I had working with FIRST as it has touched my heart in many ways. Making friends with fellow mates sharing the same interests as me helps me open up to more options in my life. FIRST has changed my life in many ways as it gives me time to laugh and enjoy my time after school.

I enjoy working with my mentors as they take their undivided time to help us through with all of this work. As removing the funds to these extracurriculars will diminish the connections between others throughout all of STEM. FIRST helps me practice Gracious Professionalism and it helps me as a whole person including my emotions and the actions I take. Which is why I write this testimony so we can have future years to also have others like me experience the same thing I have gone through.

Removing these fundings not only will affect the people that benefit from these funds but also the people coming to these clubs/activities/extracurriculars. Generations beyond these will all need a place to practice Gracious Professionalism as well as learning STEM in the process.

FIRST will remain as a place in my heart along with the people I have met. I hope generations beyond have this type of option in their lives as some may be bullied and even harassed. It may

seem as if these clubs are only for competition and learning but It is beyond learning. This is another home for all of these generous caring members.

Removing these funding will not only decrease volunteers and participants but It will also break a chance for others in life. These places give a chance for people to express who they really are. Some people may not be great in school but may have an amazing talent for designing and engineering.

In summary, the Board of Education has helped many clubs in schools and places meaning it needs continuous funds so incoming students and growing teenagers have a chance to express who they really are. Removing these fundings may completely remove the opportunities for students in Hawaii.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Douglas Chan  
Email: [Douglasdchan@gmail.com](mailto:Douglasdchan@gmail.com)  
Phone: 808-312-2368

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:57 PM

### Name

James Shimoda

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is James and I am a resident of the Mililani area. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

Out of all things to cut, the Department of Education's suggested cuts are looking at setting back the knowledge of our students significantly. Despite living on an island, we are not immune from the changes that are occurring daily in our world. Part of helping the future generation of children gain their foothold in the world as an adult is giving them the opportunity to learn about the other subjects rather than focus on Math, science, Social Studies, and English.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

It is amazing to me that my attempts to learn computer science has now resulted in the course being offered at the primary and secondary level exposing children to the world of coding. I wish I had that in my school experience because it was difficult to understand and create flawless coding in my college courses. That experience might have made getting a computer science degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa much easier than what I currently do as an accountant.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures. I am appalled at the list of suggested cuts as the best idea to follow the governor's directive of reducing the budget due to council of revenue report. Take one of the items on the list, EDN 100 Program ID 12624 - Sexual violence prevention. This program's intent was to add funds in establishing a program to educate public school students on sexual abuse prevention. Why would such a program be on the chopping in a digital age where online blackmail is an issue? How about EDN 200 Item 25764 Computer Science Teacher Prof Development where funds would be provided to upkeep professional development for the computer science teacher? How are the teachers should to keep their skills current in a field that is constantly changing on a monthly basis? I know that we do not pay the teachers well enough for them to afford the professional development on their own and part of the reason why we can't get people in the work force.

This problem is also compounded by the positions you have listed eligible for cuts. I am sure we can use less administration workers like another deputy superintendent, but why are cutting the teacher positions at the school?



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For a State that has been in the news about a declining population and the fact that we have more native Hawaiians outside of Hawaii than in state, this is a terrible way to keep people in the State. This is not even including the fact that our baby boomer population could retire and we should short hundreds of people to fill the state. The state had a wave happen during covid and more retirements will be coming within the next five years. If anything had to be gutted, I would rather gut the Human Resources and rebuild the HR unit because the process is flawed for hiring. No applicant should have to wait more than three months to get a status update about an application. No applicant can afford the time to do so. A person should not have to write a novel to get a job just because the HR unit is full of incompetents who can't understand a resume and job duties on said resume. At the time you made this proposal, Civil Beat has reported about the effects of the hiring and vacancies within the State Library system that is going to affect a public resource that should be available

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
James Shimoda  
jtshimo@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:27 PM

### **Name**

Maile Brandt

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I graduate from Kahuku High & Intermediate school in 2001. All throughout 7th-12th grade I have been a part of the band program. I played the alto saxophone, joined the color guard and became color guard captain. I also danced Hula, Tahitian, and Māori in the Marching band parades. Because of the band program it has giving me the opportunity to step out of my comfort zones and experience these different roles. Band teaches children responsibility, leadership, working together as a team, pride, and much more.

Every winter the band would put on a concert for the elementary schools in our area; sunset, Kahuku, Laie, hauula, and Kaaawa elementary. The children and staff would light up with excitement and after the concert the kids would come up to us and say they want to join band when they get to intermediate and high school. The band not only Inspires young children to follow their dreams, but it gives kids an opportunity to do something meaningful. Not many kids get the opportunity to have an activity to keep them off the streets and away from trouble. Band is also considered to be a second family for students, especially the ones who have broken homes. By cutting the music program you are depriving the children of a safe and productive environment.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:36 PM

### **Name**

Hubert Yang

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Hubert Yang. I'm a senior at Mililani High School, and I'm writing this letter on my own accord to strongly oppose the budget cuts/removal of the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770).

Not only would this not accomplish a goal to push "inspiring, personalized, and culturally responsive education that fosters creative and critical thinkers prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement," it would actually severely undermine it.

In my personal experience working in the Mililani STEM Learning Center, I have gained valuable experiences working with both peers and educators in Science Fair and other STEM-related programs. For one, I believe that HSSEF boosted my ability to research, coordinate, and experiment—all skills necessary for advanced curriculum and general career opportunities. Science Fair has granted me and many other peers invaluable advantages, both personally and academically. During the summer of 2024, I was given the opportunity to participate in a valuable internship with STEMworks and JABSOM, something I would have not been able to accomplish without the support and attention provided by the Science Learning Center. We've been granted scholarships, special rewards, career opportunities, global competitiveness, and even elite college offers, demonstrated by several high-ranking students in the past few years.

Though HSSEF and other opportunities aren't necessarily disappearing, and other programs may still live on without the Science Learning Center, the problem lies in the exposure of these programs. Learning Centers provide a platform for our interests, drawing other potential enjoyers to make use of these valuable programs. Without them, both student participation and the overall quality of education would decrease. Science and engineering classes will lose funding to provide labs and hands-on education, theatre arts will be limited in capacity to create meaningful productions, and fields in agriculture and business will lack the ability to provide adequate career readiness and preparatory skills. Fundraisers, too, would lack attention and potentially fail, blocking quality education behind a sort of "paywall", which, from the looks of other proposed budget increases, would undermine the opportunities of students by forcing them to "get creative". We want to support student education without setbacks.

Overall, with these funding cuts, invaluable programs that have aided thousands of students to elite colleges and career opportunities would undoubtedly disappear, thereby hindering the capacity of applicable education towards growth. Especially in this time of uncertainty, we need to invest in the future of technology and innovation, fostering creativity, diversity, and development in students for future success.

We see the Learning Centers as a beacon of hope, and removing them would be a detriment to further student development and success on these islands. I, as well as hundreds of other students, faculty, and families, strongly

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urge you to reconsider these budget cuts—for the future of quality education and Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Hubert Yang

Aloha, my name is Lia Rogers. I am currently a Junior at Kahuku High and Intermediate and have attended the school since 8th grade. Regarding Agenda Item: Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, I write this testimony to express the importance of funding the arts. Including music and the Performing Arts. I am proud to be a member of the KHIS show choir, Vocal Motion and am a part of school productions. Our choir director is Ms. Esther Macy, a very respected member of the community. I am so grateful for the opportunities that I've had in my experience in Vocal Motion which includes participating in the Hawai'i All-State Choral Festival with several other schools, participating in the WorldStrides Honors Performance Series Competition in Anaheim, California, and many others. Through this, we bring pride and accomplishment to our home, we won first place in our category in Anaheim, California! Students find community and refuge in these programs. They find a place to utilize their talents and see it as an opportunity to be better. Myself and the students in Vocal Motion were able to find these aspects in the Performing Arts.

The KHIS band does so much for our school and the community. They sacrifice the one break they get out of the week to provide entertainment, music, and energy for everyone attending the almost weekly football games. The band teacher Mr. Pablo Furukawa marched with the Blue Devils, which are arguably one of the best marching bands in the nation. Mr. Ernest Taniguchi, Hawai'i Symphonic Band Conductor, has been conducting orchestras and bands around the island for quite some time. He has also been working with the KHIS Band for over 2 decades. These people have put immense effort into restoring the Kahuku Marching band, which was last in place in the mid 2000's. The teachers and the band students themselves are so dedicated to providing the best sound for the student body and community. They deserve the right funding so they can continue to improve and push their musical education forward as they should be given the right to. The Performing Arts are very important to the community and KHIS alumni as well. Funding other programs are important too, but the Performing Arts always seems to be forgotten about. It is always at risk of being shut down because of lack of funding. We forget how music is a huge part of all of our lives and that is because people like me, who got the right opportunities early on, got to further their love and dedication to music.

We are able to accomplish all of this and more with the right funding and support from the DOE. If this funding is taken away, our options will be limited and the desire of students furthering their education in voice, band, acting, etc. will lessen. My desire is for future students to have the same opportunities that we have now and more. They deserve to further their education in the way they want to. If they want to play tuba, let them play tuba. If they want to sing, let them sing. If they want to sing and play tuba, let them sing and play tuba. The rising generation deserve the best education possible.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:20 AM

### Name

Andrew Baker

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I have recently heard that the new proposed budget would deeply impact the funding for Learning Centers in our schools. I'm writing to voice my strong opposition to this plan and my support for these centers. I have seen firsthand the important and positive impacts that Learning Centers have on both the students and the community at large. As a teacher, I have spoken to many students who have found passion and purpose through the work that they have done at these Learning Centers. I can speak from experience about the theater at Mililani High School. It is a space where I have seen students actively engaged in their learning, and passionate about what they do. It instills important life skills and encourages them to reach their highest potential. Through work on productions, students learn to value punctuality, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Rarely have I seen students so motivated and driven.

I believe that arts are essential to school and student success. In my experience, they open up students to creativity and problem solving. In theater, productions are hard to put on. There are a million moving parts and things can go off the rails at any moment. These productions, run by the students, are huge undertakings and it takes a lot of skill and dedication to pull one off. These students learn grit and perseverance and at the end of it all, they get to see something they helped put together come to life. The pride and joy of a cast and crew who have pulled off a successful show has to be seen to be believed. I know of one student who traveled from Waialua over to Mililani every class day for a year just to take part in it. I cannot emphasize enough how much passion I see from these students and how detrimental it would be to lose support for these learning centers.

The arts have been a huge part of who I am today. I was among the first students to go through Mililani High School's Central Theater Arts Academy. It has proven to be one of the most impactful parts of my high school experience and I credit the experiences I had there with altering the course of my life. I am now a teacher, due in no small part to the public speaking and leadership skills I gained in the program. It led to me pursuing theater in my adult life, and instilled in me a lifelong passion for the art form. This is to say nothing of the amazing work coming out of the STEAM and Agricultural learning centers. I have, in particular, seen agriculture open up worlds to students who sometimes clashed with other classes.

In conclusion, I hope that you will reconsider this budget. I plan to continue zealously advocating for the students and fighting for these learning centers, so that they may continue to provide for the students of Hawai'i.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:37 AM

### **Name**

Noel Shaw

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose budget cuts to learning centers across our Hawai'i Public Schools. This educational enhancement spaces are life lines for many students- providing hands on meaningful educational experiences in alignment with their interests. As a Farm to School educator, cuts to agricultural spaces are extremely difficult to see and do not align with the state's initiative to increase local food production to serve at schools. As a former guidance counselor, I know how important the arts are as an expressive outlets for students especially in their high school ages when they're undergoing many hormonal changes and coming into their own.

Please do not cut these essential programs. Our students and communities will suffer immensely because of it.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:28 AM

### **Name**

Anonymous NA

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I would like to express my opposition of agenda item seven regarding the reduction of funding for Learning Centers. Learning Centers has provided me with an invaluable learning opportunity which has strongly influenced my career path during the course of my education. I have been able to experience hands-on learning and obtain skills related to the STEM field, which are skills I use often in my current field of work. Had this program not been available to me, the likelihood I would have pursued a STEM related major in higher education. Maintaining/increasing funding to Learning Centers is essential to providing the quality education I have provided with to current and future students considering or pursuing a STEM related career.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:19 AM

### **Name**

Eli Davis

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:23 AM

### **Name**

Matthew Rosokow

### **Organization**

Radford Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Mahina Komeiji

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

ELA Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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10/31/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM

### Name

Clifton Dobson

### Organization

Pearl City High School Music and Performing Arts Learning Center, Highlands Intermediate Schools  
Music Performing Arts

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

STRONGLY OPPOSED to eliminating Learning Centers.

Dear Committee Chair and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) related to realigning resources. This reduction will have a significant and detrimental impact on the vital learning opportunities offered to students and the community at the Pearl City High School and Highlands Intermediate Schools.

The funds allocated to EDN100/BQ (16770) are crucial for supporting a wide range of growth opportunities these programs and initiatives do to enhance student learning and prepare them for future success. These programs include:

- Pearl City High School (PCHS) Music and Performing Arts (MPA) Learning Center: This program is designed to increase and broaden the abilities of students with interests, initiative, and discipline to explore limitless boundaries of knowledge and learning in the music industry. Uniquely, this learning center provides opportunities to "All" public school students, unlike other sports activities that require tryouts for a limited amount of talent, which not all students meet, and therefore need other way to explore talent. Learning Centers like the PCHS MPA capture more student participation than any other group activity. With valuable staffed Directors with more

than a decade of experience and knowledge has produced future graduates at the local and University's through scholarships designated for music students.

The PCHS MPA Learning Center has also enabled students to participate in leadership roles in which they are mentored by band directors enhancing the students ability to seek career opportunities beyond music and related disciplines. To add, this Learning Center curriculum substitutes Physical Education courses because of its high demand for physical conditioning benefiting the participating students with physical fitness and health.

The PCHS MPA has had a consistent band group rating of AA and/or AAA marking strides in the growth of the program every year.

The PCHS MAP is a staple within our Pear City community as well serving to provide music and entertainment through performing in parade events throughout the year, even in the Honolulu City Lights parade. PCHS MAP Hosts the annual Oahu Marching Band Festival, Pearl City Complex Music Festival, and the Hawaii High and Middle School Band Festival.

The City's Royal Hawaiian Band currently includes some of the PCHS MPA staff as well.

This Learning Center is lead by Dr. Chadwick Kamei, who was also very instrumental, as a leader, in the restoration of the Lahaina School Music and Performing Arts Program in honor of the participating students and victims of the wildfires. [Chadwick.kamei@k12.hi.us](mailto:Chadwick.kamei@k12.hi.us)

- Highlands Intermediate School Music and Performing Arts- Led by Daniel Lim, this program under Lim's direction sets the tone in middle school student participants for each child's growth towards high school engagement. Lim engages his student participants in upper classmen music activities in concert and marching band performances. He has mentored our daughter a PCHS Alumni and currently a Nursing student at Chaminade University. Although not in music, the character and discipline she is applying to her studies today started here with Mr. Lim.

We are truly blessed to experience all of the various levels of disciplines within this Learning Center and know that stories like ours are surmountable.

In addition to the above program services, the funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) are essential for purchasing supplies and materials needed for instruction, competitions, and extracurricular activities. These resources are vital for creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment that inspires students to excel.

The proposed reduction of funds will inevitably lead to the following consequences:

- Limited program offerings: The reduction in funding will force us to curtail or eliminate valuable program resources, depriving students of opportunities and experiences to explore their interests and develop essential skills.
- Reduced student participation: Fewer resources will limit the number of students who can participate in these programs, hindering their academic and personal growth and future career successes.
- Diminished quality of instruction: The lack of adequate funds will impact our ability to provide high-quality instruction, limiting students' access to state-of-the-art equipment and materials.

I urge the committee to reconsider this decision and maintain the funding for EDN100/BQ (16770). By doing so, you will ensure that Pearl City High School and Highlands Intermediate Schools can continue to

provide exceptional educational opportunities for our students in the area of Music and Performing Arts and contribute to the development of future leaders and professionals. Reducing such programs as the Learning Centers from the foundations of education and areas that benefit the future of our keiki should be always a top priority in the Department of Education!

Mahalo for your time and consideration

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Nathan Krahn

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Papa La'au agricultural program at Radford High School provides students with opportunities to understand how to take care of the land from a Hawaiian perspective, this is important for our students as most of them are military, and otherwise would not have access to. The construction program at Radford High School provides much needed training for the trades, allowing students skip some of the earlier training and getting into trades faster can provide incredible motivation for students to work in the trades and stay in Hawaii.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Asana Easton

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Asana Easton, and I'm in 10th grade at Mililani high school. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Asana Easton

2382100025@k12.hi.us



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Addison Yanito

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### Name

Alec Schumacer

### Organization

University of Hawai'i

### Position/Title

Assistant Professor and Director of Choral Activities

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha nō,

As the director of choral activities at UH Mānoa, I strongly oppose removing funding for the Learning Centers Program. Many of our university students, particularly those enrolled in our music education degree, cultivated their love of learning and teaching music and found community and shared purpose through the experiences in the Learning Centers. These programs provide a safe home for students to develop and grow in ways that amplify their learning during the typical school day. Shifting the funding priority to the schools will only encourage the removal of these programs. Please continue to fund the Learning Centers at the state level so that our keiki will have a safe and well-supported place to cultivate their passions.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,  
Dr. Alec Schumacker

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:25 AM

### **Name**

Hayden Foster

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

Student/teacher/parent

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:35 AM

### **Name**

Ashton Foster

### **Organization**

Radford highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student/Teacher/Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### Name

Jaydin Ryan

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Jaydin Ryan, and I'm a freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

When I'm at robotics, I feel like a member of the robotics family. Robotics allows me to express my creativity and my desire to create things. I spend so much time over there and I can't imagine that being taken from me. Robotics is more than just a club to me, and it connects me with my friends, and allows me to work with a team.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaydin Ryan

2121600577@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Joshua Pieper

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Kimberly Lauzon

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

October 31, 2024

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this finds you well. My name is Kimberly Lauzon, and I am a teacher at Mililani High School, as well as a parent of a junior student at Mililani High School and an eighth grader at Mililani Middle School. I am writing this letter to voice my concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the Learning Centers program related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a critical component of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. The program provides opportunities for experiences and growth that are rare to find in a classroom environment, such as specialized instruction, hand-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

So many of my students are or have been involved in the Learning Center programs at Mililani HS in ways that have changed their lives. Several of my former students who participated in Central Theater Arts Academy (CTAA) are now studying film and theater at the university level in schools across the country, including in New York City. Current and former students who devoted countless hours to FIRST Robotics and Science Olympiad have been able to compete nationally and internationally, forever changing their career paths, goals and opportunities. Every year my neighbor and I take our children to the CTAA spring musical, where I cheer on my students and interact with members of my community. These are not experiences to throw away.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures. Students who attend public schools should have access to the resources and experiences they need to thrive in our local and global communities.

11/01/2024

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Lauzon  
Kimberly.lauzon @k12.hi.us



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Jonathan Imai

### **Organization**

Freelance

### **Position/Title**

Musician

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I've worked with Castle, Kaimuki, and Pearl City's learning centers to varying degrees, from being a volunteer advisor to assistant music director. I'm constantly impressed with the work ethic these students have, noticeably improving from one rehearsal to the next. By performing with students from other schools, the students are able to meet many different talented individuals. Watching them work and improve together is incredibly inspiring and I hope to see this very unique kind of collaboration continue to flourish.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Mahealani Bernarte

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Chloe Incillio-Cummins

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Parker Creech

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Jeremiah Wilkins

### **Organization**

School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Jo-Hannah Liz Valdez

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I want to express my strong opposition to any proposal that would decrease funding for Learning Centers across our state. These invaluable institutions play a critical role in providing students with experiential and value-added extracurricular learning opportunities.

Learning Centers offer a diverse range of programs, from STEM and arts to sports and community service. These programs not only enrich students' academic experiences but also foster their personal growth and development. By engaging in hands-on activities and real-world projects, students develop essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity.

Learning Centers provide a safe and supportive environment for students to explore their passions and discover their talents. They offer mentorship and guidance from dedicated staff who inspire and empower young minds. By investing in Learning Centers, we are investing in the future of our state.

I urge you to reconsider any proposals that would diminish the funding for these vital institutions. Let us continue to support our students' holistic development and ensure that they have access to the resources and opportunities they deserve.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Khristine Bacalla

### **Organization**

University of Hawaii Hilo

### **Position/Title**

Graduate Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a concerned local student who grew up on the island of Oahu. I am testifying in opposition to the proposed budget decreases LC funding for 2025 to 2026 and the complete cuts by 2026-2027. I graduated from Kapolei High School and would be saddened if the STEM program disappeared. This program provides a space for students to explore careers related to STEM, which is in high demand. My time with those in this school allowed me to explore who I could be in my community. Cutting funding off for these programs at any of the high schools would be detrimental to future students wanting to explore their opportunities in STEM, performing arts, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, and business. Thank you for listening/reading this testimony. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### Name

Jorosh Vinard Cabanela

### Organization

Kapolei High School's Robotics and Engineering Program

### Position/Title

Alumnus

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha State of Hawai'i Board of Education members,

My name is Jorosh Vinard Cabanela. I'm a University of Hawaii at Manoa student studying Electrical Engineering and an alumni of Kapolei High School's Robotics and Engineering Program. I'm writing my testimony to oppose the proposed elimination of the funding for learning centers across Hawai'i.

Approximately two years ago, I was a junior in Kapolei High School, and in the Health Careers Academy. At the time, I was in the academy mainly to appease my parents, and to prepare myself for medical school in college. But for me, I didn't find it interesting or a career that I wanted to pursue. The classes I took were rather boring, except for physics. At first, physics seemed like an intimidating subject, but I quickly learned that it wasn't. My physics teacher emphasized applying the classwork to real-world applications, in which I excelled in that class and my physics teacher noticed that. He held me after class and invited me to join the Robotics program. I was doubtful, considering that I had never touched any power tools in my life nor learned any computer-aided design (CAD) programs. But, he took a chance on me, and that decision has changed my life ever since.

For the first 2-3 weeks of being in the Robotics program, and with the guidance of the mentors, I learned how to use computer-aided designs and power tools. In addition, the mentors encouraged me to think outside of the box and think of the best solution for the given task. In the span of just 13 weeks, the process of trying and designing new components resulted in a working competition robot that was built by the students with the help of the mentors. The passion to try new ideas, and learn new skills, made me want to come back to robotics for my senior year. In my senior year, I represented the engineering pathway and the robotics team whenever there were school fairs for the freshmen to choose their pathway, or whenever there was an S.T.E.A.M fair for the local elementary students. "Who would've thought that a health careers academy student is representing both the engineering academy and robotics team?" Some of my teachers have said this to me. At that same time, I was also in the STEM Capstone class, where my senior project was on a wheelchair that uses the same drivetrain as the ones on the competition robots. Overall, the Robotics and Engineering Program helped me find my passion, and that's where I am today. I want to give back to my community, where I can give the next generation of students the same or better experience that I had so that they too can have an opportunity to find their passions. Defunding these learning centers, which include not just only robotics, takes a massive step back for the students. Not only this affect the students, but it will also affect the



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teachers, advisors, and the adults that pour their soul into enriching these students to their full potential.

Board of Education members, I ask you to reconsider eliminating the funding for learning centers in Hawai'i. Defunding these learning centers would result in a loss of the student's true potential, potentially reducing the amount of new generation of workers that enter the work field. Thank you for your time in considering this issue.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### **Name**

Kylie Hansen

### **Organization**

All Learning Centers/ Campbell High School Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The learning center is a safe space for students that are having a hard time belonging with other peers ; And taking away the learning center would suspend those opportunities in their passions.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:15 PM

### **Name**

Ryley Hu

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I am a junior at Mililani High School and I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program.

As someone who has greatly benefited from the Learning Centers, I can attest to their essential role in my education. These programs have offered students across Hawaii invaluable, hands-on learning experiences. They provide not just academic instruction, but various other learning opportunities such as specialized training, internships, access to industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a range of college and career opportunities.

From the arts to STEM, these learning experiences have had a profound impact on the students in these programs and can continue to for future students.

The proposed funding cuts threaten to strip away this critical resource, limiting opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for countless students. Losing the Learning Centers would have a profound impact on our ability to pursue our aspirations.

I strongly urge you to reconsider these cuts. Investing in our educational programs is investing in the future of every student, investing in our society's future. Let's ensure that the Learning Centers remain a vital support for us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Subject: Request to Reconsider Funding Cuts for Learning Centers Program

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Colbren Fujimoto, and I am a junior studying computer engineering at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am reaching out on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I strongly oppose the planned elimination of funding for this program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770), which is part of the department's proposed realignment of resources in its base budget.

The Learning Centers have been pivotal to my educational journey. As an active participant in the FIRST Robotics and Science Club at Mililani High School, I benefitted immensely from the opportunities provided by these programs. Since their inception in the 1990s, the Learning Centers have provided students across Hawaii with invaluable learning experiences that go beyond the classroom. These programs offer specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, access to industry-standard equipment, certifications, and opportunities to explore college and career paths that would otherwise be unavailable.

My four years in the FIRST Robotics program at Mililani High School gave me the practical experience in engineering that shaped my passion for the field. This foundation led me to join Team Robotic Space Exploration at UH Manoa, and it ultimately contributed to my involvement with the Hawaii Space Flight Laboratory. Without the experience and skills I gained through the Learning Centers, I would have been far less certain about my academic path and less equipped to excel in the clubs and organizations I am part of today.

If these funding cuts are implemented, we risk losing a resource that has empowered countless students to discover their potential and pursue their aspirations. The absence of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for students to develop essential skills, creativity, and confidence.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. Investing in education is investing in our future, and preserving the Learning Centers program will allow students across Hawaii to continue benefitting from these transformative opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Colbren Fujimoto

[colfujimoto@gmail.com](mailto:colfujimoto@gmail.com)

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 7:27 AM

### **Name**

Anthony Lau

### **Agenda Item**

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I want the future children to have the opportunities that I had if not more learning at TMLC, I have personally learned so much from this program and its the reason I'm majoring in cinematography. Without this program many students will be unsure on their career paths related to media going forward.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

November 1, 2024 at 7:36 AM

### Name

Talon Petitt

### Organization

Radford Highschool

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

November 1, 2024 at 9:04 AM

### Name

Ethan Tubania

### Organization

Radford Highschool

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 28, 2024 at 7:43 PM

### Name

Zoe Tengan

### Organization

Central Theatre Arts Academy (Learning Center at Mililani High School)

### Position/Title

Technical Theatre Instructor (Part-time) and alumni of the program

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,  
My name is Zoe Tengan, and I'm just one of a handful of young educators who represent the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) Learning Center at Mililani High School. I kindly oppose or instead suggest reevaluating the Realignment 1 (Reduction) changes for the upcoming fiscal years. While I understand that there must be a reallocation of funds for other critical departments and programs, the cuts to already underfunded programs, like Learning Centers, do a disservice to the quality and scope of education offered to students across the state.

According to the High-Impact Strategic Priorities of transparency, equity, and effectiveness, Learning Centers (along with many other programs in the Reduction category) should be prioritized in the subsequent years to follow. They are equally and significantly impacted by inflation, the social effects of the pandemic, and many other factors faced by schools' various needs and capabilities. I believe that Learning Centers can not only benefit a student's education but also benefit their future, whether they pursue higher education or the workforce, and I firmly believe they should at least retain their currently allocated funds for the upcoming fiscal years.

For a Learning Center dedicated to the theatre, we offer students a chance to gain workplace skills and opportunities that transcend the classroom and their time in the programs. Our program, while based in Mililani, not only offers students at Leilehua and Waialua the chance to receive credit for the class but also opens auditions to our plays and musicals to all public school students on the island. Not only do we foster collaboration, teamwork, and creativity, but we also offer a place for students to gain a sense of confidence and ownership in what they produce (student-run performances). In addition, we provide a safe space for students to express themselves fully and grow as individuals, which is critical for students post-pandemic. In my time in the program (both as a student and now as an educator), I've gained invaluable skills that have helped me prepare for the workforce and have helped countless peers similarly in the professional world (both in and out of the theatre). Without Learning Centers like ours, the love for the arts and the ability for students to express themselves through song and dance or the production of a theatrical show would be impossible.

Our educator team at CTAA is limited to seven individuals, and even with such a devoted and hardworking team, the level of craft and scope of services offered are often met with hardships, including the lack of funds to achieve our goals. With inflation, the cost of materials has only skyrocketed, and our budgets are already stretched thin when factoring in the number of hours put into this program. Reducing and removing Learning Center funds and employees



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would only impede and eliminate programs that foster students' opportunities to develop new lifelong skills.

I humbly ask that you consider the importance of these Learning Centers (and other invaluable programs) to the diverse array of students in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Zoe T.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:25 AM

### **Name**

Tyrissa Barco

### **Organization**

NPAC Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a parent of a child who attends the Nanakuli performing arts center, I would like to submit this testimony of amazing progress that this outlet has offered to my child. She has grown so much in the last three years that she has been able to participate, both physically mentally emotionally and socially. It is very important for me as a parent to find a safe place for my child to be herself and explore her talent. Nanakuli performing arts center has given her the ability to grow in self-confidence and show her the reality of hard work. I would ask that you take a second look at programs such as these that boost confidence in a safe environment that is hard to come by these days. With the recent youth violence, more of our students need to be engaged in these kinds of programs, not cutting the budget.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:03 AM

### **Name**

Courtney DeConto

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Regarding the Learning Center budget cuts for next school year, I beg you to reconsider. This funding supports a variety of learning opportunities for students including paying for teachers, supplies, and facilitating a diverse learning experience. With Hawaii's schools continuing to be ranked 45th out of 50 states, the last thing we need to be doing is cutting funds specifically directed at student learning.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:48 AM

### **Name**

Sarah Dulay

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to oppose the decision to discontinue funding for Learning Centers. As somebody who was fortunate enough to be a student in a Learning Center, it was disappointing to hear that the decision was made to discontinue funding for Learning Centers at our public schools. The Learning Center I was part of paved the path for me to become a woman in STEM and a contributing engineer to our nation's Navy. Funding for the Learning Center allows public schools to encourage more students to enter into a STEM career and contribute to advances in fields like medicine and technology. The Learning Centers provides opportunities for students to create relationships with professionals in their fields of interest and also shows students that it's possible to pursue their dreams to be somebody who creates something ground breaking. So many students want to make a difference in this world. Discontinuing funding for Learning Centers will lead to the inability for schools to continue with the programs they've been providing for years. I encourage the BOE to talk to the students, talk to alumni, attend events. See where the money has been going towards and why it's such an influential piece in paving the future for our students. I grew up with the saying "Keiki are our future", please continue funding for Learning Centers, or provide a similar funding, so that these opportunities aren't taken away from our kids. Thank you for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:48 AM

### **Name**

Dennis Lin

### **Organization**

HPM Building Supply/Waiakea High School Foundation

### **Position/Title**

Community Relations/Board Treasurer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Chair and Board of Education members,

I am writing to you with concerns about the potential defunding of the Technology Learning Center at Waiakea High School. The Technology Learning Center, run by Thomas Murphy, has allowed dozens of students to participate in the award-winning and internationally known Waiakea High School Robotics Team. The robotics team has been a cornerstone of STEM outreach and real-life application of concepts.

As a local community business representative who has supported the club, I have been extremely impressed with the student's level of knowledge and polish in their public presentations. Not only have they gained the support of their local community, but they have also captured the eyes of their Mayor, councilmembers, and even the Lieutenant Governor.

The Department of Education and Board of Education have been pushing for more STEM and STEAM education for years. By defunding programs like the Technology Learning Centers, we take a huge step back, not forward, for our students.

I urge the board to reconsider the budget cuts and continue funding Technology Learning Centers across the islands. We must invest in the students and the programs that help them succeed.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Dennis Lin

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:03 AM

### **Name**

Noel Morin

### **Organization**

Hawaii EV Association

### **Position/Title**

President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I'm responding to a proposed budget line item regarding the reduction in the funding of Learning Centers.

My understanding is that with the proposed budget, the Learn Centers will lose funding in the year 2026-2027. I'm most familiar with the Robotics Program at the Waiakea High School in Hilo and appreciate very much the value that the program offers to local youth with their exposure to robotics and engineering. It has also been an opportunity for high school students to gain leadership and mentoring skills (they volunteer their time to tutor and coach younger students).

Please reconsider the funding strategy for the Learning Centers.

Mahalo,  
Noel Morin

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:48 AM

### **Name**

Kara Watada

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Student of CTAA

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Theater is helping me grow as a person and I get to be able to interact with people I love as well as being able to perform in front of others. I've always been seen as weird growing up but theater really helped me come out of my shell and become more open and extroverted to others. Because of theater, I made a lot of new friends and I was able to make a lot of connections with a lot of people. I've also benefited from theater by practicing my acting skills and being able to help out during shows and the help and assistance I give really makes me feel happy that I found a place I belong.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:58 AM

### **Name**

Chelsea Van Lerberghe

### **Organization**

department education

### **Position/Title**

acting student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

acting has been so fun to me, actually bonding people and even helping me know what to do when I grow up. acting also helped me grow as a person, i was usually shy and didn't have a lot of friends, but since acting I've gotten better. I now like improv, I didn't even know what that was or even if I liked it. please don't cut the budget.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:50 AM

### **Name**

Lyric Agullana

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Student of Central Theatre Art Academy

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Central Theatre Arts Academy is not just a theatre organization to me it is much more. It helped me find out my passion and something I actually cared about. Before I found Central Theatre Arts Academy I was still figuring myself out as a person and I was longing for the feeling of belonging somewhere. When I got to highschool and auditioned for one of their shows something inside me lit up that day. Ever since then I have never been happier and now I finally feel like I belong somewhere thanks to Central Theatre Arts Academy.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:02 PM

### **Name**

Demo Lavarias-dumlao

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

CTAA has helped me substantially grow as a person, it has helped me become who I am today. Not only does it offer a learning experience, I know how to use power tools and work with wood and stuff. It helped inspire me for future careers as i'm not interested in wood working. CTAA is like a safe space for anyone 'abnormal' i'd say, it's a safe space of accepting and fun people who work together to make cool stuff. Not only that but CTAA encourages theater and arts, I mean that's what it is, but like people can see the shows and have fun, see how talented these students and teachers are in this program. CTAA has helped me become a more social person, I've met people who are so amazing an i'm so happy to know them as I never would've without this program. It gave me time to talk with my friends who have also joined, as we're all in play production, it makes us closer bonded together and we get to actually work on something. This makes me feel like I have a purpose or something to look forward to after school. It helps put a clear goal to work towards together with people who accept you and help you learn. I am not a very social person, but this has really helped me grow, I love being more hands-on and being able to work with things. This program gives opportunities I never would've had if I hadn't joined this program. I think cutting the budget for CTAA and Robotics is stupid and I wholeheartedly disagree for this unnecessary change in order to 'fund other programs for learning' when these programs do enough. It's taking away this safe haven and cutting both students and teachers out of an interesting and fun program where you can learn so many versatile skills that are unavailable to most. It's honestly a big loss and you should definitely reconsider the arts are important and very necessary, they should be defended and encouraged as opposed to cut and taken down.

I am a student in this program, and while I've only been a part of it for two years, I've learned so much and I'd never imagine my life without this wonderful program. Money shouldn't be taken away from these learning centers.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:58 AM

### **Name**

Brent Schlittenhart

### **Organization**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to voice my support for acting and performing arts budget needs. Our family has attended performances through the years. There is great benefits to fund these programs and activities in our schools. Please do not cut funding for these programs. I know that students and families enjoy these performances. Students and faculty work really hard to make exciting and rewarding experiences. These performances enhance the educational experience of the students. It helps their teamwork. It helps their communication skills. It provides outreach to the community outside the school. It can even provide an introduction and stepping stone for future career opportunities for students. The performing arts programs with plays, musicals, dance and music presentations provide great educational experiences for the students and their families. Please do not cut any funding from these programs. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If my testimony needs to be submitted elsewhere please let me know.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:11 PM

### **Name**

Quinn Kamisato

### **Organization**

Mililani learning center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I think funding shouldn't be taken away from schools because what you're just doing is taking from one to give to another, and you think that's okay? Well I don't think so...arts and agricultural is something important for students. It helps them find what they're interested in and find who they are. These "activities" might lead them to pursuing the activity to a job. So it means it can be useful to keep these fundings high. I also have personal and emotional feelings towards these "activities". I was in Chorus in 8th grade, and stayed in acting 9-11th grade. So please keep these things in mind when you talk about less funding these activities.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:45 PM

### **Name**

Mark Catoe

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The Mililani High School acting program is a very crucial and necessary tool for fostering a love for the performing arts and promoting self-expression, collaboration, and personal growth among students. It helps participants develop not only acting skills but also important life skills like, team work, learning skills, leadership communication skills as well as how to communicate effectively with your colleagues and taking that away would be stomping on everyone's hearts and their soul. This program means so much to a lot of people in and out of the state so please we beg of you don't do this....

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:55 PM

### **Name**

Jinny Marksberry

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut the budget for the creative learning centers in Hawaii. I personally oppose of this current issue, as it would take away the opportunities and passions for many people. The people I know, including myself, who will be affected in this operation are deeply saddened by the possibility of losing these programs. Please keep these programs supported and running.



## The Marine Science Learning Center at Wai'anae High School

85-251 Farrington Hwy, Wai'anae HI 96792

Phone: (808) 697-9400

October 29, 2024

Testimony in Opposition to Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-27  
Board of Education  
October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

Aloha,

My name is Katie Kealoha, I am the coordinator of the Marine Science Learning Center at Wai'anae High School and I am writing to oppose the budget request which will effectively eliminate the Department's Learning Center Program.

I am a former student of the Marine Science Learning Center at Wai'anae High School, after graduation I volunteered with Learning Center activities and ultimately found a passion for teaching and returned to Wai'anae High School as a teacher. I eventually took on the role of coordinator for our Learning Center

From many levels, I have seen the impacts that a special course of study like a Learning Center can have on students. I have also experienced the time, effort and resources it takes to run a program of excellence and provide experiences that students do not typically get within the public school setting. Thanks to the funding for Learning Centers, our school has a salt water aquaculture facility that not only serves as a real life science lab and functioning business for students to learn workplace skills, but also an educational and community resource. We have provided limu free of charge to colleges, businesses and non-profit organizations, we have housed and reared baby mullet in support of fishpond partners and had groups of all ages participate in tours, workshops and educational activities utilizing these resources. I personally have grown as an individual through my connection to Learning Centers, and I have many former classmates and students who have shared the impact our Marine Science Learning Center had on their lives. Without the budget and half time position provided by the state, maintaining our learning center will put added strain on our school to find funding to keep these resources active. Eliminating the Learning Center program statewide will also remove an important accountability and feedback piece that allowed us to continually strive to improve and increase our outreach and impact.

I urge the Board to reconsider this budget, and to find a way to continue to offer the Learning Center program as it exists. Across the state, teachers, students and community members are coming together to do amazing things with the help of this program. It will be a great loss if they exist no more.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Katie Kealoha

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:45 PM

### **Name**

Faith Pascual

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I would like to spread my concerns on the budget cuts central theater arts academy. This would affect the many theaters programs that are connected to this organization. The many theaters programs in schools the students who are apart and attend in the programs find these groups as a safe space to express themselves and share their interests. Theater is also a way where students can learn how to project and speak in front of crowds and basic public speaking as it's involved when performing. This also will affect the STEM/ robotics programs. Now I don't know much on the ideals of STEM and what goes on but I do know that they as well have the same experience for students. A safe space for them to learn and grow.

As a student I want to be able to participate in the Theatre programs that are apart of my school and I'm sure that many other students would feel the same. Taking away this opportunity can effect many students, potentially making them quit their dreams of performing, I enjoy the theatre program, it's a safe environment and it's a place where I can feel like I belong. I as well want to watch the performances that the theater program will perform in the future. Taking that away can cause the people who have practice tiredly day and night much disappointment as their skills are not able to shine.

I beg you to rethink your decisions please. I wish to be able to share my creativity and I'm sure other students would feel the same.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:08 PM

### **Name**

Jonathan Hedges

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I gained more valuable skills in stagecraft than in shop class. Some performances even offered pay, helping me develop a strong work ethic. I acquired technical skills I've applied to assist nonprofits and churches. School performing arts programs offer far more than just performance opportunities. I learned countless life skills through CPAC that would have been missed without the program, skills that continue to benefit me as an adult. I'd hate to see that go away for future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:55 PM

### **Name**

Ciel Mores

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am here to strongly oppose the Department of Education's proposed budget cuts to drama and theatre programs in our schools.

It is deeply concerning and would have a detrimental impact on our students' education and overall development. Drama and theatre cultivate emotional intelligence, teamwork, and adaptability, skills that complement academic achievement and prepare students for diverse career paths.

These programs also provide an inclusive environment, being a safe place where students from all backgrounds can find a sense of belonging and self-expression. For many, theatre is a space where they can explore their identities, build confidence, and develop a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

But eliminating or reducing support for these programs will heavily effect students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings but excel in the arts.

Cutting funding for these initiatives not only undermines the development of critical soft skills but also narrows the scope of educational opportunities for our students. In an increasingly complex world, we should be expanding access to the arts, not restricting it.

Rethink your decisions.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:47 PM

### **Name**

Mia Hatzenbuhler

### **Organization**

Mililani Learning Center (CTAA)

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a student of Mililani High school, hearing that our Central Arts Academy budget is going to be cut is deeply upsetting to me. I've been at this school for over a year now, and I've seen the strong, positive impact that our Drama and STEM programs have had on students at this school. I know some students from the Drama Club, and I can see the positive experiences it has given them. I've also seen flyers for the different plays that our school has had over the past year, and it makes me happy to know that the opportunity for any student who wishes to audition has that choice. Regardless of a student's class or background, they can freely audition for plays that can give them acting experiences and memories that will last for the rest of their lives. I've also seen announcements about our Robotics Club at Mililani High School, and although I've never been to the club or seen their competitions, I know that there aren't many other opportunities for students interested in STEM to express their creativity and love for the subject. In addition, this budget cut would affect the ability of our arts educators to fund field trips for students. Buses have gotten more expensive to pay for recently, and this budget cut would essentially prohibit the performing arts classes from taking their students on field trips. This would lessen the amount of educational opportunities that we as students have. Field trips are already uncommon enough among classes at this school, and I would appreciate more opportunities to gain insight from places outside the school as well as at this school. Even in regards to the past, I don't remember too many things about elementary school, but the field trips I went on, and the extracurriculars I participated in are ingrained in my memory because of the educational value they gave me and the experiences I gained from them.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:07 PM

### Name

Shannon Nakata

### Organization

Department of Education (Kipapa Elementary School - Educational Assistant, Central Theatre Arts Academy - Choreographer)

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Shannon Nakata

October, 29, 2024

Kipapa Elementary School & Central Theatre Arts Academy

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to VIII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027, which proposes to cut funding for public school learning center programs. As an educator, I am deeply concerned about the impact this bill will have on our students, teachers, and community as a whole.

Learning center programs are essential components of our public education system. These centers provide invaluable opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge and skills across a variety of subjects, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), agriculture technology, and the performing arts. The performing arts programs encompass much more than just acting, singing, and dancing; they also offer hands-on experience in theater production roles like lighting, sound operations, set design and construction, costume design and construction, as well as makeup and hair design.

Beyond technical skills, these programs help students build valuable leadership skills, teamwork, and group management skills, along with problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities. These competencies prepare students not only for future careers but also equip them to be active, resourceful members of their communities.

Cutting funding to these programs would result in:

**Reduced Access to Specialized Learning Opportunities:** Learning centers offer unique programs that students might not otherwise experience in traditional classroom settings. Without these resources, students could miss out on critical exposure to STEM fields, agriculture technology, and the performing arts—all of which are essential to a well-rounded education and our state's economic future.

**Increased Burden on Families and Educators:** Without learning centers, more pressure will be placed on parents and teachers to fill the gaps. Not every family has the means or time to support their children in these specialized fields, which would ultimately impact both family wellbeing and teacher workload.

11/01/2024

Long-term Socioeconomic Impacts: Studies consistently show that educational support outside of school hours is linked to higher academic achievement and lower dropout rates. By cutting these programs, we risk compromising the future success of our students and reducing their ability to contribute meaningfully to society.

The potential short-term budgetary gains from cutting these programs are far outweighed by the long-term benefits they provide to our community and our economy. Our students deserve every opportunity to succeed, and learning centers play an invaluable role in helping them achieve their full potential in diverse fields.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider VIII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027 and protect the funding for public school learning center programs. Our students, families, and educators depend on these resources, and their future success should be a priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Shannon Nakata  
shannon.nakata@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 12:45 PM

### **Name**

Riley Guzman

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Riley Guzman and I would like to make a testimony about how we should keep theater and the funding for this program. Theater is way for many students including myself to help express themselves and get out their shell. It also helps students make more friends that have the same interests as themselves. Taking this away also takes away learning opportunities from students and helping towards their dreams and their goals. The students including me would have to travel long distances to achieve their dreams when they could have been able to achieve them without having to travel. It also gives us a lot more opportunities to branch out and be ourselves. This also takes away from future students in Mililani who dream about acting in the future. If you take this away it would make us students feel like they can't achieve their dreams and the bored of education is against us doing that. Please don't take these opportunities away from us, thank you for reading.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:38 PM

### Name

Oliana Schur

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 7 Small Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for students. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching line.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work and do what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Small Animal Systems is a level two course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.

11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration, Oliana Schur



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:32 PM

### Name

Alana Hernandez

### Organization

Lahainaluna agriculture learning center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:21 PM

### Name

Fiona Amran

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agricultural Learning Program

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Fiona Amram

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:38 PM

### Name

Ryden Adlawan

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Ryden Adlawan

Hello, I am sharing my personal experiences regarding Learning Centers specifically Hawai'i Public School Theatre, which in this budget there is a request to reduce/eliminate funding. As someone who spent 4 years in my high school's theatre program, I grew to have a love for the arts. After school during the week we learned how to use power tools, we learned how to build sets, and we learned how to measure and cut wood for sets. But two of the most important things were learning to have an appreciation for the Arts, and the opportunity to make friends who shared the same passion that I had. Looking back on High School, being a part of my school's theatre program was the best time I had in High School. It allowed me freedom to be me, in a time where I might have otherwise been struggling with my identity. It allowed me to express myself in a safe space, when I might not have felt safe outside of the theatre program. It gave me a safe place to go after school, to wind down after being in classes that might have been frustrating. Or to be around others at a time when I really didn't have any friends. It taught me to love plays, musicals and everything in-between. I still carry the love for theatre today. I'm excited to go see a theatre production that allow me to escape the world around me. I feel like Hawai'i Public School Theatre is really important in today's world, where kids/teens can escape from the world we are living in. From all the messiness that has been created, where they might not feel safe at school because of one thing or another. But the theatre doesn't discriminate, it doesn't bully you. It welcomes you in with open arms and it gives you a chance to be the real authentic you. That is something that is desperately needed in today's society. The Arts are under attack already, from book bans, to people not feeling like they can be who they want to be. Do we really need to take something else away from kids/teens? When sports gets what seems like an unlimited amount of money, we need to support Learning Centers when they need it the most. Not cast them aside and deplete/reduce the limited funds they have already. Thank You for

the opportunity to share my testimony on the fundamental impact of Hawai'i Public School  
Theatre on my life.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:50 PM

### **Name**

Jeffrey Orig

### **Organization**

Orig Media

### **Position/Title**

Writer, Director, Producer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regards to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027.

In particular I am requesting that you folks reconsider the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

These programs help give valuable experience to high school students. These experiences can either lead directly to a high paying job that is in demand for various creative fields like graphic design, web design, web development, software development, game development, and film/TV.

At the very least, these programs give very important skills like storytelling, presentations, marketing, video shooting, video editing, web design, graphic design, and much more. These skills are increasingly more important to have in today's marketplace. It is extremely important to be able to communicate your message in many different mediums

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that caters to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The loss of funding would have a profound impact on our students and greatly decrease all the advantages an LC offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, compete at the national level, etc. In order to ensure our students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future we need to provide them with the tools they'll need to succeed.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The Learning Center program is an investment that deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:38 PM

### Name

Julia LoPresti

### Organization

'Aiea Intermediate School

### Position/Title

Theatre Teacher / Student Activities Coordinator

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha member of the Board of Education,

My name is Julia LoPresti and I am writing in strong opposition to reduce our state's budget for Learning Centers as proposed in the HIDOE Fiscal Biennium Budget for 2025-2027, Attachment A, Row 77. As a former Performing Arts Learning Center Coordinator and veteran DOE Theatre Arts teacher, I know firsthand the critical impact of Learning Centers for our public school students. My testimony here refers specifically to Performing Arts Learning Centers, however I know that much of this applies to ALL Learning Centers which includes Performing Arts, Business, STEM, STEAM, and Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources. Speaking of our the Agricultural Learning Centers, I'd like to respectfully remind the Board Members, that Leilehua High School's Agricultural Learning Center Coordinator, Jackie Freitas, currently holds the title of the 2024 Hawaii State Teacher of the Year. Thus it should be made absolutely clear that ALL of our public high school Learning Centers provide a transformative platform that deeply aligns with the Department of Education's priority targets, especially in cultivating students' positive behaviors, providing excellence in education, and rich career exploration opportunities. To claim otherwise is simply false and a disservice to all the incredible programs offered to our students in Learning Centers statewide.

In regards specifically to Performing Arts Learning centers (PALCs) students are not only encouraged to develop essential life skills, such as collaboration, accountability, and emotional resilience, but they are also immersed in hands-on career experiences that foster creativity and confidence. Participation in PALCs inherently supports positive behavior development in students. As they engage in music, theater, dance, and technical roles, students learn to express themselves constructively, manage time, and commit to group goals—essential for building empathy, patience, and self-discipline. Working within a team-oriented environment, students foster respect for others, and the immediate feedback they receive during performances reinforces perseverance and personal responsibility. These social-emotional skills lay the groundwork for both academic and personal success, aligning directly with DOE's objective to foster well-rounded, positively engaged students.

Performing Arts Learning Centers also serve as dynamic hubs for career exploration, giving students a valuable window into the numerous pathways within the arts and entertainment industries. With exposure to areas like technical theater, lighting and sound design, stage management, and performance, students gain real-world insight and practical skills that can translate into a variety of creative and technical professions. These centers often partner with industry professionals and higher education institutions, providing students mentorship and networking opportunities that can shape their futures. This level of career exposure supports the DOE's goal to prepare students

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for diverse post-secondary pathways, particularly in a field where the demand for creative, adaptive, and collaborative professionals is ever-growing.

In light of these benefits, any reduction in the DOE budget for Learning Centers would undermine students' social, emotional, and career development and be an inexcusable offense to excellent, long-running programs that have been offering our students invaluable learning experiences for decades. Cutting funds would not only jeopardize students' access to these transformative experiences but also signal a disregard for the DOE's own high-priority goals. Limiting resources for these programs risks decimating the opportunities students need to grow into empathetic, capable, and career-ready individuals. For the sake of our students' futures and the diverse, dynamic skills they bring to society, it is essential that funding for ALL our state's Learning Centers remains protected and prioritized.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:15 PM

### **Name**

Selah Johnson

### **Organization**

Kauai Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

KPAC has made an incredible impact on me and so many others involved. I have choreographed only one KPAC production so far, but it has changed me for the better in so many ways. Spending time with the students has shown me what a special program this is and how much it means to them. KPAC means so much to me as well, it has provided me with the amazing opportunity to choreograph for a tri-high school theater production, something I wouldn't be able to experience without it. The feeling I got when I was able to see my work on stage is unexplainable. KPAC has not only impacted the students and me, but also the entire island of Kauai. The arts bring communities together. These kids have shown me their passion and love for acting, music, and dancing. KPAC has given those a place to be themselves when they may not have one. KPAC has changed so many lives and it would be devastating to see it gone.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:44 PM

### **Name**

Jonathan Takiguchi

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing with concern about the defunding of the Technology Learning Center at Waiakea High School. As a student at our Technology Learning Center our program has given back to our community repeatedly through providing educational opportunities for STEM education in elementary and middle school students throughout our time operating. I know personally how much this learning center has improved my education and increased my love for STEM topics. By defunding our learning center you are removing both educational STEM opportunities for both high schoolers but younger students we run events for. I strongly request you reconsider defunding our learning center as it would be a shame to see such a genuinely important facet of my personal growth fizzle out by no fault of its own.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:02 PM

### **Name**

Charley Brown

### **Organization**

Waiakea high school engineering learning center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Waiakea learning center has provided so many opportunities through the years in the past twenty years 18 women have gone into the engineering industry and we have had 6 regent scholars they have provided so many opportunities. Being a women in stem this leading center has provided me with so opportunities and had mas made me feel I have a place in this industry of engineering. I have learned so much through this program and have made so many strong connections. If they defund the schools robotics team then a bunch of other students will not have this amazing opportunity that I have had

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:44 PM

### **Name**

Alicia Dexter

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School's Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

After recently joining Waiakea High School's Technology Learning Center (TLC), I've observed their extreme amounts of dedication to to their learning, the knowledge each member absorbs from being apart of such community, and the opportunities our TLC has provided our members with. The funding provided for Waiakea's TLC has helped our members go on numerous robotics trips to compete at national levels. Additionally, this funding has also allowed our TLC to be assisted with adults who have experience in robotics. Losing the funding for the 2024-2025 school year means losing the opportunity to compete at higher levels on the mainland, not having assistance in robotics from older peers, and potentially not being able to create certain projects due to financial restrictions. Furthermore, in the 2025-2026 school year, as well as future school years, Waiakea High School's TLC will cease to exist. This rips away multiple scholarship and academic opportunities from our members.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:54 PM

### **Name**

Elven Yip

### **Organization**

Waiakea high school learning center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I still want this program to exist because it helps kids like me make friends



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:42 PM

### **Name**

Avery Wong

### **Organization**

Waiākea Robotics TLC

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

As a active student I don't think the TLC should be defunded. It has helped me improve a lot in high school and build connections with many people. Also, I have learned valuable skills in engineering, speaking, and programming. A lot of this experience comes from driving and building robots at tournaments. If the TLC is defunded we would not be able to apply to these tournaments and participate. Future generations would also not be able to get the same experiences and opportunities.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:52 PM

### **Name**

Noah Gagne

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing with concern for the defunding of the Technology Learning Center. As an active student in the Waiakea High School TLC Robotics team I've gained many connections that help me get closer to goals and I've gained many useful skills. Our team also reaches out to the community, including the younger generation teaching them about STEAM opportunities to hopefully inspire them to aspire a career in STEAM. Robotics is also a safe environment where students stay during afterschool to work and have fun. If the Technology Learning Center gets defunded students will lose opportunities that they once had with the Technology Learning Center. Thank you for reading my testimony.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:50 PM

### **Name**

Claudia Pummer

### **Organization**

Olelo Community Media

### **Position/Title**

Education Manager

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regards to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

‘Ōlelo Community Media has partnered with the Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design for many years. During that time, we have witnessed first-hand the great value that the LC offers its students by providing them with industry-standard, practical opportunities to pave their pathway toward college or into our local workforce. Some of our most trusted employees are graduates of this program.

The loss of funding would greatly diminish those opportunities and in the long run jeopardize Hawaii's overall ability to compete in the global marketplace.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The LC is a unique and indispensable investment in our future and deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Claudia Pummer

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 2:44 PM

### Name

Connor Meers

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Hello,

I am writing this testimony after hearing that the Board of Education intends to strip the Castle Performing Arts Center (CPAC) in addition to the three other Learning Centers across the island. I find this absolutely unacceptable and strongly encourage you folks to reconsider taking this amazing resource away from the future of tomorrow.

Before I get into this, I'd like to share a little about myself. I am a proud graduate of Castle High School, class of 2014 and CPAC was a huge part of my life from the age of 8. I went to Kupunahala and King Intermediate located in the Castle Complex. Through CPAC, I discover my love to theater, specifically lighting and decided to pursue a BFA in Lighting Design at the Conservatory Of Theatre Arts at Webster University, in St. Louis Missouri. After graduating with Departmental Honors in 2018, I went on to become the Light Board Programmer at ZACH Theatre in Austin, Texas. After the pandemic, I moved back to St. Louis and currently I am a proud IATSE Local 6 union member, the Head Electrician at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, the Light Board Programmer and Assistant Head Electrician at The Muny, and an adjunct professor at Webster University. To put it in perspective, I am about 5-10 years ahead of schedule when it comes to career success in my specific field of work. I wouldn't have any of this if it weren't for CPAC. I wouldn't have ever discovered my love for theater, passion in lighting, or found the thing I want to do for the rest of my life.

CPAC is how I discovered theater and entertainment via their KidStart program. My brother was cast in a KidStart production when I was 8 and I absolutely fell in love with everything that place had to offer. I was at every single rehearsal, knew all the moves, and went to every show. When I was of age, I also got selected and that's really where my journey started. I haven't heard of any other place in the nation that is anything like the KidStart program. I was so empowered every time I got up on that stage. The faculty gave me courage, strength, and confidence at such a young age which has played into every aspect of my life. I think the KidStart experience changed so many lives for both the participants, and the Castle Complex as a whole. Every single student from the 4th-8th grade had teaching artists in their school once a year. They did a production which then students are selected from each school for the Complex wide production of that year. We aren't just singing and dancing in those sessions. We are learning valuable life lessons along with skills that are transferable to everyday life. We are teaching the students confidence and being able to let loose. We're also teaching them what it means to be a team player.

Through CPAC, I was able to travel out to Europe for the first and only time in my life as we were participants in the International Fringe Festival which takes place in Edinburgh, Scotland. I was in the 8th grade at the time and my mom went with me. But I met students from all over the country and world there, it was amazing. I will have those memories for the rest of my life. It's also acted as a networking tool for me as I move through my career. I can connect with other artists and technicians about our experience at this festival that is just so well known.

CPAC played a huge role for me in high school. I actually decided not to try out or play for our soccer team my

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freshman year to really dive into theater. I got really into lighting as a suggestion from the director of the program, Karen Meyer. She changed my life by just suggesting I go to a lighting focus and see what it's all about. I was able to work alongside a seasoned, well known, and well traveled Lighting Designer who went to graduate school at Yale. I didn't know what that meant at the time but holy cow, I was extremely blessed to be able to soak up that knowledge. We produced 3 shows a year through the theater department and I was apart of every one of them since I was in the 8th grade. I ran the light board, was a follow spot operator, stage manager, and head flyman. Through this, I was really able to learn what it means to work with a team and how important it is to always remember that the people around you are also working towards the same end goal. Communication was and still is a huge aspect of my job and that all started at CPAC. Theater demands that you collaborate with other people to achieve one thing and that requires an excellent line of communication. Learning the importance of being on time to things and how integral every single person is to this world! We can't all get to this one goal if someone is lacking.

Anyways, I then started designing lighting for our Dance Concerts produced by our dance program. It was in these concerts that I really fully discover my love for lighting. Being able to paint with light, assist in telling a story, and really transporting an audience just really meant the world to me. The dance teacher was amazing in the fact that she really allowed me to discover myself and my art over 4 years. She definitely provided guidance, but she really let me run with it and do my thing and learn on my own. She recommended me to someone she worked with my sophomore year and recommended me to design for them. Because of that, I started freelancing for numerous companies around the island before the age of 18. Some of these organizations were 24VII Danceforce, Chaminade University, Ohana Arts, Children's Theater of Oahu, HyperSquad, ToKa Media, and many more. This really showed me I could make a living off of my art which encourage me to keep learning and getting better. I learned to collaborate and communicate with people much older than me and had so much more experience. That was all due to CPAC and the connections the teacher had, in addition to the confidence they instilled in me.

I now live an amazing life, doing exactly what I love every single day. I am a part of a union, own a house, and run an entire Lighting Department at a major Regional Theater all at the age of 28. This all started because of CPAC. Because of the impact it had on my life at such a younger age. Because of the support network around me that uplifted and supported me. Because of the countless friendships that were forged and have been maintained over 20 years of my life. Because of the amazing, truly wonderful, and essential work these teacher do.

I promise you that CPAC and the Learnings Arts Centers across the island have produced some of the most amazing entertainers from Hawaii. CPAC alone has produced people back in the day cast in Broadway and Touring Productions of Miss Saigon, Lion King, and Mama Mia!. Those are people that I and many others, looked up to through our youth. We have people in every aspect of the industry, across the country and in Hawaii. People work in the film industry and make up the technical workforce for film productions in the state such as Hawaii 5-0, NCIS: Hawaii, and Magnum PI. The freaking Lighting Director for the hit NBC competition show, The Voice! He oversee's the lighting for The Voice world wide! That's incredible and guess where he went to high school and learning lighting? JAMES B. CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL and the home of the Castle Performing Arts Center. Absolutely none of these amazing achievements could have been possible without CPAC.

CPAC changed my life and has changed countless others. I want you all to know that you would be completely destroying everything that Mr. Ron Bright worked so hard to accomplish. The actual building that houses CPAC is named after him. The Ronal E. Bright Auditorium. He build that entire program from the ground up. Student who have learned from him have gone on to do amazing things, not only in theater. Some of become lawyers, teachers, doctors, law makers, and news reporters. This man touched so many people and created such a strong sense of community. He just exuded joy and positivity which spread like wildfire. I hope someone of you have met this man because even from one interaction, I promise you that your life would have bee changed by him. He always created a safe space for everyone to feel loved, have a good time, and produce some wonderful theater.

I implore you all to reconsider cutting funding from the Learning Centers across the state. These programs are home to so many people, needing confidence, and expressing themselves through theater. Sure not everyone goes on to pursue it as a career, but it teaches students so much more. I hope you realize that if you cut funding, the entire state will feel it for years to come. You're cutting down a major funnel of talent from this next generation.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:32 PM

### **Name**

Rafan Rahman

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose section VIII because I am a member of Waiakea TLC. I believe it's a great program but this budget will make us lose our spending fund which would force us to close down robotics. Robotics is a great resource for students and it betters many lives. We need to maintain our budget to keep running robotics.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:50 PM

### **Name**

Bruce Meyers

### **Organization**

Okahara and Associates, Inc.

### **Position/Title**

President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I understand that the State is considering removing the learning centers statewide. I am writing to oppose this because one of the learning centers is the STEM program of Robotics, which I support and have been involved in for many years. Our company has hired former students who became engineers because of their involvement in STEM and robotics programs. The students that are in these programs really love it and to kill that program would impact our STEM industry! Please do not cut funding for these learning centers.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 2:52 PM

### **Name**

Payton Tayama

### **Organization**

Mililani Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The money that the learning centers provide for our program is vital to keeping our instructors paid, and our program from losing all funding. This program is important to both the instructors, the current students, and the future students who want to be apart of this learning center program. Without this funding, students won't have the opportunity to learn from these learning centers, and lose out on the valuable experiences that these programs provide us. Personally, the learning center funds my school's drama program. This program is really important to me, and all of the students in this program. It's given me valuable, real life experience that I wouldn't have otherwise gotten from just sitting in a classroom all day. I've met so many people that love this program and everything we do here. I want this program to stay here, so the younger generation can experience the same sense of community and belonging that I felt from my peers in our drama program. It's taught me real life skills, such as working with tools, communication, teamwork, construction, and so much more. All of these experiences are important to me, and I want them to stay for the next generation of students to learn from and grow from. Please consider our side, and keep our funding, not just for our program, but for all of the learning centers who need and rely on this funding to keep their programs alive. Thank you for considering our side of this issue.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:46 PM

### **Name**

Alexandra Marchello

### **Organization**

PACK & CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I believe that it is unfair to stop the funding of learning centers! Many students enjoy spending their time performing for others and so do I! There are many things to learn while be apart of the arts as well! Working in the arts helps students, like me, develop creative problem-solving skills. It teaches me how to manage my time, and overall make new friends and embrace my culture. Theater has taught me to embrace myself and it's okay to be different. That's why they shouldn't defund the arts!

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 3:32 PM

### Name

Nathan Rizzo

### Organization

Waiakea High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Testimony Opposing Section VIII: Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027\*\*

Dear Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Department of Education's operating budget request for the upcoming fiscal biennium of 2025-2027. While I acknowledge the importance of funding educational initiatives, we must engage in a comprehensive evaluation of our priorities, particularly in light of new challenges and the diverse needs within our community.

Over the past 20 years, we have indeed seen remarkable growth in STEM education, particularly through impactful programs like robotics. The participation numbers are impressive, with over 1,100 attendees at community outreach events this past year alone. We have successfully conducted STEM camps and special engineering events, which have inspired countless students and fostered a vibrant ecosystem for aspiring young engineers.

However, as we look to the future, it is essential to address pressing concerns that threaten the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs. The current budget request appears to favor robotics and STEM initiatives disproportionately, potentially sidelining other critical areas of education that contribute to the holistic development of our students. We must ask ourselves whether a singular focus on high-tech initiatives adequately prepares our students for the diverse challenges they will encounter in life.

Furthermore, while our robotics program has gained recognition through competitions and partnerships, we must consider the implications of equity. Not all students have equal access to the resources and opportunities afforded by well-funded robotics programs. If we continue to prioritize these initiatives without a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the broader educational landscape, we risk perpetuating inequities that could have long-term negative effects on our students and community.

In conclusion, while I share pride in our accomplishments in STEM and robotics, I urge caution in how we allocate our funding. The Department of Education's budget request for 2025-2027 should be reconsidered to promote a balanced educational framework that values every aspect of student development. I encourage each of you to reflect on the

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long-term implications of our funding decisions and to advocate for a budget that truly serves the diverse needs of all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan, Rizzo

Personal Email: [naterizzo0919@gmail.com](mailto:naterizzo0919@gmail.com)

Professional Email: [3911500796@k12.hi.us](mailto:3911500796@k12.hi.us)

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:56 PM

### **Name**

Ella Lessary

### **Organization**

Performing Arts Center of Kapolei

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Department of Education's operating budget request for the upcoming fiscal biennium, specifically regarding the proposed reductions in funding for musical theatre programs.

Musical theatre is not merely an extracurricular activity; it is a vital component of a well-rounded education that fosters creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. These programs provide students with unique opportunities to express themselves, develop confidence, and engage with the arts in a meaningful way. The impact of musical theatre extends far beyond the stage; it cultivates essential life skills such as discipline, collaboration, and public speaking, which are invaluable in today's workforce.

Reducing funding for these programs threatens not only the arts but also the holistic development of students like me. Many kids find their passion and sense of belonging within these artistic communities. The benefits of participation in musical theatre—enhanced social skills, improved academic performance, and increased mental health—are well-documented.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and recognize the importance of maintaining funding for musical theatre. Investing in the arts is an investment in our future and in the cultural fabric of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I hope you will advocate for the preservation of funding for musical theatre programs.

Sincerely,

Ella Lessary

Student in Performing Arts Center of Kapolei

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:06 PM

### **Name**

Alexandra Marchello

### **Organization**

PACK and CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Department of Education's operating budget request for the upcoming fiscal biennium, specifically regarding the proposed reductions in funding for musical theatre programs.

Musical theatre is not merely an extracurricular activity; it is a vital component of a well-rounded education that fosters creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. These programs provide students with unique opportunities to express themselves, develop confidence, and engage with the arts in a meaningful way. The impact of musical theatre extends far beyond the stage; it cultivates essential life skills such as discipline, collaboration, and public speaking, which are invaluable in today's workforce.

Reducing funding for these programs threatens not only the arts but also the holistic development of students like me. Many kids find their passion and sense of belonging within these artistic communities. The benefits of participation in musical theatre—enhanced social skills, improved academic performance, and increased mental health—are well-documented.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and recognize the importance of maintaining funding for musical theatre. Investing in the arts is an investment in our future and in the cultural fabric of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I hope you will advocate for the preservation of funding for musical theatre programs.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Marchello

Student in Performing Arts Center of Kapolei and Central Theatre Arts Academy

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 2:44 PM

### Name

Thomas Murphy

### Organization

Waiakea High School, Technology Learning Center

### Position/Title

Teacher, Head Mentor FIRST robotics team 1056

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Well, trying to do robotics has always been an interesting ride. We have had thousands of students participate in our STEM programs in the past 20 years. For more than two decades of successful competitions and community outreach, including State wide and International representation.

This last school year alone we had more than 1100 people attend our community outreach programs stretching from Hilo to Kau.

-We offer week long STEM camps for grade school students (Gr 3 to Grade 6)

-Staff Girls in Engineering Events to help the Zonta program, one of our community supporters.

-We have had 6 University of Hawaii Reagent Scholars come out of our program

- We host High School students from Hilo High, Kea'au High School and Waiakea Intermediate school in our after school programs.

-We compete in FIRST robotics programs and for the past three years we've been finishing our robots at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

-We have graduated a dozen cybersecurity specialists through our US CyberPatriot program.

-We have more than 30 community sponsors assisting us with Parts, lumber, food, omiyage and other support as needed.

-I have graduates programming the Mars rovers, developing the pilot HUD

The state is pushing for more computer science and STEM opportunities but you are eliminating Waiakea's proven catalyst. This is a step backwards and you need to fund Technology Learning Centers because they directly support their students and communities.

Mahalo,

Tom Murphy

Waiakea High School

Technology Learning Center Coordinator

FIRST robotics team #1056 Lead Mentor

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:56 PM

### **Name**

Mason Wissman

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The leaning center helps to fund all of the tools and equipment that we use to go and do well in the tournaments. Without this funding it will be much more difficult to build a suitable robot for the years challenge. Also this will hinder all of our experiences as a club and as a potential job opportunity. You shutting down this influential source of money would hinder my future and the future of many other kids that are going to struggle without it.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:05 PM

### **Name**

Gabriel Oliveros

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the removal of funding to the Technology Learning Center. The funding towards this amazing program has given me and many of my peers amazing opportunities. JSSF (Japan Super Science Fair) an international science fair where many of the top students from around the world show off their science fair projects. Technology Learning Center helps Waiakea to send their top students to this prestigious event. Technology Learning Center has also allowed the Waiakea High School Robotics team to help over 2700 younger students inspiring them to pursue STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics -- fields.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:15 PM

### **Name**

nimr tamimi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please support the TLC funding at Waiakea High School and other schools. A nation without STEM is a nation in decline, it is important to support all STEM efforts, especially in east Hawaii where our children have very little support and opportunities. Let's continue to give them a strong foundation in STEM and allow them to aspire and help them to achieve success. Please continue to fund TLC.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:46 PM

### **Name**

Gates Gleason

### **Organization**

Mililani performing arts center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

I know that you are expecting to take money from creative classes across the state of Hawaii, but it is not just a program; it's a community. It is a community that is already struggling to thrive under the pressures of modern society.

As a military kid, it is difficult to move from school to school and be expected to already fit in somewhere. However, all of the buildings that I proudly call my schools have one thing in common. A stage. Drama production is a place where I feel accepted and like I belong. It is a place I can go from a crazy house with 5 kids to a crazy theatre with 100.

The difference is I am able to talk with people who share my interests. It is hard to talk to people when you have no idea who they are as a person, that's why it is so much easier to make friends in Theatre. They would not be there if they didn't have unique qualities that they express through the arts. I have discovered things about myself in drama and I don't want that opportunity taken from other kids. This program is a creative and healthy outlet for kids who have nowhere else to express themselves outside of the Internet. This generation is already experiencing depression, drug problems, dangerous relationships, and many other harmful experiences that will be damaging throughout their lives. Play production gives many kids a safe space away from their possibly not-so-safe homes.

I have not been in this district long, and maybe you will cast away my voice because of that. But the fact that I am fighting so hard for a program I only joined a few months ago has to mean something.

The performing arts have existed for centuries, and is a huge part of not only Hawaii, not only America, but the entire world. It is a way to shout how proud we are to be able to entertain and to be ourselves.

These kids have a future, whether as an actor in your favorite show, an artist that expresses complex emotions, an author that strives to continue inspiring others, they all matter.

So please do not take away their futures or the futures of all who come after.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:28 PM

### **Name**

Leah Murphy

### **Organization**

Life Care Center of Hilo

### **Position/Title**

RN, Assistant Director of Nursing

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Our community in Hilo has benefitted greatly over the years from the Learning Centers programs. The students who have gone through those programs have often progressed to higher education and professional lives that support their families. Please consider ongoing funding of the Learning Centers to support programs that change the lives of students for the better and help them enter Science and Technology. This ultimately benefits us all.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:27 PM

### **Name**

Branden Baker

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing today with deep concern over the proposed budget cuts to Hawaii's Learning Centers, specifically the impact these reductions will have on the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA). My family's story highlights the profound, life-changing influence of this program and the unique opportunities it provides to Hawaii's youth—opportunities that could vanish with these budget cuts.

Fifteen years ago, our oldest son, Andrew, joined CTAA. He found in CTAA a space where he could thrive creatively, express himself, and develop a sense of belonging. Today, he is a regular cast member in shows at Manoa Valley Theater. CTAA is also where he met his wife, Amber, who returned to her alma mater to serve as CTAA's Costume Instructor. Our family's story doesn't end there; my daughter followed in his footsteps, joining CTAA 14 years ago in middle school and every year throughout high school. She is now the Associate Program Director at CTAA, leading and inspiring new generations of students just as she once was.

CTAA has provided "alternative" kids—students who may not have found a place in sports or other extracurricular activities—a community where they are accepted, valued, and empowered. It has given them a creative outlet to build confidence, social skills, and lifelong friendships. For students who feel like they don't fit into traditional school activities, CTAA has been a sanctuary that encourages their growth and success.

The potential elimination of this program would not only close doors for future students but erase a valuable resource that teaches students to express themselves, discover their talents, and become productive, inspired members of our community. This program has proven its worth, as evidenced by the success of alumni like my son and daughter. I urge you to reconsider these cuts and protect this vital space for self-expression, growth, and community for our keiki.

Thank you for considering the stories and futures of the students whose lives CTAA has changed.

Mahalo,

Branden Baker

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:05 PM

### **Name**

Yusuf Tamimi

### **Organization**

Oregon State University

### **Position/Title**

Robotics and Controls Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a student at Oregon State University studying Robotics, Mechatronics, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering. I am a former president of the Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center program which supports the FIRST Robotics Competition. My experience with the learning center has greatly supplemented my learning in engineering with hands on experience in mechanics, electronics, design, and computer science. Without this program I would not have the extensive skillset I have today nor my deep interest in engineering. It was through this program and this program alone that I was also able to teach younger students about STEM and give them the same practical skillset I was able to gain from this program. I have learned specific concepts such as 3D printing, CNC (Computer Numerical Control) Machining, circuits and electronics, Computer Aided Design (CAD), mechanical systems and dynamics, robotic and machine controls, and computer programming. This skillset put me far ahead of my peers who did not have a program like this. Getting rid of the budget to support the Learning Centers will create a massive setback for students in Hawaii. Having gotten in touch with the competitive robotics communities on the mainland, Hawaii has a very strong reputation and representation in these national and international level robotics competitions and getting rid of these programs will severely ruin that reputation and hinder students ability to learn more practical skills in engineering or any other subject the learning centers support.

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 4:52 PM

### Name

Jared Rose

### Organization

Waiakea TLC

### Position/Title

Alumni

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

As an alumnus of the Waiakea Learning Center (TLC) and a current graduate student in aerospace engineering, I can attest firsthand to the life-changing impact that such inter-school learning centers have on students. These centers provide opportunities and resources far beyond the classroom, shaping students into innovators, leaders, and collaborators. I can say with certainty that the skills, experiences, and passions that took root in me through TLC's collaborative programs have become the foundation of my academic and career pursuits. Defunding such programs would be a disservice not only to current and future students but to society as a whole.

In high school, the Waiakea Learning Center was a place of academic growth, community, and ambition. Through inter-school collaborations, I was able to work on complex projects with students from different schools, each bringing unique perspectives and skills to the table. This collaboration taught me how to work in diverse teams, tackle real-world problems, and think critically—skills that are essential for success in any field. I know many fellow alumni who have followed paths into engineering, medicine, arts, and public service, and every one of us benefited deeply from these formative years of cross-disciplinary engagement. These experiences are irreplaceable, and no classroom setting can replicate the hands-on, interconnected nature of learning that these centers provide.

From an academic standpoint, learning centers are indispensable for fostering curiosity and engagement in students. My aerospace engineering career began in those early days at TLC, where I learned the basics of robotics and engineering, collaborating with students from other schools who brought different skills to the table—programming, design, even creative problem-solving. It was this collaboration that ignited my interest in space and ultimately led me to pursue an advanced degree. Without the resources, mentorship, and encouragement of TLC, I may never have discovered this path.

Defunding these centers would mean pulling support from a program that not only supports but also celebrates diverse learning experiences, offering students a broader worldview and a chance to learn from those outside of their own schools. In doing so, we risk limiting students' potential, curbing their curiosity, and denying them the chance to explore fields that could define their future. Collaborative learning centers foster community, encourage inclusivity, and provide a safe space for exploration, especially for those students who may not fit into traditional molds or who are still searching for their passions.

At a time when our world is increasingly interconnected, fostering collaboration in education is essential. These

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centers teach students how to navigate different perspectives and contribute to collective goals—a skill that is not just useful but necessary in any professional setting, particularly in fields like engineering and technology, where cross-disciplinary teamwork is the norm. By defunding these centers, we would undermine our students' ability to thrive in a modern workforce that values innovation and teamwork.

The legacy of learning centers like Waiakea Learning Center cannot be understated. They are more than a school program; they are a keystone in the lives of students who pass through them, shaping who they become and how they contribute to society. Investing in these centers means investing in future doctors, engineers, artists, and leaders. Let us not rob our future generations of the chance to discover, explore, and realize their potential.

STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING  
Thursday, October 31, 2024 1:30 p.m.

Aloha Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Arakaki, and esteemed members of the Board of Education,

My name is Laura Acasio, and I am writing in strong **opposition to Agenda Item VIII, the Department of Education (DOE) operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027 which neglects to fund crucial educational programing**. As written, this budget proposal would defund the Technology Learning Center (TLC) at based Waiākea High School in Hilo—a decision that would have a significant, negative impact on students and on the future of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education in our community.

The TLC has been essential to here in East Hawaii as a primary source of funding, enabling us to serve over 2,700 keiki throughout Hawai'i through partnerships, STEAM camps, and events that inspire and prepare students for careers in technology, engineering, and innovation. We work with local businesses to create learning opportunities that cover all aspects of STEAM, including programming, design, modeling, building, and business. Without the critical funding from the TLC, these invaluable programs—and the enthusiasm they spark in students—are at serious risk.

The accomplishments of our students highlight the value and impact of TLC-supported programs. Just this past season, our team placed 10th out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition and ranked as the 8th overall team in the state. Our students have earned the opportunity to travel across the U.S. to compete in the First Robotics Competition, placing as semi-finalists and even winners in various regional competitions over the past 21 years. Alumni from these programs have gone on to extraordinary achievements, including working with NASA on the Mars robot, launching rockets, and developing microsatellites.

Defunding the TLC would undermine these opportunities and limit students' potential to pursue similar paths. Without this vital support, our ability to continue providing advanced, real-world learning experiences for our students will be compromised, stifling their enthusiasm for STEAM and reducing their future career options.

I respectfully ask each of you to **oppose Agenda Item VIII and protect the TLC's funding, or to simply amend this item to restore TLC funding within this budget**. Doing so will ensure that the students of Waiākea High School—and Hawai'i's keiki more broadly—continue to have access to inspiring, high-quality STEAM education that empowers them to achieve their dreams. Mahalo for your time and consideration in preserving this essential resource for our community.

Sincerely,  
Laura Acasio, Former State Senator District 1 (Hilo)



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:32 PM

### **Name**

Grace Rasgado

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School's Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I believe funding for STEM is important not only to our educational systems; but the community as a whole. No longer funding things such as the Technology Learning Center would be a gross injustice to students, faculty, and the community.

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:29 PM

### **Name**

Jennifer Nakano

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Learning Center (TLC) at Waiakea has been crucial in supporting our robotics team, which has been running strong for the past 20 years. Robotics has enabled countless students to enter the STEM field, where many have developed into successful young professionals in Hawaii. Through robotics, students gain invaluable experiences in teamwork, face both successes and setbacks, and acquire a wide range of hard and soft skills. Cutting funding for TLC would be a significant disservice to students planning to pursue STEM careers. Not only does TLC empower high school students, but it also sparks an early interest in STEM for elementary and middle school students across our community.

For me personally, robotics was life-changing. As a high schooler, I originally saw myself heading toward a career in the health field, but I joined robotics out of curiosity and a desire to learn new skills. Initially, I joined to spend time with friends and learn something new, but it quickly became a true passion. Robotics gave me the opportunity to travel to competitions, make lifelong friends, and grow an enduring love for programming and engineering. When I began college as a biology major, I realized my interests lay elsewhere, and I soon found myself drawn back to the passion robotics ignited. I went on to graduate with a major in Information and Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics, delving into AI, machine learning, and robotics research projects. This drive and sense of purpose all began with high school robotics—I don't know where I would be today without that foundation.

Now, as a future teacher, I am committed to promoting mathematics, computer science, engineering, and robotics for the next generation. Removing funding from learning centers like TLC will have a lasting impact on students who are, or could be, inspired to explore STEM.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:43 PM

### **Name**

Ellie Novack

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Students deserve art exposure and creativity to be a part of their learning.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:53 PM

### **Name**

Nicola LauLu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I would like to ask that you please keep funding our public schools CPAC organizations in the castle complex school zone.

CPAC is a place where our public school children can feel safe by being their authentic selves performing on stage and backstage.

The teachers and volunteers are always very committed to keeping our keiki safe, excited and enthused about performing and entertaining.

Please reconsider cutting the budget for CPAC. this would be decorating for our Windward public school keiki. CPAC really is a highlight of the school year and it gives our keiki, who may not normally put their had up to perform on stage, to really give acting a go and experience they will never forget.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 6:19 PM

### **Name**

Osiel Montoya

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a recent Computer and Electrical Engineering graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and I can attest to the positive impact that the Learning Centers have had to the Engineering community at the University.

Throughout my studies, many of my classmates and I have shared in a common background of early STEM exposure through K-12 robotics. This exposure allowed us to solve engineering problems and connect with mentors in the engineering community. Even though I personally was raised outside of Hawaii, I was able to share and relate experiences with locally-raised students, as we have participated in national robotics competitions. Those of us who participated in such events were among the highest-performing students in the department because of our passion and drive for engineering, instilled early in our career pathways.

It would be a great disservice to Hawaii's future to deny these opportunities to the next generation. Cutting funding to the Learning Centers would hamper STEM education outreach efforts, and ultimately threaten the diversification of Hawaii's economy.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:48 PM

### **Name**

Beverly da Silva

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing in opposition of reduction of funding for DOE Learning Centers, particularly the performing arts centers at public schools. As the parent of a talented teen who has performed with two PACs, I have seen firsthand the benefits of these programs. They give students experience in all aspects of stage production and broadens their career possibilities. It is one of the few avenues for kids in Hawaii to get a performing arts education without tuition cost or entry fees being a factor. The skills they take away from such programs will help them tell their stories, and in turn take Hawaii's stories to the world. Performing arts programs are more than just "nice to have" in public school curriculum. They are essential and should be preserved. Please find a way.

## Learning Centers Testimony 10-29-24

I write in support of Learning Centers, and against reducing their funding. This is addressing row item 77 on the FB 2025-2027 Requests. As a veteran, full-time elementary public school teacher, a former member of Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) Learning Center's Board, a parent of former CTAA students, and a community member, I believe the BOE is making a crucial mistake in lessening funds for Learning Centers.

In the BOE's vision it states envisioning a "statewide system of public schools where students are **engaged in inspiring, personalized, and culturally responsive education that fosters creative and critical thinkers**". In a nutshell, this is what Learning Centers accomplish. In addition to aligning with the BOE's vision, the core values are filled with tenets represented by Learning Centers. Listed below are the ways CTAA, specifically, addresses these core values..

- He pili wehena 'ole. (A relationship that cannot be undone.) **Connections to and engagement with people and places as important drivers of action.**
  - At CTAA, students choose their area of interest, whether it is costuming, lights, sound, set work, or acting/dancing. They are guided by teachers and professionals in the community to learn their chosen craft, and their learning culminates in stage productions for the community.
- Ma ka hana ka 'ike ma ka 'imi ka loa'a. (In working one learns, through initiative one acquires.)\* Initiative to perform motivated by **a sense of kuleana and accountability to self and others.**
  - CTAA members wear shirts that literally tout this idea in the verbiage "We are all ensemble". Taking on a theater production requires all groups working with and for each other in order to have a successful show.
- 'A'ohe ulu e loa'a i ka pōkole o ka lou. (There is no success without preparation.) **Nurturing individual strengths, increasing proficiencies and abilities to be able to serve**, and fostering excellence in ourselves and those we serve.
  - CTA services students from all public school settings and home-schooled students, and across grade levels (elementary, middle school, and high school). The education is differentiated by content where students learn from lead teachers and apply their

learning through hands-on activities and performances. It is also an opportunity for students from different districts and grade levels to collaborate and work together on shared interests. Students, teachers, families, and community members are all stakeholders who get to see finished products in the form of plays and musical productions. CTAA is unique in that the instructors give students hands-on learning experiences, then allow them to take the lead for community shows. It is very much an apprenticeship where everything is done by students (front of the house greeters, costume/designers, lights, cameras, stage design, prop production, acting, singing, dancing, etc.)

- E 'ōpū ali'i. (Have the heart of a chief.) **Reciprocal partnering and sharing that calls forward a deep sense of aloha and generosity**, especially towards those needing the most help in pursuit of equity.
  - I have witnessed many of my former students join the program and finally get a sense of belonging that they were seeking. It has also been my experience that no student was ever turned away. Instructors are inclusive and work hard making sure everyone feels appreciated. Inclusive practices include giving each other words of affirmation called “warm fuzzies”, learning the Tri-School chant (the origins of CTAA), and signing the back of stage walls at the end of the year.
- Ua ola loko i ke aloha. (Love is imperative to one's mental and physical well being.) Pono practices that **prioritize balance**.
  - As an educator, it is a known fact that students learn better when it is engaging and relevant. At CTAA students are getting practical, hand-on learning, but are also fostering relationships and developing social skills. Some of my students that struggled academically found a sense of purpose and motivation to do better as a result of being at CTAA. It provides that balance of work and play. There are also bonding opportunities, like the end-of-year party called “Ziggies”.
- 'O Hawai'i ku'u 'āina kilohana. (Hawai'i is my prized place.) Hawaii based processes to **preserve, honor, and elevate the unique qualities that define and sets Hawaii apart from the rest of the world**.



- CTAA is a melting pot that brings students from various schools together to share their experiences with each other. It is a safe space to explore differences and foster understanding and acceptance of each other because each member is from a local public school. This is a connection that binds students together.

Here are some of the BOE's priorities and goals that CTAA address:

- Priority I: High-Quality Learning For All
  - Goal 1.1: All students experience rigorous, high-quality learning that results in equitable outcomes for all learners:
    - Desired Outcome 1.1.5. All students **transition successfully** at critical points, from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school.
      - Many shows have elementary and middle school students who have made connections with high schoolers and thus have had an easier transition in a new setting because they have already worked and made friends with older students.
    - Desired Outcome 1.2.3. All students **experience a Nā Hopena A'ō environment for learning.**
      - See core value comments above
    - Desired Outcome 1.3.1. All students, throughout their K-12 experience, **engage in a variety of career, community, and civic opportunities.**
      - Many career professionals found their roots at CTAA. My daughter, son, and daughter-in-law went through the program. Each has found a passion for performances and either do ensemble work, paid community theater, and/or work at a community theater. These accomplishments came from the hands-on learning they got at CTAA.
- Priority II:
  - Goal 2.1: All students are taught by **effective teachers who are committed to quality teaching and learning for all**
    - Lead instructors are tenured DOE teachers with degrees in their respective areas (e.g. the musical director has a degree in Music Education)
    - Support staff are from professional communities (e.g. the costume instructor works full time as the Costume Manager at Manoa Valley Theater)

On a personal note, I have seen my own children flourish in this program. Being involved in CTAA taught them how to work with others, got them invested in projects, developed their love for live performances, and gave them a sense of belonging in middle school and high school. My son married his highschool sweetheart that he met at CTAA. He is a science teacher at Campbell, but continues to do many shows at Manoa Valley Theater, and this year is musical director for JCHS's upcoming musical. My daughter has been part of musical ensembles since her CTAA days and is a middle school teacher at 'Ilima Intermediate. She is the choral director at 'Ilima, but is also the music director and co-program director at CTAA in the afternoons. My daughter-in-law continued her love of sewing and props-making that she learned from CTAA and is currently the Manoa Valley Theater Costume Manager. She and my son lived in Seattle for three years where she also did community theater work. These are three personal examples of life-long learning at its best.

Lastly, I do believe the community has something to be proud of with Learning Centers. Last year CTAA was invited and performed excerpts from their spring musical "Hairspray" to those in attendance from the Public Schools of Hawaii Foundation. This year CTAA was the first on the island to get "Hadestown", which is a very current and popular musical. The show performances will be in December before any other public or private school. That says something for the pride of these public school students.

Please, please, please reconsider all that is being lost if the funding is taken from Learning Centers. Many students will lose an opportunity to experience different callings, meet new people, and learn new skills. In order to develop the whole child and make them not only knowledgeable in skills but empathetic and have social awareness, please do not cut funding for Learning Centers.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 5:48 PM

### **Name**

Niki Libarios

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

\*please do not post my personal information, mahalo\*

I am writing to submit my support for the Performing Arts Centers in Hawaii and to strongly oppose removing funding them from the Department of Education's Operating Budget. Putting the responsibility of funding each program on the Public Schools themselves is an unfair burden to place on already struggling departments. The Kaimuki High School Performing Arts Center in particular does not receive any CTE money, and the only money they receive is from the DOE and fundraisers. The educators within the program are not professional fundraisers and do not have any expertise in raising money. Their expertise lies in educating young minds in the art of performing and creating. The shows that KHSPAC puts on serve as a fundraiser for the program and they also do small bake sales and costume sales. These fundraising events take a lot of creativity and support from the community and they always do their best to raise as much money as possible - which is still far and below the amount needed to run a Theatre Program. KHSPAC and other Theatre Programs in Hawaii desperately need the support of the DOE, and I think it would be a great travesty NOT to support these programs. The DOE should stand for all types of education for our young people INCLUDING arts education.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:13 PM

### **Name**

Frances Zhu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not close all the learning centers in Hawaii. I'm a robotics researcher and many of the students that come to me were trained through these learning centers. I'm proud that Hawaii has the highest K12 robotics students per capita, which translates to robust representation at global robotics competitions. We are known to be good at robotics and that's due to investment.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:25 PM

### **Name**

Emily Preis

### **Organization**

Student (Alumni)

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the DOE's cut of public school Learning Centers and budget. As an alumni of CPAC at Castle High School, I owe my passion for theater and art to our program and its family of educators.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 6:57 PM

### **Name**

Alana Tan

### **Organization**

Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I traveled 12,000 miles to pursue my passion.

When I started high school, I was a scared teenage girl who didn't have a friend within 2,400 miles. My family moved to the North Shore of Oahu the summer before my freshman year of high school. Before that we had lived across the U.S. and Central America, before settling down in Waialua. I was completely and utterly alone. All the other freshmen had their friends, the one's they've known since middle school or even longer. All the other freshmen were familiar with the campus. I, on the other hand, hadn't stepped inside a school in over five years. I was an outsider in so many different ways. There was so much I didn't understand about a normal public school.

Adjusting to high school was something no amount of books, youtube videos, or teen movies could ever prepare me for. The day of freshman year orientation, I sat in the back of the cafeteria, alone, worrying at my thumbs. I worried about making friends, but I was too scared to talk to anyone.

I was never someone who needed all eyes on them, who needed all the attention. The thought of getting on stage in front of people always made my stomach churn. But even still, I love performing. I was 10 years old when I realized I could perform from behind the scenes. I was 12 years old the first time I was ever on crew for a play. That experience changed my life. I fell in love with working behind the scenes.

Ever since my first show working on a crew, I've been hooked. I love working to put on a show, completely invisible, cloaked in black. I have been on tech crew ever since that first show. When my family moved again, my only demand was to find a theater program where I could be on crew and I did. I was desperate to have my theater fix. My small, rural high school didn't have a theater program, but the high school in the next town over did. So every other day, for all of high school, I would drive to the next town over, to a high school I didn't even attend, just to be on crew.

When I first joined the program, I was a scared freshman, who didn't know a soul, but knew I wanted to help put on a show. I walked into the cafeteria, 15 minutes late due to living two towns over, of a school I didn't go to, and all eyes turned to me. I hurriedly sat down at a back table with no one around and listened to the instructors introduce themselves. The whole place was filled with faces I didn't recognize, hidden by masks. But the first day didn't discharge me, even if I was too scared to talk to anyone. I eventually got sorted into lighting crew, with 6 other students and 2 instructors. It took some time for us to warm up to each other, but once we did we forged an unbreakable bond.

In my first year a lot happened and though at times it was discouraging, it only helped my love of theater grow. I put

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all I learned into action as I was chosen to be the Lighting Director for the spring play. My crew stood together to put on a show, even as both our instructors left, getting other jobs, before the school year even ended. All this did was help me to show myself that I have what it takes to work in theater.

My second year, I started to move up the rank as some of my closest friends graduated, leaving me as the soon-to-be upperclassman in charge. This year I was given another leadership role as Props Master. The props crew, me and one other student, we spent months working together, just the two of us. He would become one of my closest friends.

My third year in the program, as an upperclassman with 3 years experience, I was stage managing and organizing our shows. Stage managing was a blessing and a curse. I was honored that the directors viewed me as one of the few students they'd trust with the responsibility of managing a musical. To say it was easy would be a lie. Between driving two towns over for rehearsals everyday and managing a cast of 40+ high school students; by the six month mark I was worn down. Though it was the hardest challenge I took on in theater, it ultimately gave me so much more experience and it's an experience I'm thankful for.

My fourth and final year, as one of the few fourth year students in the program, it's now my role to be a role model to the younger students, to help teach them and foster the love of theater we all share. I can't say much about this year, because it's happening right now. In my time at this program I have seen teachers come and go. Students graduate with the spark of pursuing professional theater and others ready for a different path. Even though so much has changed since I joined this program, both with me and it, it is still a place I love, where I've met lifelong friends, and where I will hold some of my most treasured memories.

I traveled 12,000 miles to pursue my passion. That is the total miles I have traveled over my four year high school career to be a part of this program. The total miles I'm willing to go to be in this program. The total number of miles of my dedication. This program needs to be kept alive, for the current students and the future students. For the students that will be dedicated enough to travel 12,000 miles for their passion. For the students.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### **Name**

Gennellea Amasol

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I feel that if this is going to help children in the future to decide what they want to be and major in while also having fun doing so is more help than actual school itself. Although not research based, I have peers and friends who learn better when it comes to activity and doing hands on learning. Getting rid of this will not benefit children and their future into getting STEM jobs for their lives.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### **Name**

Sean Paul Newcamp

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I think theater and other programs that follow under these categories bring a different but important kind of learning without music I would have a passion for acting and dancing and enhancing my memory along with my skills. I'm a proud theater student, please reconsider as you will be affecting the mental health of many students who call these places home.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### Name

Dian Hermes

### Organization

Waialae Performing Arts

### Position/Title

Music Teacher, Director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

### Written Testimony

#### Write Testimony

Aloha ,

I am an Elementary Music Teacher at Wai'ala'e Elementary and the artist director of Wai'ala'e Performing Arts Company. I have been a public School educator for 25 years. I am deeply disheartened to hear that our district learning centers are losing their funding in your proposed budget. My students use these centers in several events throughout the year specifically at Kaimuki High School but also at Castle High school - when the AC unit broke at Kaimuki (which is a whole OTHER budget issue) why are why not able to fix these units?!? AC Units both broken at Castle and Kaimuki- canceling productions from our youngest performers- but now their funding is being cut as well?

In an era where politicians and board members pretend to care about mental health and social emotional learning, why would you EVER cut funding from the arts? Places that are proven to give students tools and means to build the self confidence and communication skills they need to navigate their world? The theater is a place where our students can put down their devices and learn about human relations.

Please think about what you are doing cutting these resources from so many.

Mahalo.

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing to oppose the proposed elimination of the Learning Center funding in High Schools across Hawai'i. Learning Centers provide students with real world experiences and opportunities as well as having an impact on the community that the school is a part of. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the \$17,000 that each program uses to fund projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for students. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

When I was a school garden teacher at the middle and elementary schools,(2017-2021), I directly benefited from the generous donations of the Lahainaluna High School Agriculture Learning Center. I received seeds, soil amendments, irrigation supplies and expertise on how to grow certain crops in Lahaina's climate. The funding that the LHS Learning Center received from the State allowed it to accomplish the goal of supporting food gardens in the community.

Now that I'm an Agriculture teacher at Lahainaluna High School in our CTE program, I continue to be supported by the Agriculture Learning Center. This support, in the form of funding, allows for culturally rich and place-based opportunities through field trips that introduces our students to experts in the fields of Agriculture and Conservation. This year's Learning Center funds made it possible for us to experience Honokowai Valley with Maui Cultural Lands, visiting a sacred place which grew food for thousands of people in the area, hundreds of years ago. We hope to go on one field trip per month. These field trips are a great way to inspire students to pursue careers in agriculture.

With the recent devastation in Lahaina our students and the Agriculture Learning Center have the unique position where we can have a powerful impact on our community as the town needs to be replanted. We can grow and be a staging area for native plants, food crops, trees, flowers, and seeds as well as host workshops to teach the community about regenerative agriculture, health and wellness and food security. Our students can be instruments of change for their community while nurturing their social-emotional well-being and learning the business/entrepreneurial side of Agriculture.

Learning Center funds also allow me to participate in Professional Development which helps me become a better teacher for my students.

This is my fourteen year in education. Teachers are consistently expected to provide more for students with less resources. Learning Centers across the State are doing incredible things with their students. Thank you for reading my testimonial in opposition of the proposed budget cuts for Learning Centers.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### **Name**

Alani Watson

### **Organization**

Nānākuli performing arts center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha board members I am writing to not cut the funding. I have been in NPAC ever since I was in 4th grade and NPAC is my passion. I love it because it is so fun and it helped me build up my confidence to talk more and be more social as well as letting me open up to others. It also helped me make a lot of new best friends at the program. So if you cut the funds then that would make me so sad because that would be like taking away half of my life. I would also have nothing to do after school. But most importantly I would not be able to see my most closest friends.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### Name

Leona Watson

### Organization

Nānākuli Performance Arts Center

### Position/Title

Parent

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I am writing for your request to oppose the cutting of funds for all Learning centers. My child have been apart of the Nānākuli Performance Arts Center also known as NPAC for the past four years from 4th grade until now.

This learning center have provided a place to build her social emotional confidence through singing, acting, and dancing. At fourth grade she was confined to a wheelchair due to having surgery on both her hips. However, NPAC welcomed her abilities and she was able to grow and become apart of an environment that allowed her to express her gifts and talents.

In addition, NPAC is a positive influence for our community. It has been around for over 30 years, since I was a student at Nānākuli. Now as a teacher and parent of my hometown of Nānākuli I proudly support and acknowledge that NPAC is a program that cultivate individuals who are proud, passionate and dedicated in sharing their love for singing, dancing, and acting.

Please reconsider the cutting of funding to the learning centers budget so our youth has a place to make positive changes in our community by being involved through their bringing of smiles to all ages with their bravery of singing, dancing, and acting.

I appreciate your time and support!

Mālama Pono,  
Leona Watson

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### **Name**

Audrey Kelly

### **Organization**

DOE Retired

### **Position/Title**

Teacher Ret.

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha! I respectfully oppose a Budget that excludes funding for our school Learning Centers where thousands of our students spend countless hours pursuing their passions in Robotics. At these centers they are learning leadership and 21st century skills that give our public school students a competitive edge for STEM scholarships! These centers are also where Teachers donate countless hours of their own time. A budget that includes hiring outside resources not only builds community partnerships which are critical to Academy schools, but it gives students an inside track to career insight in their chosen field. Please invest in our future. Include Learning Centers and all programs of enrichment for our students.

Sincerely, Audrey A. Kelly

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:03 PM

### **Name**

Ann Abeshima

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut Learning Center funding. This will negatively impact many students in public schools.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### **Name**

Thomas Aguinaldo

### **Organization**

Mililani High School Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This budget proposal threatens to defund several major programs for the students in these learning centers. As a student actively participating and learning from these centers it is of utmost importance that the funding is still provided to the learning centers. I have personally been involved with the Central Theater Arts Academy learning center for over two years and it has been an incredibly educational and rewarding learning experience. Through this program I have seen so many students gain experience and knowledge within relevant areas through the help of the staff of these learning centers. Losing funding to these learning centers greatly reduces the opportunity for students such as myself to learn from instructors with relevant experience. The suggested budget and eventual defunding of these programs would undoubtedly decrease the ability for students such as myself to learn in a way that is meaningful and beneficial thus removing opportunities for healthy student learning.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### **Name**

Rudy Domingo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a father of an 8th grade student, it is essential that we offer our students a well-rounded education. My daughter loves the performing arts. If the performing arts budget is cut, it would be devastating to thousands of students. My daughter belongs to the CTAA program and seeing her thrive in the arts teaches her discipline and hard work that applies into her academics. She has done great because of the skills that a musical program teaches.

Learning Center Funds provides access for all students that may not be able to access resources due to a variety of reasons. Please be mindful of the thousands of students that you will not fill their buckets full of knowledge and skills because of budget cuts. All of our students deserve to receive a well rounded education so that they can add value to others when they grow up.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:07 PM

### **Name**

Christine Kluvo

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Alumina

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the BOE,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the learning center funds that support the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA). As a proud alumna of this program and now a professional singer and performer at Universal Studios Japan, I can attest to the profound impact CTAA has had on my life and career.

Growing up, opportunities in the arts were not easily accessible to me. My family struggled financially, and I could not afford private theatre lessons. However, CTAA provided a nurturing environment where I could explore my passion for the performing arts. The skills I developed and the experiences I gained through this program laid the crucial foundation for my career.

CTAA helped me reach beyond high school theatre, allowing me to engage with our local community theatres, including Diamond Head Theatre and Manoa Valley Theatre. My most notable roles, such as Hope Harcourt in *Anything Goes* and Cinderella in *Cinderella*, were pivotal experiences that further shaped my artistic identity and opened doors to professional opportunities.

Today, I am fortunate to work in a competitive field, performing on an international stage. My journey from a public school student to a professional performer was made possible by the support I received at CTAA. The program taught me not only how to act and sing but also instilled in me the discipline, creativity, and resilience necessary to succeed in this industry.

Theatre was not just a creative outlet for me; it was a safe haven. In a tumultuous household, it provided a space where I could express my emotions, build friendships, and gain confidence. The arts foster resilience and teamwork—qualities that benefit students far beyond the stage.

Cutting funding for CTAA would not only diminish this vital program but also rob future generations of students of the chance to discover their potential in the arts. Without this program, many talented individuals may never realize their dreams or find the supportive community that I was lucky to have.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and preserve the funding for CTAA. Our students deserve the opportunity to thrive and express themselves through the transformative power of theatre.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mahalo,  
Christine Kluvo  
Christinekluvo@gmail.com  
CTAA Alumina

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:17 PM

### **Name**

Tayzha Satele

### **Organization**

Kapolei high/pack

### **Position/Title**

Former student/crew

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please don't refund the arts. For some kids it's where we feel like we really belong. Where we meet new people who become family to us. Without theater we'll have no where to go to be free. Weither it's being on stage or being the crew for the back. We all help eachother. If you defund the arts. You'll be ruining some poor child chance to realize they can belong somewhere and have a chance to build another family with friends you can trust and who go through the same things as you. So please don't defund the arts.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:18 PM

### **Name**

D O

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Honorable members of the Board of Education,

I'm speaking today as a concerned parent and advocate for our community's children. I strongly oppose budget cuts to learning centers, which provide vital programs for our youth.

State Learning Centers offer essential programs that foster academic growth, social skills and emotional development. They provide a safe and supportive environment, helping children build confidence and character.

My children participate in these programs, and I've witnessed firsthand the positive impact. They stay engaged, motivated and out of trouble, developing skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Continued funding is crucial to maintain these programs' quality and accessibility. Reducing funds would undermine the progress made and jeopardize the well-being of our children.

I urge you to prioritize learning center funding, ensuring our children continue to thrive. Invest in their future, and our community's.

Thank you.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:18 PM

### **Name**

Gen Oshiro

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha All,

I'm submitting my testimony in opposition of operational budget cuts to the learning centers.

I was concerned and confused when I was informed that the budget for CTAA may be reduced then potentially cut completely the year after next. I went to Mililani when the program was called Tri-School... it made me proud to see my own child partake in the robust variety of lessons that CTAA provided. From constructing a set with props and paints to maneuvering the lights and sounds involved with a production.

I'm hoping those in leadership would truly look into how this program benefit both the students and the community. I recall attending their Beauty and the Beast production a few years ago where the culinary class provided a meal... it was quite an experience and the food was delicious. Hoping they're able to host more events like those in the future. Please consider budgeting for the students and the community. Mahalo for your consideration.

Very Respectfully,

A Mililani Alumni with a child who is a current Mililani student

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:21 PM

### **Name**

David Nishimura

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regards to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that caters to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The loss of funding would have a profound impact on our students and greatly decrease all the advantages an LC offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, compete at the national level, etc. In order to ensure our students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future we need to provide them with the tools they'll need to succeed.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The Learning Center program is an investment that deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

David Nishimura

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 3:46 PM

### **Name**

Chloe Trueblood-Thompson

### **Organization**

Mililani High School performing arts

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As an active participant in the program that is funded through the means of the government, these classes and extracurriculars have truly changed my life. I have met many individuals, collaborated with amazing people, made friends, met those who are like my family, and found a place where for once in my life I felt like I belonged. Doing those budget cuts will take away the opportunity of the future classes having that and feeling the way I felt. It will take away how many would find what they like to do and what career path they would go on. This program opens many doors into new paths that students will go on and pursue in life. These places and communities foster a greater understanding of socialization and teamwork, taking that away is taking education from those who need it. This budget cut will destroy lives, and will harm more than it would fix.





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regards to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that caters to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The loss of funding would have a profound impact on our students and greatly decrease all the advantages an LC offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, compete at the national level, etc. In order to ensure our students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future we need to provide them with the tools they'll need to succeed.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The Learning Center program is an investment that deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Emi Nishimura (a Learning Center Student)

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:07 PM

### **Name**

Angelika Marchello

### **Organization**

PACK and CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Mom

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to the Department of Education's requested operating budget for the next fiscal budget, specifically concerning the proposed decreases in funding for musical theatre initiatives.

Musical theatre constitutes a vital element of comprehensive education, fostering creativity, teamwork and critical thinking. These initiatives provide students with unique channels for self-expression, confidence development and profound artistic involvement. Musical theatre's influence extends far beyond the stage, instilling indispensable life skills such as discipline, collaboration and public speaking, crucial in today's professional landscape.

Musical theatre provides children with a supportive community where they discover their passion and belonging. Research underscores the importance of authenticity for teenagers' mental health, and participation in musical theatre cultivates this. Furthermore, it instills lifelong social skills, confidence, leadership, and academic excellence while fostering friendships that might not be formed elsewhere.

I strongly advise reevaluating the proposed theater and music budget cuts and recognizing the essential role of sustained funding for this program, which fosters growth in confident young leaders through arts investment.

Thank you for your consideration. I acknowledge that securing funds is a daunting task, but I firmly believe that other opportunities for budget cuts must exist.

Sincerely,

Angelika Marchello

Proud Parent of a student in Performing Arts Center of Kapolei and Central Theater Arts Academy

# October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

## Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 7:23 PM

## Name

NA NA

## Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

## Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Hello, I am writing in opposition of the proposed budget plan due to my concern with the allocation of resources regarding the Learning Centers across all school in Hawaii.

As an educator, I work with students who struggle to find their place in school and have a difficult time staying in school and often drop out. With these students, I often try to help them find an activity to get involved with to help boost their morale and find something to look forward to participating in. These activities often lead to them finding an interest that connects them to their next career or educational goal after high school.

The Learning Centers provide various activities for students to explore their creativity in ways regular school hours cannot. For example, the Performing Arts programs allow students to pursue music outside of school in a safe environment and in return gives back to the community by holding performances.

Findings suggest that students involved in extracurricular activities have more favorable perceptions of social emotional security, adult support, student support, and school connectedness (Martinez et al, 2016). If we want students to stay in school and continue to pursue education, we must provide support the activities that continue to keep students in school.

Benefits of participating in extracurricular activities included having better grades, having higher standardized test scores and higher educational attainment, attending school more regularly, and having a higher self-concept. Participants in out-of-school activities often learned skills such as teamwork and leadership while decreasing the likelihood of alcohol use and illicit drug use and related problem behaviors. Those who participate in out-of-school activities often have higher grade point averages, a decrease in absenteeism, and an increased connectedness to the school (Wilson, 2009).

In the Implementation Plan for the 2023-29 Strategic Plan that was approved by the Hawaii Board of Education in May 18th, 2023, the plan discusses the following points:

Goal 1.2: All students learn in a safe, nurturing, and culturally responsive environment.

Desired Outcome 1.2.1. All students desire to and attend school regularly.

Desired Outcome 1.2.2. All students demonstrate positive behaviors at school.

Desired Outcome 1.2.3. All students experience a Nā Hopena A'o environment for learning.

Goal 1.3: All students graduate high school prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement.

Desired Outcome 1.3.1. All students, throughout their K-12 experience, engage in a variety of career, community, and civic opportunities.

By pulling funding from the Learning Centers, these desired outcomes outlined in the plan that was approved by the Hawaii Board of Education will be harder to maintain. If the board truly believes in the work that they have approved, then they need to reevaluate where they are spending their resources.

Thank you for your time.

### References

Martinez, A., Coker, C., McMahon, S. D., Cohen, J., & Thapa, A. (2016). Involvement in extracurricular activities: Identifying differences in perceptions of school climate. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 33(1),

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70-84.

Wilson, N. (2009). Impact of extracurricular activities on students.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:14 PM

### **Name**

N/A N/A

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing today to oppose measures in the proposed 2025-2027 budget that jeopardize Learning Centers across schools via a drastic reduction in funding over the next two years. As an educator, I believe I am qualified to and owe it to my former, current, and future students to speak up regarding this matter.

Learning Centers play an essential role in providing our students with a well-rounded education and create opportunities that are a must-have for high school students as they prepare to enter into the post-secondary world; whether that is by attending community college, trade schools, a 4-year university, or going directly to the workforce. Stripping funding away from these important programs will greatly hamper their ability to serve their students and may force them to cease operations. This should be avoided at all costs.

Learning centers for Performing Arts provide students with access to high quality educators, equipment, and real learning experiences that benefit students both academically and aesthetically. Cutting funding to these programs will deprive students of the thing that, for so many of them, is the reason they attend school - the arts. If absenteeism is truly an issue the Board wishes to tackle, cutting funding to learning centers is not the answer.

A high school's goal should be to develop the entire student - not just their test scores. Focusing solely on academic education without regard to the aesthetic education students receive will result in graduates that lack so much of what they need to truly enter into the "real world" that just cannot be measured by a standardized test or a grade. The Board can prevent this from happening by keeping Learning Centers funded - and I fully believe that is the right decision to make for the sake of all students.

Thank you for your time.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:23 PM

### **Name**

Arlen Noguchi

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Position/Title**

Student, Robotics Vice President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Chair and Board of Education members

At our school, Robotics offers students their first steps into the field of STEM. The program provides industry-like experiences with our use of CNC machinery, computer-assisted design, assembly, programming, and business. Students build on their classroom education, applying what they've learned to the real world and exploring deeper into these subjects. Beyond STEM, we emphasize leadership, communication, and teamwork all of which are fostered through the engineering challenges we face as a team.

Our leadership extends to the community, with many members spearheading local STEM activities. Sharing our passion, we collaborate with NexTech and host our own STEM camps. NexTech, a nonprofit organization, runs programs like the 4-week 3D printing initiative, where kids from elementary to high school receive 3D printers to experiment and create. Our various STEM outreaches and camps, such as HIRA a 1-week summer STEM program, introduced 1,100 people to our field and the value of engineering just last year.

Robotics shapes not only our community but all those hundreds of kids going through the program. Personally, it has shaped me into the person I am today. Because I get to code, I see my work translated into our team's success or failure. Because of this program, I've forged unforgettable memories from both our highs and lows. Because of the knowledge I've gained, I'm interning for the UH Hilo to use AI to better model our island. Through teaching STEM I've discovered the beauty and importance of teaching our kahi exactly what STEM is all about. To show them what they've been in school for and see their face light up as they unlock their potential is truly an amazing experience. In elementary attending these STEM camps has always captivated and inspired me to work harder in my education. Those who were leading the programs were my heroes and now that I'm in their position I hope to give the youth the same experience.

These opportunities and events are thanks to the TLC funding, which this budget proposes to remove. The TLC funding is key in purchasing materials and equipment necessary for robotics. While we receive funding from 30 community sponsors the TLC funding constitutes the majority, so without it, we wouldn't be able to run our programs. So I ask the BOE, as a student, member of the robotics club, and member of our community that this bill be reconsidered and there's continued funding for the TLC program. Thank you for your time reading this.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Arlen Noguchi

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:53 PM

### **Name**

Veronica Wang

### **Organization**

CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Veronica Wang I'm 12 years old and this is my 2nd year in CTAA. I moved here last year and it helped me with support, making many friends, and being there for me. I'm in 8th grade now and I really hope to do more shows in the future. I have made many friends because of this, including one of my bestest friends. I was really in a hard place at the time, and CTAA was a comfort space where I knew I could just be myself. I think that a lot of other people too benefit so much from theater programs. I am so grateful that there are theater programs here, and I hope to do more.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:14 PM

### **Name**

Alexandra Wang

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy (Learning Center at Mililani High School)

### **Position/Title**

physician and parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Alexandra Wang, and I am a physician and parent of four children involved with theatre arts, two of which are active participants in CTAA.

As a physician, I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this proposed bill would have on the mental health of the children affected by it. Theatre and other Learning Center activities function as a second home and a safe space for many of the participants, particularly those who are not able to get support at home. They are sources of friendship and instill a sense of acceptance and belonging they might not otherwise get. These programs also build confidence and a sense of self, as well as help children discover and hone their skills. They help teens get into their preferred colleges and earn scholarships for them. As per psychologist Erik Erikson's 5th stage of psychosocial development, adolescence is the stage of Identity vs. Role Confusion. Learning Centers are VITAL to this crucial life stage for adolescents as they connect them with others who have similar passions and interests and help them figure out who they are as both individuals and as part of a group.

As a parent, I am truly grateful for the CTAA Ohana at Mililani High. My daughters and I moved to Oahu last summer under traumatic circumstances and loss, not knowing anyone on island. CTAA auditions for their spring musical occurred two days after my daughters began school. They both got roles and had an instant supportive community, who helped them cope with their loss as well as help restore their confidence and provide them structure and support. They developed strong relationships with other students in the program, both at their own schools (Mililani High School and Mililani Middle School) and students who participate in CTAA from other schools. I can't emphasize enough how grateful I am to the CTAA community for the aloha and love they have shown my daughters and the immensely positive impact the program has had for them in beginning their new lives here. I am so sad at the prospect of this program and many others like it ending.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Alexandra Wang, M.D.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:14 PM

### **Name**

Michael Mattos

### **Organization**

Big Island Top Dogs, Inc.

### **Position/Title**

Owner

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Recently, it has been brought to our attention that the TLC is being defunded (as part of Article VIII, DOE operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027) meaning we aren't being provided with funds for the 2025-2027 SY. One of the biggest parts of the Waiakea High School robotics team is the Technology Learning Center (TLC.) The TLC is their biggest source of monetary funding aside from sponsors and grants. Without this funding, the program will struggle and many students may not get the same opportunities as those students in the past.

Here are just some of the major highlights that this funding has provided:

- \* Waiakea High School "Hot Rocks" Robotics has partnered with local companies and business to hold STEAM camps and events and was able to reach over 2700+ of Hawaii's keiki that showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM.
- \* The Robotics program incorporates various learning opportunities for our students to learn all aspects of STEAM including building, programming, design, modeling, and business. The keiki who participate and learn are our future engineers, inventors, and business owners in our community.
- \* They have done great things, like placing 10th out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition--and the 8th overall team in the state of Hawaii. Their team has been able to travel all over the United States for First Robotics Competition regionals, placing as semi-finalist or winners in multiple competitions over the span of 21 years.
- \* Also, some of their previous students are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA, launched a rocket, and one worked on a microsatellite!

Can you see how important this program is to our keiki and their future? These are huge accomplishments for our keiki, the school and community!! We should be very proud as a community and as a state!

Please continue to do the good work in funding the TLC. Please do not defund this program. Our keiki are depending on YOU, the DOE!

Mahalo!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:12 PM

### **Name**

Kori Oros

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board of Education,

I strongly oppose the funding cuts to public education. This budget would cut programs that make public education stronger. Programs such as the performing arts, agriculture and stem programs. Why would we want to decrease opportunities in learning for our keiki? Please consider alternatives and request the DOE to keep these vital programs funded.

Mahalo,

Kori Oros

Grade 3 Public School Teacher.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### Name

Sophia Wang

### Organization

CTAA: Mililani High School Theater Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

My name is Sophia Wang and I am a part of CTAA, the Learning Center Theater program affiliated with Mililani High School, and a 16 year old junior at Mililani High. CTAA has helped me so much over this past year, and if the funds are cut from Learning Center programs, the state and teenagers across the state will lose an important part of our society and community. When I moved to Hawaii last year from the mainland after my father left our family, my mom and three sisters were on our own. We didn't have any connections here, but we were trying to find our home and community, which proved difficult when breaking in during the second quarter of school. My first day of school at Mililani High School, I noticed a flyer on the wall showing auditions for the 2023-2024 CTAA musical, Hairspray, which took place the next day. I've always loved theater and it has always been a home for me, a constant when not everything was. Even though we were mid-move, my little sister and I decided to try out. We got roles, and were soon welcomed into the loving community. During our time of need and uncertainty, the CTAA family was what helped us become connected and feel safe, loved, and wanted. Most importantly, it helped us find a home when we were struggling to establish one. Since then, I now have two close friend groups that I met through this program, and a loving boyfriend whom I also found during the musical production. My little sister found much love and support during the musical, and gained so much self-confidence through this experience. Without CTAA, my experience in moving across the world to an unknown place and culture would have been much more difficult and much less accepting. Every kid needs a home outside of their home. Many kids don't have good home lives, and they go to theater to get away from that. Others have found theater to be their passion, and theater helps them explore their skills as well as aids in their self-discovery to further help them in their careers. Taking away the funds of the Learning Centers across the state would destroy the home that our directors and peers worked so hard to build. It would result in the loss of many jobs, which effects not just these teacher's incomes, but also their passion being taken away. It would result in the loss of many lives, because teenagers go through rough times, especially in high school, and many who would alternatively consider suicide, turn to theater instead and find a family that will support them. And this doesn't just go for CTAA theater program. It goes for the STEM programs that are a part of Learning Center as well, and every other educational program that is in place specifically to help students grow, learn, and find their passion in life. Taking away the funds of Learning Center programs would destroy the livelihoods and passions of so many, and remove a safe space and home for teenagers to go to when in need. As an impassioned student, an enthusiastic theater nerd, and a determined member of our society, I ask that the representatives reconsider this decision, and let our ohana continue to thrive and grow.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 4:27 PM

### **Name**

Lani Watson

### **Organization**

Mililani High school parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please reconsider the funding reductions to the State Learning Centers in the Hawaii DOE budget. As a parent who strongly supports public school education in Hawaii, I think it is critical to keep these programs to provide students with opportunities that will make a difference in their lives and future. I am disappointed that the funding for Learning Centers would be discontinued and oppose the DOE budget proposal that would reduce and cut funding to these programs. As a tax payer and community member, I want to see a diversity of programs being supported in public schools. Programs like The Central Theatre Arts Academy are a shining star in the Hawaii public education system. Cutting this program hurts students like my child. My child loves being part of play production and wants to continue through high school to develop and build skills. These programs provide real training and opportunities for future jobs and careers. The students are devastated and these funding cuts have real impacts on young people who have such passion and bring these incredible plays to our communities. These programs in our public schools provide our students with a safe and productive space for learning, growth and gaining skills. I think programs like this help students thrive and excel in school overall. My feeling is that if you reduce and cut performing arts programs that there will be a decrease in grades and motivation for students who thrive in that learning environment. The productions put on by the Central Theatre Arts Academy bring a diverse group of students together who work as a team. This builds confidence and a sense of being part of something bigger than the individual. I see this as equivalent to a football team or other sport team that works hard together to achieve a goal. Just as a sport event brings people together, play performances bring the community together. We need programs that support all types of students and interests. We are putting Hawaii's students at a disadvantage as they head into college or jobs after High School. Students in the Central District don't have an alternative if this program is cut. Families can't afford performing arts programs with other organizations and that are not in our communities. It is truly heartbreaking to take these programs away from our students. Please keep the Learning Center programs fully funded in the DOE budget.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 8:14 PM

### Name

Gianna Oshiro

### Organization

CTAA (Central Theatre Arts Academy)

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Hello! As a student who actively participates in play production and theatre, I strongly believe that the budgets shouldn't cut off funds to the learning centers.

It goes without saying that programs like the one I'm a part of need the support of the HDOE to be able to do shows, or receive supplies and such, or to function in general. What happens when this is suddenly cut off? Programs die off, and if that happens opportunities and potential careers for people, especially teens, will as well.

What if someone wanted to act on a stage and express themselves? What if all someone needed to do to become their best was to simply participate in a STEM program? In a short few years, they may never know, because there isn't any programs available for them to discover a group that like doing STEM projects the same as them, or there just isn't any drama or theatre clubs to join and experience how it feels to be on that stage playing a character they've been dreaming on becoming.

I'm really hoping that funding will still continue, because then the kids before me will have the opportunity to be in a program like I am. So many programs rely on funding by the HDOE to keep going, to give kids chances to become someone truly amazing, or become someone they want to be. A small after school extracurricular someone decides to do might just be that doorway to success, or the chance of finding out that they're good at something.

And oh goodness, what about the instructors? The teachers who teach at these learning centers? There are some absolutely amazing instructors in these programs that have made powerful impacts on people's lives. If these programs aren't going to be around anymore, where do they go? What would they do now that they can't do something they love doing? Or future instructors who've been wanting to do it for years, only for that chance to be taken away? What happens to those who honestly want to teach acting, or give lessons about tech, but they can't because there isn't any program providing that?

Some of the most famous, or the most successful people have to start somewhere. These learning programs might just be the thing that leads them down that path to greatness. Some learn the greatest lessons from them as well. I really cannot express that enough, because I'm certain that if I continue to be in play production I can learn great things, lessons, experiences, and wonderful people. And I want those who wander down the same path as me to be able to experience this too.

Please. These learning centers really matter, as small and unimportant as you may think they seem, they provide a chance for others.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:12 PM

### **Name**

Regina Wang

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy at Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

prospective student and younger sister

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi my name is Regina Wang. I'm 8 years old in 4th grade and a student at Mililani Waena Elementary School. I love theater and robotics and I think I would be really sad when I'm older if I can't do them. I think that it would be really sad for my older sisters because I know they love being in theater so much. I also think that it wouldn't be fair to other kids that love theater or robotics because then they couldn't do what they like. And that it's not fair for all of the other people who might want to be theater teachers or robotics teachers.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 9:26 PM

### Name

Anthony Ezell

### Organization

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### Position/Title

Alumni

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Members Of The Hawai'i Board Of Education,

I am writing as a proud alumnus of the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) at Mililani High School to express my deep and unequivocal opposition to the proposed HIDOE budget cuts that threaten critical theatre, STEM, and agricultural programs throughout our state. These cuts would severely impact programs that provide more than just education—they offer students invaluable opportunities for personal growth, a sense of belonging, and a safe space for authentic self-expression.

For me, CTAA was more than a theatre program; it was a life-changing experience. It was within this space that I first discovered my love for acting and performing, and where I found a community that accepted me as I am. As a queer teenager, I struggled to find spaces where I could genuinely feel accepted and supported. CTAA provided that safe haven, giving me a place to express myself freely without fear or hesitation. The program didn't just teach theatre—it fostered an environment where I, and so many others, could feel safe, valued, and truly part of something larger than ourselves.

CTAA's legacy is one of creative inspiration, acceptance, and inclusivity. This program has empowered countless students who may otherwise feel out of place, offering them a supportive community and an outlet for their creative expression. For many of us, this program was not only a significant part of our high school experience but was also instrumental in shaping who we are today. To see this program, which has profoundly impacted my life and many others, placed in jeopardy is both heartbreaking and alarming.

I implore you to consider the broader impact that these budget cuts will have—not only on the arts, STEM, and agricultural programs but on the well-being and futures of Hawai'i's students. Programs like CTAA are essential for fostering well-rounded, compassionate, and confident young people who can thrive in an ever-changing world. Removing or limiting access to these programs would not only erode the legacies they have built but would also deprive future generations of students of the vital support systems that many of us so desperately needed.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this proposed budget. Please prioritize the preservation of programs that play such a significant role in students' lives and help cultivate the creative, resilient, and diverse community that makes Hawai'i truly special.



11/01/2024

Thank you for your consideration of my perspective as you make decisions that will impact the futures of countless students.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Ezell

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:26 PM

### **Name**

Grace Balukoff

### **Organization**

CPAC

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Grace Balukoff, and I am currently a Castle High School junior. Within the past year, I have started working on the theater light board, and have found a new passion through it. I am now head light board manager. I have been and still am being mentored by a union member, and plan to someday become one myself. The theater has changed me in so many ways, from finding joy in working on a project to learning new and unique things in my theater craft class. The theater has become a second home to me, and I know it has for many others. I hope you all keep in mind the significance the theater has not only to the performers and crew, but also to the viewers and anyone who needs to find community.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:47 PM

### **Name**

Chloe Otake

### **Organization**

Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

The students and directors of the Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center have recently learned that all funding for State Learning Centers is set to be cut by 2026. This alarming news affects the future of CTAA and has left my peers and me heartbroken. Being a part of Play Production has deeply impacted our lives, embracing our creativity and collaboration. I advocate for the continuation of our program, as it not only cultivates talent but also builds confidence in our community's youth. Being part of Play Production has genuinely transformed my life, and I believe many students can relate to this experience. It has created a supportive community where we can combine our unique talents with our shared passion for theater. Throughout this journey, I've connected with others who make me feel welcomed and understood. Play production is a safe space that makes people feel like they belong, and I want people to continue to be able to feel this way. Being involved in play production has transformed my life. It has helped me learn to bring my creative visions to life, which I find rewarding. I've noticed significant growth in my skills and feel less self-conscious and more confident. I am eager to continue growing as a person through this program and am excited for the journey ahead. The instructors dedicate tremendous effort to teaching us, taking our individuality and expressions into consideration. It is important that they receive fair compensation for their actions. Many kids look forward to being a part of this program. It is special that different people come together, sharing experiences and connecting with each other. The thought of funding cuts concerns me, as it could mean that some may miss out on the wonderful opportunities, I am lucky to have right now. This program creates an accepting environment where I feel like I belong the most as someone who struggles to fit in. It is crucial that you reconsider and find a way to protect this incredible experience for everyone it may affect.

Sincerely, Chloe Otake and Students

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:25 PM

### **Name**

Kelli Finnegan

### **Organization**

Mililani High School's Central Theatre Arts Academy Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Learning Centers that fund Hawai'i Public School Theatres, STEM, and Agriculture programs are crucial to education. These programs teach students so much intellectually and emotionally and they make a huge difference in their lives. As someone who was a part of programs like these when I was growing up, my life would not be the same without them and they played a big part in shaping the person I am today and even in my career choice. The arts are incredibly underfunded when they are a great way for kids to learn and can be more influential when it comes to learning since it's more engaging and memorable compared to traditional learning methods. Kids need to have a place to grow in art, STEM, and agriculture outside of their classes and it helps them build more skills, discover who they are, build relationships, etc. We need to have more funding in these programs, not less. It's incredibly crucial that we maintain and incorporate more of these programs into our public education.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Lyza Bisquera

### **Organization**

Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Opposing/Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi!, my name is Lyza and I'm currently in 4th grade. I think that if you defund the arts that would be very and I mean very sad. That's because when I'm in middle school or high school I would like to join theater, and if you guys defund it I won't be able to join it like my sisters did.

And also, I think that if you join theater it will bring more fun, laughs, friends, and much more! But I would like to know why you guys are defunding it? Cause it's not just some kids singing and dancing, there is much more that they would be learning and they would have fun if you ask my sisters that had done theater. I would like to think that it would change my confidence and my bravery of going on stage and much more.

The reason I'm typing this is just because I would like to live my dream on the theater stage with my friends that would do it to. And maybe make new friends along the way! And I have watched my sisters theater shows a lot of times and yes, it does make me feel happy when I see my sisters up there. Thank you for your time in reading this! Hope you understand my message and many others messages.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:53 PM

### **Name**

Misako Rose

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My daughter improved her Japanese language skills in this program. And she is interested in other languages too. I think it's very important to communicate each other who speak other languages except English. I think they are learning a lot of things from other students and getting international sense. She got in to UH and she is still learning Japanese language as her minor. I think children need this program for their future. So I strongly support this program.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:47 PM

### **Name**

Kami Wakabayashi

### **Organization**

Castle Performing Arts Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The learning centers have been a crucial part in creating successful students. These programs teach students skills that they can use for the rest of their lives and applied to any job that they choose to enter in. For a lot of these students, these programs have also helped them find something that they are passionate about and helps to set them up for a future in that career.

The Castle Performing Arts Center (CPAC) and other performing arts learning centers are programs that have not only created talented performers, but also doctors, lawyers, construction workers, teachers, and so much more. Being able to be in the programs that the learning centers provide has helped students to do better in school. They must keep their grades up in order to participate. They allow students to do anything they want and can do. Students have discovered their strengths and weaknesses through doing shows and working behind the scenes. The learning centers also allow students to make connections with so many people within the industry from all over the state. Making these connections allow students to be able to find careers and internships in this field once they leave high school. A lot of students consider these learning centers as a second home and family. When life gets hard, they know they can turn to these learning centers to make their day a little better. It is where a lot feel that they belong with no judgement. It is their safe space.

It is because of learning centers that inspired me to go into the field that I am currently working in. Watching how passionate the educators are in shaping young minds and changing lives is what made me want to become a teacher. They not only educate, but they inspire and it is reflected in every student that has gone through their programs. If we want to continue helping our students become successful in life, then we need to keep funding our learning centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:10 PM

### **Name**

Vaneza Austria

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose the agenda to defund the theatre programs. I trust that you will make the right decision. The right decision being to support the theater and the arts, not to take away or limit these programs from our children. We should be nurturing the next generation of artists and not taking opportunities away from them! We should be supporting our young and local artists. Don't take these away so that all we're left is with You tube and Netflix. Again, do not defund our DOE theater programs. Thank you.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:10 PM

### **Name**

Arriana Simpao

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha.

To whom it may concern, I am asking you to reconsider the decision of cutting funds towards learning centers. As an alumni of the KHSPAC Learning Center, I have benefitted from the funding provided in the previous years. Without being involved in a learning center, I would not have been motivated to excel in my core academic responsibilities, due to the fact that I would have gotten kicked out of the learning center if I did not do so. Cutting off this avenue for students enrolled in our public education system is a risk. The opportunity for students to discover their interests and be fruitful citizens will decrease if funding cuts were to proceed.

In the case of my alma mater, the KHSPAC learning center was not only an avenue for growth, it was also a source for its own funding. Without the learning center, the shows produced by KHSPAC would not have flourished and consequently would not have made income that funds itself.

This goes for other pursuits provided by learning centers outside of KHSPAC. STEM and Agriculture learning centers are essential for supporting students who decide to explore these prestigious paths. Learning centers provide insights that go beyond the classroom, and these learning centers are filled with students who actually have the passion to dedicate their time to these centers, hence dedicating their time to their craft, which will inevitably lead these students to dedicate their time after graduating for these pursuits. Without the learning centers, what will students spend their time on? Defunding these learning centers negates the point of public education that supposedly helps the students to flourish in the real world.

I end my testimony with this quote: "Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits to sustain life. But poetry, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for".

Learning centers support both sides of the spectrum. Do not defund them. Mahalo.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 7:23 PM

### Name

Ryza Mae Bisquera

### Organization

Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center

### Position/Title

Opposing/Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To whom it may concern, it has come to our attention (the students of Mililani Learning Center) that the theater and STEM programs are at risk for defunding. I would like you to reconsider. Theater is more than what you think it is. Theater is not just about kids dancing and singing for people's entertainment; it is the connections they make along the way, a safe place for them to be, a home. I joined this a year ago. I remember before, I never talked a lot, didn't know many people, so I decided to join theater and do performing arts. Making this decision changed my life for the better. Since then I made more friends, my social skills got way better, and I am meeting more people even outside of doing theater. Joining this drama program helped me grow as a person, and I wouldn't be who I am today without this program. Central Theater Arts Academy means so much to me. The friends I have made feel more like a family to me. They taught me that it's okay to be myself. Performing arts brings us students together because we have the same interests, we share the same passion, which makes our connections so strong. Defunding this program also means taking away the opportunity for kids who want to do theater, acting, dance, etc. In the future. For example, I joined the theater to follow in my older sister's footsteps and my nine-year-old little sister was looking forward to joining the theater program as well. I remember after every show, my little sister would tell me that when she's my age she'd join and perform just like I did. I want her to experience how it feels to perform, and I want her to experiment with new things she's never tried. It'll push her out of her comfort zone, which is good. Kids need to learn how to get out of their shells to be out in the real world and theater is a good way of practicing that.

Shutting down all these programs affects the future of kids who want to perform in general. Everyone has their dreams, especially during middle school and high school. High school is the part where teens start thinking of what they want to do with their lives. Some students decide they want to be performers and these programs may help them pursue their dreams. This doesn't only apply to the performing arts bit of it. It also applies to the STEM and Agriculture part. As you may know, tourism is a huge part of Hawaii. Tourism depends heavily on agriculture so taking that away will not benefit Hawaii at all. Not to mention STEM is also important for us. It helps with critical thinking, collaboration, etc. Think about how it is going to affect the future if kids can't get the education they need now. Think about your kid's future. Taking away all these programs will not help build a better society for the next generation. We need kids who want to make a difference and use their passion for the better. Please remember as you make this choice. You're not only taking away from teens or kids, but you're also taking away jobs from directors and instructors who work there. It's already expensive enough to live in Hawaii and taking away their jobs won't make it any easier. They have families they want to feed, and bills they have to pay. They need these jobs. These theater programs impacted heavily on many people's lives and taking it away so suddenly has a bigger impact than you think. Kids who are already in

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programs want to continue what they're passionate about, they want to follow their dreams which is why keeping these programs is so important. With this information please reconsider your decision with defunding the arts.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:30 PM

### **Name**

Deja Taheny

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut funding for learning centers! As a former student of the Nanakuli Performing Arts Center, cutting funding for this program—that has positively impacted the lives of hundreds of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds—would be **DETRIMENTAL** for the future of this community. As a student, not only did I obtain skills to assist me in succeeding in the classroom, but I also gained skills I later went on to use in the workplace and my current profession. As a child of poverty, I've experienced first-hand how these learning centers reach beyond the four walls of their institution and create a lasting impact in the lives of its students. We cannot allow this opportunity to be taken from the future leaders of our communities; we cannot ignore the mental, emotional, and physical benefits of centers that promote creativity, collaboration, and self development. I strongly oppose defunding our learning centers!!

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 10:53 PM

### Name

Naia Tamashiro

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Naia Tamashiro, and I'm an alumni of Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Throughout my time at Mililani High School, I actively participated in Science Olympiad, one of the programs under the Learning Center. This program gave me and many other students the opportunity to explore so many different areas of science, and really allowed us to delve deeper into these topics that would not have been possible in the normal classroom setting. The ability to have materials for our build events or the funds to buy supplies to create our kits for chemistry events would all have not been possible without the Learning Center. I remember coming in every weekend to practice for events, and we would always have various different chemicals and equipment available to us so we could show up on competition day the most prepared we could be. This practice eventually even culminated in a first place medal at the State competition, all of which again would not be possible without the support of the Learning Center.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please

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ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Naia Tamashiro

Email: [naiatamashiro@gmail.com](mailto:naiatamashiro@gmail.com)

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 8:33 PM

### Name

Rhonda Masuda

### Organization

DOE: Mililani Uka Elementary

### Position/Title

Teacher/Mother

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Sir/Madam, Members of Board of Education,

I am writing as a mother and a Hawaii State Department of Education teacher for over 30 years. The academies, learning and performing arts centers are essential in giving all students, each and every child equal access to the joy learning and becoming passionate community contributors. In 2010, my son Chad auditioned for his first production of "The Outsiders" at Castle Performing Arts Center under the nationally recognized director, Ms. Karen Meyer. Chad was your typical lanky, soft spoken, somewhat socially awkward Asian boy. Through his experience he learned to project his voice and be a confident on stage performer. He went on to audition and play various roles in over a half dozen shows at CPAC throughout his four years of high school at Moanalua High School. The academy allowed him to earn credits from Moanalua and Castle High School. He graduated with an abundance English credits.

Auditioning for various roles and productions he learned to accept rejection and be resilient. He gained strong work ethics: The importance of showing up on time and making personal sacrifices to fulfill his commitment. (He missed his prom to do a show.) Chad learned that there are no small parts. Every role and everyone is important for ultimate success. He also learned empathy and acceptance. Many of his co-stars came from different socio-economic, culture, and religious backgrounds, and sexual preference. Though Chad did not go on to seek his fortune or fame on stage, he carries with a wealth of experiences due to the academies he was involved with.

With the lingering pandemic impacts on students' attendance, academic achievement and social and emotional well-being the academies and the arts programs will help to engage students. The arts encourage reflection and self-expression. They help us to heal. You must continue to budget for KHSPAC, Castle Performing Arts Center Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center. They are indispensable in preparing our students to be compassionate citizens.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 10:24 PM

### **Name**

ELIZABETH SALVA CRUZ

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

To endanger the existence of the Learning Centers by reducing its budget is shortsighted and dangerous. CTAA, for one, provides immeasurable benefits to children's confidence and self-esteem. Book-driven courses are not enough to fulfill young minds' needs to feel "well-rounded", accomplished, "can do anything". Provide them the tools and the encouragement to be budding Picassos or Taylor Swifts. The Learning Centers matter and must continue to exist.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:08 PM

### **Name**

Thomas Istvan

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Thomas Istvan, and I'm a junior at University of Hawaii Manoa. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

I personally benefited through FIRST Robotics, where I was able to be introduced to engineering concepts and how I could apply what I learned in the classroom to out of the classroom. This eventually led to me currently pursuing my bachelors degree in mechanical engineering, in hopes to pioneer and aid inventions to be of use to the world. In addition, with this profound knowledge, guide and convince upcoming students to do the same by not limiting their creativity and show what can be done with the knowledge they gain in their classrooms. Without FIRST Robotics, I would not be as knowledgeable and passionate about the field I am currently in and many of my peers and fellow alumni feel the same.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Thomas Istvan  
tommyjohnhawaii@gmail.com

I am a student at Mililani High School and am currently in the drama program (play production) at my school run by The Central Theatre Arts Academy. If the funding is reduced, my peers and I would be directly affected. The fund reductions would put our drama program at risk of shutting down.

The start of High school was very difficult for me, I didn't have many friends and hardly any motivation to go to school. However, being a part of the play production changed the point of school entirely. I made so many friends there who shared my love for the arts and finally found a place where I felt like I belonged. Being in play production motivates me to come to school every day. Getting to work with other students in play production is the best part of my week. I am extremely passionate about the arts and storytelling and play production is one of the only places where I can have the creative freedom to express my design and explore a new way of telling stories. In play production, many people from different backgrounds come together to share ideas and showcase their talent.

I have been part of play production for the last couple of months and it has already made an everlasting impact on me and my life. Play production is like a second family to me and many others, we hold each other up and are there for each other every step of the way even when times are hard. The amount of joy and uplift that being a part of play production brings me is indescribable. This program is very important to me and I wouldn't be able to bear losing it.

On the same note, losing the program funds would mean losing our teachers. I can say with complete honesty that the teachers and instructors in this program are some of the best I have ever had. Our teachers in this program push us to try new things, experiment with different perspectives, and give us the freedom to think outside the box. The teachers also give us a lot of independence to make our own choices, problem solve, work with our classmates, and let us take the handle on our projects and design. In play production, we learn skills that we could never learn in the classroom, as we work through the stages of putting on a play we learn and grow through interactive work and teamwork.

Art is a huge part of our world, and sharing art brings people together, and storytelling connects us in a way like no other. And by taking away this program you are taking away student voices. Without this program, students don't have a way of expressing their talents. This applies to not only our program but all programs that would be affected by defunding. These programs mean so many things to so many people. Taking away these programs would separate people and take away the only creative outlet that we have.

I strongly ask you to think about the impact that this will have on students' lives and reconsider the Hawaii DOE budget and funding reductions to the State Learning Centers the Hawaii DOE budget. Please help us save our program and the community we've built within it.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:03 AM

### **Name**

Tanaya Tafa

### **Organization**

Castle Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

In addition to the legacy created by Ronald Bright, many students and alumni involved with Castle's Performing Arts created an impact towards their peers and community. It allowed them to inspire others and themselves to express creativity, practice inclusivity, and experience the fascinating world of musical and technical theatre.

As many people assume, theatre seems to be an artistic form of entertainment for people to watch on stage, full of nothing but corny dance numbers and loud singing. However, though they are not too far from the truth, the process of developing such production is far from easy.

The opportunity of expression backstage and on stage also includes the opportunity of discipline and safety, which has students strengthening their analytical skills, time management, organizational skills, engineering knowledge, and quick thinking/reflexes. All crucial and important traits for a job.

The engineering aspect could involve having to engineer the lighting board, navigate the sound board properly to adjust the audio of instrumentals, stealthily and cautiously controlling the rails for smooth transitions of settings, constructing large sets with blueprints, or efficiently placing sets, set pieces, and props away for the pace and safety of the production.

The disciplinary aspect could involve remaining punctual to call time for rehearsals or shows, memorizing lines or cues to allow a smooth show or rehearsal (whether technically or musically), communicating issues and solutions with a coworker/co-star, or taking the time to find a safe way to safely and cautiously navigate the dark stage with people and large, heavy sets/set pieces in your way.

Funding learning centers such as CPAC not only allow children to strengthen their imaginations and creativity, but also provides them opportunities to develop new profound engineering and disciplinary skills, whether on or off stage. Beneficially, many of those characteristics and skills are heavily sought after from numerous occupations when looking for workers.

Taking such learning centers from the community may cause a strain on future generations in their development, restricting them of opportunities to navigate their way in this world. Perhaps they are set to succeed in a career in theatre or maybe they'd rather lean towards the field of engineering than construction. It provides students the ability

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to understand their interests and strengths.

The growth of students should be encouraged, not disregarded. Allow them to prosper and be the bright future for our communities.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:32 AM

### **Name**

Jordyn Reynolds

### **Organization**

Eleanor Roosevelt High School (CA)

### **Position/Title**

Vice President of Troupe #7980

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to arts and agriculture programs in HI schools. These programs are not merely "extras" but vital components of a well-rounded education that equip students with essential life skills, enrich our community, and open doors to future career paths.

Arts programs are often an integral part of a student's educational experience. They provide more than just skills in performance or technique; they teach discipline, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and emotional expression. For many students, the arts are where they find a sense of belonging and purpose, often improving their academic performance and overall well-being. Cutting funds from these programs would mean taking away that space of self-discovery and expression, which is irreplaceable.

Moreover, the arts foster cultural awareness and community engagement, creating a bridge between the school and the broader community. School performances and exhibitions bring people together, showcasing the achievements of our students and the diversity of our community. By funding these programs, we invest in the cultural fabric of our society and help prepare students for a workforce that increasingly values creativity and adaptability. Not only this, but theater programs get their jumpstart money from arts financing. Without this money, their program will die. They simply cannot raise enough money to even buy rights to shows.

Agriculture programs are equally important. They teach students practical skills that have immediate applications in our economy, especially in communities where agriculture plays a central role. These programs introduce students to food science, sustainable practices, and technology, encouraging innovation in an industry that supports all of us. They also foster responsibility, a respect for the environment, and an understanding of our food systems—lessons that are more critical now than ever.

Furthermore, agriculture education provides students with pathways into fulfilling and stable careers. In a time where many young people face uncertainty about the future, these programs offer skills and knowledge that lead directly to jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Removing support for agriculture programs would not only harm individual students but could negatively impact the local economy as well.

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In conclusion, I strongly urge you to reconsider the budget cuts to arts and agriculture programs. These are not just programs—they are investments in your students, your community, and our future. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Stop defunding the arts & agriculture.

Sincerely,  
Jordyn Reynolds

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:50 AM

### **Name**

akiko Mc

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

With this proposed budget, all funding for learning centers will be cut, and crucial programs such as CTAA will no longer be able to go on. The arts should be accessible for everyone, and this proposed budget would completely take away the arts for so many. Public theatre has provided an outlet for so many kids around the island, and that outlet must continue to be available. These kids deserve to explore their dreams and passions without the fear of it being taken away. Please please continue to fund the arts.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:39 AM

### **Name**

Sara Catalano

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

— Learning Centers are too important. Learning Centers are integral to a child's well-rounded development and are a cornerstone of community involvement. I don't think it's an understatement to say I owe my life and my success to Castle Performing Arts Center. In school, kids are trying to figure out who they are, who they want to be, and how to function in society, and there's no better place to learn those things than a performing arts learning center. Students learn communication, empathy, reading comprehension, confidence, collaboration, time management, focus, improvisation and creativity, how to handle rejection and how to practice for success. These skills are noticeably lacking since Covid disrupted traditional learning, and I fear what will happen to future generations if the learning centers are not funded and the students don't have these resources.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 11:08 PM

### Name

Kalea McLagan

### Organization

Castle Performing Arts Center

### Position/Title

Alumni

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Castle Performing Arts Center has changed my life. My love for this program started early on. Ever since I was eight, my mom has reminisced about the magical memories she made in the 1996 *Once On This Island* production. She described the deep bonds she formed with the cast and Ron Bright, the beautiful music she sang and danced to, but mostly, she spoke of the joy that being on stage gave her. Twenty-five years after that production, I stepped onto the stage of the Ron Bright Theatre for the first time. Little did I know that this theatre would become my second home, where I would spend 600 hours in two years. The community provided me with some of the closest friends I've ever made, creating a space filled with love and fun. I learned vital skills such as resilience, communication, drive, work ethic, and collaboration. But most importantly, I discovered the power that comes from gathering people together, without screens or distractions, to share one sacred moment. Here, I could forget my stress, breathe life into a character, create powerful, living art with my castmates, and reflect the human experience to an audience.

Because of CPAC, I've had the opportunity to participate in exclusive programs such as *Broadway Evolved* in New York City and *Musical Theatre Lisbon* in Lisbon, Portugal. I've also received paid theatre contracts and an offer to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, one of the top musical theatre programs in the country.

From my first rehearsal in the 2021 CPAC production of *Anastasia*, I knew I had found my people: a vastly talented group of individuals who fostered a supportive learning environment. My directors, Karen Meyer and Kami Wakabayashi pushed, encouraged, and loved each cast member. Their guidance gave me the tools to bring honesty to my work. But they weren't just concerned about their show; they are incredible theatre teachers and people who believe in each of their students. They offer mentorship to everyone, from the youngest fifth grader to alumni who now work professionally on Broadway. CPAC doesn't just train amazing storytellers; it cultivates amazing people.

2023 marked CPAC's 60th season, dating back to Ron Bright's first show in 1964. While participating in the anniversary concert, I saw generations upon generations of performers whose lives had been changed by this program. Thousands of students have been influenced by CPAC because it provided them with joy, expression, artistry, and a unique community. Looking around, I saw the young faces of the next generation, who would take the stage after I left, and carry on this legacy. My heart filled with pride, and my eyes with tears, as I realized the sheer scale of the impact this program—and all of the arts programs on the Island—have had on our community.

Please don't take this away from us. Doing so would leave a void in our community, not only now but for future

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generations.

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 5:39 AM

### Name

Ayzha Sagers

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I know the goal of the budget is to improve students lives and ready them for the future. That is everyone's goal. Cutting funding, even diminishing funding from the learning centers will not achieve this. As someone who has been a part of Castle Performing Arts Center (Castle High School's Learning Center) I have seen how it has bettered me and many of my peers. For me and my friends (Hawaii public school students) CPAC provided affordable, most often free, training for us as actors, dancers, singers, and theater technicians. If you go outside of school for training a singular voice lesson (typically 30 min) can cost \$60, and that is considered reasonable. Similar costs can apply to dance classes and outside theatre programs. If any student wanted to pursue theatre or even discover if they had an interest in theatre they would have to take more than one class. This makes theatre and the performing arts outside of the learning centers simply unattainable for public school students.

Another reason the learning centers benefit our students so much is what it gives them. Learning Centers provide amazing instruction for students which develop critical thinking skills, work ethic, and communication skills. I often am told I am a hard worker, and I credit it to theatre. It was the rehearsal schedules and the plays/cues I needed to memorize that pushed me to practice on my own and plan what I needed to do to accomplish my goals. That spilled over into other areas of my life. If I didn't do theatre or CPAC I would not have the work ethic that helped me become a valedictorian at graduation. This is all without mentioning the critical thinking and communication skills that were built in me and my friends. Many things can unexpectedly go wrong in theatre. A prop can break, costumes can tear, set pieces can get stuck, or even understudies might have to go on. Whenever things like this happened in CPAC a team of us students backstage would have to communicate with the students onstage to fix the problem. It doesn't seem like anything wrong is happening when one comes to see a show, and that is because we learned how to use critical thinking and communication effectively and swiftly.

Furthermore in a study, A Survey of School Theatre by Matt Omasta, highlighting theatre in public schools surveyed teachers and school administrators on how important a role they felt theatre programs played in strengthening certain social and workplace attributes. Over 50% of all the teachers and administrators said that they felt theatre grew students self-confidence, collaboration, communication, creativity, self-discipline, self understanding, leadership, social & cross cultural skills, and problem solving/critical thinking skills. Over 90% thought theatre programs had somewhat of an impact on developing these traits in students.

Still, CPAC did that and so much more for many of me and my friends. CPAC provided a safe place for many of us. Many of my peers spent as much time as they could in theatre and expressed how it was one of the few, or only, safe spaces for them. We built a community there where we supported one another and accepted each other regardless of our views. Taking away these learning centers would be taking away safe spaces for students and taking away places where they would be able to grow in critical workplace skills.

Maybe not every student will become an actor or theatre technician, but the learning centers provide affordable and critical places for students to grow in preparation for their future education and careers. We all want our students to thrive, so I implore you to support the learning centers in every way you can.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:07 AM

### **Name**

Anastasia Wang

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Theatre is an outlet. My family was torn apart when my father walked out, and we were devastated and heartbroken. Two of my sisters found solace in the theatre program, CTAA. Through this, they were able to build friendships and connections, but most importantly, begin to regain their confidence that was shattered by our father. Theatre was, and still very much is, an outlet for them to express their pain, sorrow, and anger, but also to help them feel happy and understood. The opportunity to perform and share their talents with others is something that is so crucial to them and to others, and taking away the funding that makes this possible would be detrimental to their mental health and daily lives. My sisters, and many other people I know, have allowed themselves to be shaped by theatre in a positive way; removing this outlet would cause so much pain to not only them, but to us, their ohana. We shouldn't have to watch our children suffer because of lack of funding, they deserve a place where they feel safe and able to express themselves through the arts.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

October 30, 2024

*Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,*

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

*John L. Fink*

John Fink  
Co-chair, Advisory Board  
Kalaheo HS Academy of Media & Design

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:18 AM

### **Name**

Connie-Anne Holman

### **Organization**

CPAC

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Creative expression is integral for our youth. They need programs and places that help them channel and work through emotions in healthier ways; spaces to explore, expand, exercise and express themselves and their emotions. Places great for socio-emotional wellbeing! Without mentally healthy outlets they will be stuck with unresolved and unexpressed creativity. They may then lean on and depend more on their smart phones which will contribute to more phone addiction, less social interaction and more depression and anxiety. Don't let more youth down! Please fund and support their programs!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Robert Lundquist

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I graduated from a Hawaiian public school, and I know how much CTAA meant to many of my friends because they had an opportunity to pursue their passions and take it to the next level, a few of my friends even took their acting to an elite level at college and are going to a top 3 acting school in the nation. This program helped develop them into incredible actors who just needed to find the right place to grow, this budget cut takes that away from so many future students.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Emi Aukai

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing in opposition to the budget cuts for learning centers, specifically for Castle Performing Arts Program. I am a former student of Castle who benefited tremendously from CPAC under the direction of Mr Ron Bright. My kids also participated in CPAC under the direction of Ms Karen Meyer. CPAC is a household name in Kaneohe and greatly contributes to the community. It's the pride and joy of Castle High and teaches kids not just about performing but about how to become confident responsible human beings. I urge you to continue funding this important and necessary program.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Michaela Woodford

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Don't do it, I love learning centers they help me do homework and help others understand what they are learning.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 11:50 AM

### **Name**

Mischa Carman

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello, My name is Mischa Carman. I am currently a Junior attending Mililani High School. I have been apart of the Central Theatre Arts academy for 3 years and it has helped me grow in so many ways. These learning center programs are my safe spaces. They are other kids safe spaces. The thought of future kids not having access to a safe space like the one I have now is absolutely devastating. Learning Centers are so crucial for kids. Everything I've learned from them, I have been able to apply in all aspects of my life. It has really helped me to grow, not only in the material of the learning program, but also as a person. I've been able to learn and see how to make and keep friendships, been able to learn how to work through difficult situations, and been able to learn how to adapt to changing environments. All of these things will help me when I graduate high school, start applying for jobs and start navigating life. Defunding these learning centers means taking away future generation's opportunities to experiment and learn the things that I have learned and experienced. It means taking away jobs from people who really need it. It means making it harder to find hands on experience in a possible career. Stripping our communities of these learning centers puts all future generations in Hawai'i behind the rest of the world. Don't limit the success of our children. They are the future. They need their learning centers. Thank you for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:44 AM

### **Name**

Robert Marchello

### **Organization**

American Electric, LLC

### **Position/Title**

Project Manager

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to share my concerns and opposition to the proposed plan to decrease funding for musical theater for the next fiscal budget year.

Musical theater is an excellent foundation for building student's confidence and learning how to work within teams and making decisions as individuals and as a group. These skills are imperative in building successful professionals who will understand the challenges of working together to achieve organizational goals.

The theater brings out individuals critical thinking skills and creativity and fosters a fun and focused environment for them to learn and grow. The theater also allows self-expression and belonging which is important for strong mental and emotional health. The discipline required to be successful in theater will support most working environments and open doors to a better future. The physical aspect of theater also supports students' health which is very important for living a long and prosperous life. These traits will inherently improve their ability to learn and adapt within other areas of education and prepare them with important life skills for their professional and personal growth.

I strongly request that you reevaluate your position on reducing funding for the musical theater programs and support the vast growth potential of the students as they grow into successful and driven professionals.

Thank you for your consideration. I appreciate your time, and I hope that you reconsider your objective to cut funding for Musical Theater.

Sincerely,

Robert Marchello

Proud father of a happy and successful student currently in Central Theater Arts Academy and Performing Arts of Kapolei.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Lillian Sebangiol

### **Organization**

Mililani Community

### **Position/Title**

Mililani Community Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Removing the funds and support for the creative programs will negatively affect all the people who have a passion for the creative space. I have a little sister who enjoys the program and will be negatively impacted if all the funds are removed. There would be no opportunities for her in that environment.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Jonathan Miller

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

It would be stupid to cut funding to our Learning Centers in Hawai'i. I'm an alumni of Castle Performing Arts Center and can tell you the part of my public education that helped me the most was CPAC, without the skills I learned through CPAC I would not be a successful Gemologist in NYC. No AP or GT classes will teach you the life skills you learn in the arts, and those are the skills that many older generations say the younger ones lack. Communication, motivation, organization. If you don't see this maybe look into how students in Learning Centers do academically as well, after all we won the Coming Up Taller award my senior year from the Bush Administration and we were the only recipients of that award that year that was a public school. Cutting funding to learning centers will only be a detriment to our future.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:00 AM

### **Name**

Sara Ramadan

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The arts are an integral part of every life and if we cut funding we stop the Shakespeare, the Van Gogh's, and the other artists of tomorrow. We should be encouraging these programs not defunding them. We often take for granted what we have and forget about the importance of the arts until we no longer have music in the car, art on our walls, and passion in our souls. Don't do this to our future, don't do this to our kids. Let them have the freedom to pursue these fields so we may have a better tomorrow.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:50 AM

### **Name**

Anna Foster

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing in opposition to cutting the budget for Learning Centers in school. Specifically I am writing to support the amazing job the theater Learning Centers do educating young actors and technicians while producing quality theatrical events across the island.

I am a professional costume designer in Hawaii and I have worked as a teacher for Central Theater Arts Academy in Mililani. My children also performed with CTAA during their time at Mililani HS and have gone on to choose performing as a career.

The theater learning Centers in Hawaii give an opportunity for students to learn, perform and grow in theatrical arts. The opportunity for students to come together with students from other schools within the Learning Center promotes community and collaboration in a way that only theater can. Theater Learning Centers strive to hire professionals in the field which allows the students access to high quality training and provide insight into a future career in the arts. Theater is traditionally an expensive endeavor due to acquiring the rights for plays and musicals, constructing sets and costumes and paying professionals for their expertise. Everyone involved in theater gives more hours and energy than contracted and supports the learning and growth of students. Funding from the BOE supports the Learning Center teachers and students and is vital to their success.

Please don't cut the budget line that these amazing organizations receive from the BOE. The theater Learning Centers have changed so many young lives in Hawaii and should be allowed to change more.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:55 AM

### **Name**

Carolyn Kaichi

### **Organization**

UH Institute for Astronomy

### **Position/Title**

Education/Outreach Specialist

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not defund TLC

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:19 AM

### **Name**

Sarah Kalawe

### **Organization**

Hawaii Dept. of Education

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose this budget proposal because the Technology Learning Center (TLC) plays an essential role in our robotics team's success, student growth, and community involvement in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) fields. By removing this funding, we risk losing crucial resources that directly benefit Hawaii's students and our broader STEAM community.

Defunding the TLC would not only jeopardize the future of our robotics program, which has consistently represented Hawaii nationally, but it would also cut off valuable educational opportunities. Through our partnerships and community events, we've reached thousands of Hawaii's students, offering hands-on experiences in STEAM fields that are not otherwise accessible. Without TLC support, these opportunities—and the positive impact they bring to our youth—will be significantly diminished.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Joshua Taylor

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:19 AM

### **Name**

Ken Salva Cruz

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear BOE,

I am writing to strongly oppose the projected budget cuts for the Learning Centers. I am a 1987 graduate of Kaimuki High School and was involved in several plays directed by Peggy Anne Siegmund. School cannot be just about academics; we need sports, the arts, and other activities to engage students. The Learning Centers provide a creative outlet for students that they would not get at home or in the community. Please reconsider these cuts.

Sincerely,  
Ken R. Salva Cruz



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

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In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Gracie, Herbst



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.





STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kaila Kiaha-Styring



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely Apollo Spheeris



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

Students really enjoy going on field trips and doing hands on activities, however, cutting the funding will result in them not being able to do these things and will make learning less fun and exciting.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School  
continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

- Zoe Daner



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regards to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that caters to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The loss of funding would have a profound impact on our students and greatly decrease all the advantages an LC offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, compete at the national level, etc. In order to ensure our students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future we need to provide them with the tools they’ll need to succeed.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The Learning Center program is an investment that deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mikayla Kloeppe



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

As a Kalaheo student, these funds ensure more hands-on activities and more engaging learning opportunities. I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Corinne Cabrellis





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School  
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Giulia Aliotti



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities. The future of our students depend on the unique activities that the funding supports and gives students an opportunity to study and become more engaged in their learning and actually enjoy it. As a student at Kalaheo, I can say with full confidence that the field trips and ways of learning we have has through the funding has made my education experience a lot more enjoyable then it would have been otherwise.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Alana Gamez



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of students. It provides us with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on us Kalāheo High Students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers us. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at The national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in us students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Zoey Reid



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” For their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Eve Padro



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,  
I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Lucus Andrews



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing about agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's budget request for 2025-2027, and the planned cuts to funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers very unique and specialized opportunities that fit what our students need and are interested in. It gives them with special instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Cutting funding would have a large and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would take away all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC

funding lets students to use industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This

Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities. We went on a field trip recently that provided us with the opportunity to see an unreleased film in the Hawaii

International Film Festival. It was an amazing learning experience and the movie gave all of us great examples of the materials we were learning about in class. We also were given the chance to submit a poster we made into a contest called the TC Ching contest. None of these opportunities would've been possible without the funding for

Learning Centers.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Shannon Love



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am reaching out with a heartfelt plea regarding agenda item VIII, which concerns the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the planned cuts to funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC provides valuable and specialized opportunities tailored to us students' unique needs and aspirations. It offers us hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and various college and career pathways. Losing this funding would severely impact us students, stripping away the essential advantages that a Learning Center provides. The support from LC funding enables us students to access advanced resources, visit colleges and businesses, earn recognized certifications, and compete nationally. We need more support to uplift us students, not less.

As a student in one of the Learning Centers, this program is truly unique. I have been to many different schools and districts but I have yet to find a program like this. We desperately need funds and with those being cut we are unable to do anything in this class. Even small projects like designing buttons or using Photoshop cannot be done without money. I have learned so much and created so much in the little time I have been here. Your support is crucial to our continued success and development as students.

To ensure local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed,” we must be equipped with the tools necessary for success. This Learning Center is crucial in providing those opportunities.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

I beg you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in us students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is a vital investment that merits your full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Savannah Clifton



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

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A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

Students really enjoy going on field trips and doing hands on activities, however, cutting the funding will result in them not being able to do these things and will make learning less fun and exciting.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your





STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School  
continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

- Zoe Daner



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration. (Danyl Morman.)



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I, Maddox Kendall, am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations

operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Education Operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the plan to reduce funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers special and interesting opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry, equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a massive negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to use industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We provide children with many life changing opportunities and we need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Austin Higgins





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School  
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Leilani Ricks

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:02 AM

### **Name**

Jill wakabayashi

### **Organization**

CPAC Encore Association/Community supporter

### **Position/Title**

Community supporter and Vice president of CPAC Encore Association

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly urge you to reconsider the dissolution of the Learning Centers until more research is completed. This short 2-day notice of the financial change was disrespectful to the students in the public schools and the state taxpayers.

The learning centers, especially the Castle Performing Arts Program (CPAC) Learning Center has been a benefit to the education of all students in the Castle and Windward district. In fact, the CPAC theatre shows are open to ALL public school students and creates a bond among the students and community. Relationships and friendship among the students and parents develop into lifelong bonds that don't happen just by being in school. Other benefits/skills of the theatre education are the improvement of the following skills - reading comprehension, history education, public speaking, confidence building, teamwork, time management, problem-solving skills and compassion. Allowing the learning center to maintain its status will allow a student to grow into a well-rounded young adult ready to attend college and face diversity with confidence.

The teachers of the learning centers go over and beyond the normal work day to accomplish great theatre productions for the public to enjoy. Unique to the CPAC learning center is the Kidstart program which is a collaboration with the castle complex schools from grades 5-8 to participate in the theatre process. This program allows students to discover a talent they didn't think they had and best of all, makes students want to remain in the public school system because they realize the positive factors of public school education.

Dissolving the funding and learning centers will only cause chaos and confusion for the future of the public education. It took years to finally understand and establish the learning centers. And now that it is running smoothly and with good results, this is not the time to end it. Why are you considering ending something that is successful?! Until there is a better educational program (with proof), this should remain intact and be funded every year. The benefits are too risky to lose. Please reconsider your decision to cut these centers.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC). The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific interests and desires of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. The deprivation of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to take advantage of industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. Losing all the fun opportunities in the Academy of Media & Design would be a huge loss to students and those who thoroughly enjoy the art of creating media. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. We want to give them all the chances and opportunities at this school in order to prepare them for their future, wherever they may go. Do we really want our students looking down on this school because something they loved was taken from them, or do we want to them to preach about how much they love Kalaheo High School and all the enjoyable electives they offer? In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their lives, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities. I strongly urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Olivia Heltsley



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for the betterment of their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This

Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration. From Kai Mayers



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Jowy Langaman

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work doing what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Large Animal Systems is a level three course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.

11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration, Jowy Langaman



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:29 AM

### Name

Kevin Cruz Valdez

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work doing what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Large Animal Systems is a level three course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.

11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kevin Cruz Valdez

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Melinda Moore

### Organization

Punahou School

### Position/Title

Director of K-12 Theatre, Parent of 3 DOE students

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Good morning esteemed members of the Board of Education,

I write today as an advocate for the students and educators across Hawai'i who rely on the invaluable support and inspiration provided by Learning Centers, especially those that champion the performing arts. The proposed budget cuts would eliminate funding for these centers, slashing critical resources by next year. Such a move would severely undercut opportunities for students at programs like CTAA at Mililani High School, Castle High School, KHSPAC, and Nanakuli High and Intermediate PAC—programs that have long served as sanctuaries of creativity, discipline, and resilience for countless young people.

Learning Centers offer far more than just technical training in the arts; they provide a profound and impactful education in empathy, collaboration, and cultural pride. For many students, these programs are lifelines, fostering not only academic achievement but also mental health, self-expression, and community involvement. Studies consistently show that students involved in the arts demonstrate higher levels of engagement, improved emotional well-being, and greater overall academic success. These Learning Centers are a direct link to these benefits, helping young people to flourish in both their personal and academic lives.

When we defund Learning Centers, we are not simply cutting an extracurricular activity; we are stripping away essential support systems and creative outlets for students who may not find them elsewhere. Furthermore, we risk dismantling the pathways that lead students into college and careers in the arts, which play a critical role in our state's cultural and economic landscape.

The financial and logistical implications of these cuts reach far beyond the immediate loss of resources. Removing Learning Centers will undoubtedly create a void in opportunities for students across socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those who may lack access to private arts education. These centers make the arts accessible, inclusive, and representative of the diverse voices that make Hawai'i unique. When students are deprived of these opportunities, we not only fail them but we also weaken the cultural vibrancy and future creative workforce of our entire state.

The role of the Board of Education is to safeguard educational opportunities that empower students and nurture their potential. I implore you to consider the profound and lasting consequences of defunding these programs and to keep the Learning Centers fully funded for the benefit of our keiki and the future of Hawai'i.

11/01/2024

Thank you for your time, dedication, and commitment to the future of education in Hawai'i.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Ka'iulani Tolentino

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work doing what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Large Animal Systems is a level three course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.

11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ka'iulani Tolentino

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:02 AM

### Name

Daniel Herson

### Organization

Magpie and Hunny LLC

### Position/Title

co-owner

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Greetings,

i have recently become aware that the academies we're going to be defunded in 2026. This should be good news to me, since part of what my business does is teach private acting lessons. The thing is this isn't good news. Even the idea of it makes me disconcerted with what our society values. More importantly it has me concerned about what our society doesn't value. When something is removed from a budget you're saying one of two things:

- 1) it's not important
- 2) We're going to do it another way

When it comes to these academies Is the high focus on STEM and the arts I'm not sure you're replacing this with anything you're just eliminating it. I would feel differently if every school on these islands had teachers in everyone of the STEM and Arts disciplines. Perhaps then you could make a decent case that you didn't need the academies since every school offers dance,theater, music, and art. Every school. Every High School every middle school every Elementary School. If this sounds Insane keep in mind I still haven't talked about all the Sciences. Certainly rich kids Can get great acting lessons from Private school but that's not the point. The question isn't acting lessons (for example) are available, the question is are they affordable. Before you start quibbling over the definition of affordable, the definition is zero. It should not take any money to study something that's important. We haven't even gotten into how important engineering and how we're not seeing more than a club level activity at most high schools.

I understand Theater the best however, my arguments are not limited to theater. When considering what is important in a society we have to consider the future of the society. Is the world we want to live in here in Hawaii one in which only wealthy people get to partake in the arts? Because once you eliminate the funding it is very hard to teach. Sure you might have the teacher but you don't have the budget to show them. It doesn't matter if we're talking about not being able to build a set or not having any microscopes in a chemistry class it's the same idea. So many places rely on these Academies that you don't even think about. The Ripple effect would destroy whole communities. For example castle is a fantastic High School that has a really great theater program. It is had decades to build up it's inventory of costumes. But building and maintaining costumes takes time and energy. If you go and see a play there, you'll see it's very well costumed. This wasn't free it took them time energy and money over a very long time to set this up. But if that money starts evaporating teachers time is pressed a little harder all these resources will start fading away pretty quickly. Aiea Intermediate School Is currently borrowing costumes from them For production that is not connected to Castle. Castle is lending resources through the network of theater. If you ended up coming to see Annie Jr and even for a moment thought this was proof that the academies aren't necessary because there isn't one at Aiea Intermediate,

11/01/2024

please understand That the quality of the show miles away from Castle is directly impacted by Castle. Just one small Intermediate school you might think. But they're already so few theater programs. In that production, to keep going with my example, There are students From two elementary schools, Two intermediate schools, And the high school. None of these schools with the exception of Aiea Intermediate Has a drama program at all. This is a tiny speck of the impact The defunding just Castles Academy would do.

Maybe we wouldn't see the impact immediately. It's completely possible that years would go by and everyone would pat themselves on the shoulder certain did those academies were just a waste of money. Then we'd start to see a trend, It would seem Like some type of miscalculation at first just random noise within the statistics. Someone would comment why aren't there any more famous actors coming out of Hawaii. Why is it that whenever they film in Hawaii they bring in all the actors even the Polynesians? Then In a completely separate idea, UH would notice that for the first time No local students got into the Masters programs in the science departments. But these things aren't connected are they they couldn't belt just means the school's getting more competitive. And they're a better actors in Hollywood maybe it is cheaper. We would even explain to ourselves that with so many people being priced out of paradise It's cheaper and easier to find actors Who are Polynesian In LA and Las Vegas in simply fly them to in. Even with a local music category in the Grammys suddenly the winners are all on the mainland. All of this starts happening about a decade from now.

You might read that scenario and roll your eyes. You might point out that nobody's defunding the private schools. So the private schools and academies would be able to fill the gap. Unfortunately that wouldn't happen either. Everybody has a budget and everyone wants to make money where they can. Once the private schools realize how little it takes to be better than the public schools, they won't need to work as hard. Imagine a student interested in technical theater whose parents could afford to send them to any school on the island but, their home District is Kaimuki. The private school would absolutely have to bring the best possible offerings to even be considered because that high school has such an incredible ability to teach students technical theater. What if they didn't? What is the private schools didn't have to fight very hard To be better than any public school. What makes us believe that they would continue to deliver at the same level? Keep in mind if they're more students interested in going to private school because the public schools have defunded the Arts in so many places they're is going to be increased demand. Most the students even the ones who could afford it won't be accepted. Being so much better means they can lower their standards by orders of magnitude.

I think magnitude is a perfect word to describe what is being considered. This loss of funding would create a seismic shift in the way education functions in this state. As those who study science know: seismic shifts can level communities.



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Kapena Ah You

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 2 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kapena Ah You

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Jowy Langaman

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jowy Langaman

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Bryson Torricer

### Organization

LahainaLuna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bryson Torricer

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### **Name**

Roseann Michaud

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose this budget since it no longer supports learning centers that have provided programs like robotics. My children both participated in robotics and it has been instrumental in their education and career choices. Without STEM programs such as these many students don't get real world experience in fields like electronics and engineering. Please find ways to continue to support STEM education.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Ian Cabello

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ian Cabello

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Marc Gairan

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marc Gairan

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:02 AM

### **Name**

Nyra Dee

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

secondary science teacher (and volunteer robotics coach)

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am opposing the DOE's operating budget request for fiscal biennium SY2025-2027 because it does not provide funding for the Technology Learning Center (TLC) program located at Waiakea High School. This is a much needed STEM program for our community. Most high school's cannot afford the operating cost of running an FRC competing robotics team (I would know since I am a high school robotics coach) and the TLC provides our students in the local community to join an award winning team focused on hands-on learning in engineering and computer science.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Gabryella Gagala Salmon

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:29 AM

### Name

Angelica Agrade

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,

Angelica Agrade



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:41 AM

### Name

Mary Miura-Aguinaldo

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Mary Miura-Aguinaldo, and I am the parent of a Senior (Grade 12) student at Mililani High School where I also teach. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I've worn hats for several roles with learning center programs, going back to my own high school experience with Central Theater Arts Academy (back when it was still referred to as Tri-School). The friendships and theater experiences I had that were connected to those programs (I was not a learning center student, but I did participate in theater workshops hosted by Tri-School) are still some of my fondest memories from High School. As a parent, I have watched my shy, awkward child find his niche with the set production crew with Central Theater Arts Academy (CTAA), and the construction and art skills he has learned and put in place are skills that are definitely transferable to the real world - using power tools safely, how to persevere when plans fail and learning to lean on and trust others. As a shy anxiety riddled middle schooler, I often worried that he would struggle to find a place to "fit in" in high school. Those worries disappeared entirely when he found CTAA - the teacher and staff mentors as well as his own group of quirky "theater kids" have been almost miraculous when it comes to giving him the confidence to be himself around a group of peers. My older child often participated in service learning activities through the Science Learning Center here before graduating, participating in Science Olympiad and the Middle School Robotics team that was supported in part by the High School Science Learning Center (MHSSLC). She is now in college majoring in Environmental and Sustainability Studies due in part to her experiences with learning center programs. Although not technically learning center staff, as a science teacher at Mililani High School, I spent countless hours volunteering to help supervise community workshops that MHSSLC students planned and taught to elementary students from our feeder schools.

11/01/2024

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures. Although my experiences are with the programs hosted at Mililani High School, I am sure other Learning Centers serve vital roles for their host campuses and the surrounding communities as well. Eliminating these programs not just our school, but our larger surrounding community, and not for the better.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mary Miura-Aguinaldo

Teacher, Parent and former Learning Center Student at Mililani High School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:28 AM

### **Name**

Dana Kiyabu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose cutting the Learning Center budget. I support the Learning Centers, with all my heart. My son was well on his way to flunking out of high school in his freshman year until CPAC gave him a reason to be there. This program gave him something productive to do and taught him personal responsibility, punctuality, resourcefulness, self-discipline and so much more. He graduated in 2006, and since then I've had the pleasure and opportunity to watch many others learn and grow into themselves. CPAC celebrated 60 years last year. What a legacy! What a travesty to have to fight for it all these years, but I will always fight for it. Our world needs creativity more than ever, please continue to fund this vital part of our education system.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:24 AM

### **Name**

Calina Ryan

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Science Club Vice President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Science Learning Center at my school has been very beneficial to my learning and has provided me a place to make amazing memories with my friends. I aim to go into the STEM field, so having the opportunity to compete in academic competitions, like Science Olympiad or Science Fair, has helped me not only gain experience, but has helped me in developing my specialized pathway that can help me stand out to colleges.

For Science Olympiad, we get to travel to other schools for invitationals to compete in what we're interested in, while also having snacks provided by our advisors, resources freely given, and fun times with our members. We also get to hold our own invitational, despite the expenses, because we want to give back to the community. In Science Fair, we were able to get our boards professionally printed and get a bus to take all of us to the State competition, all for free.

Doing all of these things with little to no cost on my end has allowed me to branch out and seek my interest without the extra stress of money or having to turn down opportunities. But most importantly, the ability to do this with my friends and make these amazing memories has been most impactful to me.

I understand the difficult situation many Hawai'i residents are undergoing on the island of Maui because of the fire last year, and in no means do I want to take away resources for those who are struggling. While supporting those who need help is important, I think taking away funding from others who will also find a valuable use of that money may not be the best approach. A common phrase that is told to our generation is that "You guys are the future." Having this funding to support our education and extracurricular activities can significantly impact our futures.

I hope for a compromise that can support the learning centers in Hawai'i public schools, while also helping Maui recover from their tragedy.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 AM

### **Name**

Chanel Kaeo

### **Organization**

NPAC nHIS

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose cutting funds from public schools learning centers. You are making a huge mistake. I guarantee this will have a negative impact on the community and students. What other outlets and extra curricular activities can these students join besides sports?

Come on stop stealing that money from our kids and do the right thing

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:29 AM

### **Name**

JAYLA WAKABAYASHI

### **Organization**

CPAC supporter

### **Position/Title**

Former CPAC Participant

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose cutting the funds for the Learning centers especially the theatre learning centers and Castle Performing arts program (CPAC). I participated in this program when I was in grade 5 at Kapunahala Elementary School. I was in the Kidstart program and show. This program allowed me to become confident in front of people and decreased my nervousness when speaking in public. I also made lifelong friends with students from other schools. I also have returned to the program to teach 5th graders the dances for the individual schools' performances. The CPAC learning centers allows students to create a sense of family and a desire to help and give back to a program that provided in developing lifelong skills of compassion and being a good human being.

All the theatre learning centers provide wonderful theatre shows for the public and requires funding to accomplish this great experience. All learning centers must find shows that are favorable for the public and does not compete with each other so that the state can have a diverse experience to the world of live shows. Hawaii has a very limited exposure to theatre and the benefits of live shows that the CPAC learning centers and others are able to provide gives the public a vast variety.

Theatre allows someone with an introvert personality the opportunity to become more confident without the fear of rejection. It also helps with reading skills, reading comprehension and history. Many shows are based on a historical event and theatre brings it to life. Theatre enhances the learning and public education especially for students who are more visual and oral learners. Many students are hands on learners and CPAC and learning centers allow students that opportunity to succeed in increasing their knowledge.

Do not cut the funding for the learning centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 AM

### **Name**

Agnes Yamauchi

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose this bill as it does not include funding for the Technology Learning Center at Waiakea High School. Although it is at Waiakea HS, our Hilo High School students have been allowed to join and prosper from this program. With such limited budgets, it is nice to see that the entire community can participate and benefit from these programs, not just the students from that school.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 AM

### Name

Aukai Waiohu

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work doing what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Large Animal Systems is a level three course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.



11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Aukai Waiohu

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 AM

### **Name**

Griffin Lockette

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi there. My name is Griffin Lockette and I am a 2015 graduate from castle high school. I'm submitting this testimony in opposition to the budget of learning centers in public schools being cut. Castle Performing Arts Center has directly shaped and changed my life. Receiving an accessible arts education at CPAC is what gave me the tools, confidence, and courage to pursue a life and career in the arts. If it wasn't for CPAC I wouldn't be a professional actor living in New York City or an engaged member of my community. The learning centers are essential for students access to arts education which isn't just for those of us pursuing a career in the arts but enriches students communication skills, comprehension, critical thinking, emotional development and so much more. Kids shouldn't have to be rich and attend private schools to have access to valuable arts enrichment. Please do not make this crucial mistake in cutting funding to these programs.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:03 AM

### **Name**

Ville Mustonen

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Hi.  
Please reconsider the budget cuts on learning centers.

Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:05 AM

### **Name**

Justin Young

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The Technology Learning Center would be defunded. This would be taking away a wonderful program for students. Please think this through and do not go through with it. Think about the keiki! Let's give them opportunities to shine!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:05 AM

### **Name**

Joshua Julian

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

English Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Many students benefit from the TLC program. If anything, it should have a larger budget.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:05 AM

### **Name**

Reid Nonaka

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Assistant Principal

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Reid Nonaka, and I am an Assistant Principal at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As an Assistant Principal at this school, I have seen the many benefits of our school's learning centers. With these learning centers, opportunities have been provided for students to really find their niche at this school. These programs allow students to grow, explore, and find a sense of belonging with peers who share similar interests. As educators, we are here to provide as many opportunities as possible to educate the whole child. We hear many stories about students who fall between the cracks. Defunding programs like our Central Theatre Arts Academy and Science Learning Center, would only perpetuate the idea of students getting lost in the crowd. As educators, we promote individuality, not conformity. These programs are integral for providing a more personalized educational experience.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Reid Nonaka

11/01/2024

reid.nonaka@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:05 AM

### **Name**

Kellie Frias

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

Career and College Counselor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Programs such as Waiakea High School's Technology Learning Center, as well as Hilo High School's Performing Arts Learning Center, would be detrimentally affected if this budget proposal goes through. There are students participating in these after school programs from different areas of our community, and from elementary through high school levels. For some, this is the one bright spot in their day! They look forward to the learning that occurs through hands-on participation, and are able to connect the various curriculum they learn in their core classes, with these real-life experiences. I am writing to oppose this proposal.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:26 AM

### **Name**

Nalia Newman

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Through fundings like these, students are able to experience learning centers that provide infinite amounts of knowledge, learning and unique skills that prepare them for a constantly evolving society. I myself have been fortunate to be apart of a learning center during my high school career, and I continue to remain thankful for that entire experience and learning style. I firmly believe that the type of learning & hands on experience I gained from my years in a learning center have positively impacted not only the person I am today but also the type of student I am today. I am in opposition of this motion & do not support.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:18 AM

### **Name**

Jeff Galon

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

This is testimony that opposes eliminating Learning Centers across the state.

The Waianae High School Marine Science Learning Center should continue to be funded because it provides a place for kids to learn about science and culture not only in the classroom, but through hands on learning experiences in the facility and the larger community. The program also fosters positive interpersonal interactions with teachers, community leaders and classmates. This program has made an impact on me as I was a student in the program in '98-99 and '99-'00 school years. Please continue to fund the program. Mahalo.

V/r

Jeff Galon

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:30 AM

### **Name**

KRISTIN AIONA

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I am opposing this bill because it does not fund PALC and TLC. Mahalo!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:41 AM

### **Name**

Dee Gleason

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I vigorously oppose cutting funding for the Hawaii Learning Centers. This program greatly benefits my granddaughter and many other students. Please reconsider this plan and allow funding for the program to continue. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:30 AM

### **Name**

Phillip F

### **Organization**

Castle Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Former Instructor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I am a former music instructor and teacher with Castle Performing Arts Center. I am writing to request that the funding for learning centers be preserved in future DOE and BOE budgets. These theatre programs are such a wonderful opportunity for students in the DOE. I have many friends, former students, and colleagues who had greatly benefitted from these types of programs offered at these schools and theatre programs. These funds give these programs a head start on funding projects throughout the years and allows them to hire specialized instructors, like myself, to come in work with DOE students. Please reconsider keeping these funds in the Hawaii DOE budget for future academic years.

Mahalo For your time,

~Phillip Foster

October 30, 2024

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Carol Barnhart, and I provide support services to students at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The Learning Centers support more than the educational experience of students, but also the mental health and social emotional learning of students. I have provided support services to students who participate in the Learning Centers offered at Mililani High School and have found they provide a safe environment for students to feel welcomed and included - strengthening their connection to the school community and their education. This unique connection to school and education is critical for students who may otherwise feel isolated within the school setting or who may struggle with mental health concerns. It is such a positive experience to see and hear how these students are able to generalize skills learned to cope with their struggles and flourish within these programs under the guidance of amazing teachers.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures. It would also disband the safe spaces and communities that were built within the programs, creating disconnect between students, the school community, and their education.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Carol Barnhart  
(808) 307-4396

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:30 AM

### **Name**

Amber Imai-Hong

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Learning Centers are an important part of Hawai'i's STEM pipeline, and give underserved students a better chance of succeeding in the college and university environment. Throughout my years working at the Hawai'i Space Grant Consortium and Hawai'i Space Flight Laboratory, I have worked with many students who benefitted from these Learning Centers through their robotics teams. These students enter college with hands-on experience, communication, and time management skills that many of their peers are just starting to develop. Additionally, I work with many of the teachers who run Learning Centers statewide. These teachers use much of their personal time to provide students access to robotics tournaments, hands-on experience working with tools, and training that cannot be done during the typical school day. I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget and continue to fund Learning Centers across the state.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Kainoa Holomalia

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Thank you,  
Leila Cooper



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Elise Quinonez



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kilinahe Schenk



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

McKinley Shanks



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

From- Kennedy



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jayden Anthony Tavares Waiters





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Katia Masi



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Chloe Grindell



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Mahalo for your time and consideration. Adrianna Van Horn



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Adam Hufstetler



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Kohdy Tai-arthur



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**Samuel Linn**





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Andy Ngo



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Elliott prinzing



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:30 AM

### Name

Fahreem Jaffar

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Parent

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Committee Chair,

My name is Fahreem Jaffar, and I am reaching out to urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I strongly oppose the reduction in funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) as part of the department's resource realignment. These programs are far more than extracurriculars; they provide foundational skills in technology, problem-solving, and teamwork that are crucial in preparing our students to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

Since these programs were introduced, I have personally witnessed their profound impact on students. Robotics and science programs engage children from diverse backgrounds, igniting a passion for STEM in those who might not otherwise have access to these opportunities. Beyond fostering a love of learning, these programs are pathways to future success, inspiring students to pursue higher education and careers in fields critical to our nation's advancement.

My daughter has been actively involved in robotics for the past three years, starting with the Mililani Middle School robotics team and now, in 9th grade, as a part of Mililani High School's team. Her team ranked 2nd in the First Lego League (FLL) state competition in 2021, 4th in 2022, and won the FLL Hawaii state championship in 2023, earning the honor of representing Hawaii at the world competition in Houston. Through this program, I have seen firsthand her growing interest in STEM, and many of her teammates now aspire to STEM careers because of the skills, mentorship, and encouragement they received through this program.

The robotics programs provide vital opportunities for students across Hawaii to gain skills essential to competing in STEM jobs in the future. These students dedicate countless hours after school, fully investing themselves in their work. Cutting funding would be a significant disservice to our keiki, who already face challenges in critical areas like math, science, and ELA.

Reductions to these programs would not only limit access to quality STEM education but would disproportionately impact underrepresented students who depend on public school programs to explore their potential in technology. Without funding, we risk a future where many of our students are unprepared to meet the demands of tomorrow's workforce, ultimately compromising our nation's competitiveness and innovation.

11/01/2024

I urge you to champion these programs. They are not an expense; they are a crucial investment in the future of our children and the economic resilience of our country. Let's continue to inspire and equip our youth with the skills they need to shape a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fahreen Jaffar

Parent

Mililani High School



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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John Griffin



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Tuan Anh Nguyen





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Jase jarrett



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Madelynn Levoy



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:16 AM

### **Name**

Haylee Pula

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a girl who grew up adoring theater, hearing that my opportunities to continue my passion may be taken away from me is heartbreaking. Theater has become one of my favorite things in the world and a huge part of my life. I participated in several community theater productions at various places like KHSPAC & CPAC and each experience were ones I will never forget. Theater, specifically, has allowed me to meet amazing people, strengthened my creativity, taught me perseverance, and has done many more things that are too long to list here. Performing at these theaters brought me so much joy and fulfillment and often became my saving grace in rough times. In the first half of high school, I was still trying to find a place where I could fit in or somewhere I could enjoy myself. When I discovered places like KHSPAC & CPAC, I was ecstatic as they provided a place where I could pursue my interest in theater since my school could not.

I performed in "Footloose" at KHSPAC in my sophomore year and to do this day it is my favorite show I performed in. The whole experience was absolutely thrilling, so much so I returned to do a second show there the following year. Additionally, my friends and family also enjoyed seeing the show. In fact, performing there inspired my sister to pursue an interest in theater. As well as friends and family who had no interest in theater at all, suddenly found a change of heart after watching the show.

The main point is that theater has brought so much positivity not only to myself but to our community. Theater provides an opportunity to learn, grow, and to be a part of something amazing. Theater is so valuable to me and many others that it would be an absolute shame if it would be taken away.



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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

- Isabella Caballero

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 2:54 PM

### Name

Erin Wright

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to agenda item VIII. Specifically, the budget cut for SY25-26 and no funding for SY26-27 for Learning Centers. My testimony comes from a personal perspective of a parent whose child has greatly benefitted from participating with the Central Theater Arts Academy at Mililani High School (CTAA) and Castle Performing Arts Center at Castle High School (CPAC). My 'ohana lives in Kalihi and my child (they/them) is a fourth-generation Farrington High School student. While FHS' Farrington Performing Arts Center is amazing, due to lack of funding, they are very limited with what is offered to our arts-oriented students, especially during the fall season. CTAA and CPAC have provided my child with the opportunity to participate in an excellent performing arts programming during the fall which has been invaluable for my child. Performing arts has positively impacted my child in so many ways. It has built their confidence, helped them to make friends outside of our geographic area, and contributed to helping them manage their time and energy so they can participate in theater productions. So, having the opportunity to have my child continuously involved and active with performing arts throughout the school year is critical to keep them engaged in education in ways not typically available in their daily classes. And, for children like mine who are creative and expressive, participating in performing arts is essential to their overall well-being. Academically, I have witness my child blossom from a mediocre student barely involved in co-curricular activities in middle school to an Honors/AP student also enrolled in early college leading student organizations at their high school.

My "theater kid" participates in 2-3 productions annually and actively auditions for community theater, so we have experience with performing arts programs. Those offered through CTAA and CPAC are among the best including those programs I have paid for (which can be cost prohibitive). The teachers are not only highly skilled in their craft, they also show compassion, empathy, and kindness to our children while also challenging them. You can see all this work culminating in their performances (and I am non-theater/non-arts person). From the set design to the costuming to the live music and the students themselves, these productions rival any "professional" ones I have attended. The teachers at these Learning Centers make it happen! Furthermore, they not only prepare our children, organize, direct, and plan the productions, they also organize the parents, musicians, costuming, etc. The work they invest and the work they encourage our children to invest is nothing short of amazing. If you already have not attended a performance, you should -- you would not want to defund these programs once you experience what these programs do our children, our families, and our broader communities who all get to share in our kids' learnings. Other than athletics, how else might our communities be able to see the beauty and excellence of our students and their teachers?

As a fellow educator, I understand the delicate balance of financing education with the many demands and persistent under-resourcing of public education. However, as a parent who has witnessed the positive impact of Learning Centers on my own child's life and educational trajectory, I hope you carefully reconsider your proposal to defund them. Thank you.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:05 AM

### **Name**

Courtney Booth

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed budget cuts to Learning Center funding in Hawai'i schools, specifically for performing arts programs. These centers, including CTAA at Mililani High School, KHSPAC, and others, have been vital in providing students with a well-rounded education that extends beyond traditional academics. They nurture creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and self-expression, all of which are essential skills for success in higher education and the workforce.

Eliminating this funding threatens not only these invaluable programs but also the opportunities for students to explore their talents and passions in a supportive and structured environment. The learning centers are lifelines for students who may otherwise lack access to quality arts education, and they bring much-needed balance to the academic rigor of high school by fostering personal growth, confidence, and lifelong skills.

I urge the Board to reconsider this decision and find a path that sustains Learning Center funding. Doing so affirms our commitment to providing students with comprehensive educational experiences and upholds the spirit of creativity and diversity that enriches our schools and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Courtney Booth



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jaylen yetter



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Dezmon Jace Longgay

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Dezmon Jace S. Longgay

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Siana Boaz-Vasquez

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Siana Boaz- Vasquez

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### Name

Penina Tufaga-Cuelho

### Organization

LahainaLuna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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Thank you for your consideration,



11/01/2024

Penina Tufaga-Cuelho

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### Name

Javlyn Alers

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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Thank you for your consideration,

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Emily Baltazar

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
-Emily Baltazar

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:41 AM

### Name

Kelly Wadlegger

### Organization

7 years Hawaii Dept of Ed Teacher, (Castle Performing arts Center, Iao Intermediate School Drama,) 3 years Graduate Fellow Teacher at UHM Manoa Theatre and Dance Dept,

### Position/Title

Theatre Arts Educator grades 6-12

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha

I am submitting my testimony in support of myself and my colleagues who work in learning centers and for the students who benefit from the Learning Centers!

It is a travesty and a major disservice to our students for the Hawai'i Department of Education to even propose to eliminate funding for the Learning Centers across all of Hawai'i!

This would mean the elimination of our amazing pre-professional theatre programs that transform the lives of all our students and community across all the islands. Our friends, family, students and community members of Castle High School's Castle Performing Arts Center, Kaimuki High School's Kaimuki High School Performing Arts Center, Mililani High School's Central Theatre Arts Academy, Nanakuli High's Nanakuli High and Intermediate School's Performing Arts Center, Baldwin High, Hilo High, and Kaua'i High and Intermediate School's Performing Arts Center will all be negatively affected. The theatre is a home to these students. Students stay in school, belong to something positive when their home lives may be traumatic. The audiences come to our shows and are moved and find themselves being able to connect to real life situations and emotions especially in this challenging time.

Myself and colleague have "saved" many students through the arts. Students on the brink of self harm, suicide, dropping out, not having a home, getting hurt or hurting others. They have transformed their lives through the positive processes in the arts. Parents have thanked me for bringing out the potential that was there in their child only waiting for the safe space to explore, research create and collaborate in positive ways. I spent 4 years at Castle High working with incredible students in the performing arts. The arts are crucial. The data is all there.

This is beyond a travesty. Americans for Arts conducted the study Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 showed the vast benefits of the arts. According to the 2015 study, "the nonprofit arts industry generated \$166.3 billion of economic activity in 2015 - \$63.8 billion in spending by arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences." This then translated to 4.6 million in jobs and \$27.5 billion in revenue for local, state and federal governments. Even though this may not seem like it is directly linked to us at the community level, I feel it most definitely does. It is our students and community that become these arts practitioners at the profit and non-profit level.

Beyond data, these are my colleagues', students' and community members' lives. Our Learning Centers are free for the students to participate in and therefore provide equity and access for all to the arts. This can, at time, change the

11/01/2024

trajectory of someone's life. Aside from being the Chapter Director serving you all in the thespian society and the theatre programs, I have also been an active member of the community, even stage managing for KHSPAC. I have seen first-hand how the performing arts impacts lives. Some students consider and may move on to careers in make-up, costuming, lights, sound, projection, set design and construction, music, choreography or acting. We are connecting our students to real industry work. Theatre is a place where people can have meaningful experiences. For most, it is a place of belonging, where they find people who are like themselves.

It is a safe space where people are among people for whom they feel the most free to explore, create and produce. For these reasons alone, the Learning Centers are worth advocating for. All those in the Department of Education need to see our productions, come watch our classes. The many shows and programs that these Learning Centers provide, have positive long term impacts on the smaller and greater island wide community.

Please do not cut the funding

Sincerely

Kelly Wadlegger, BFA, MFA

grade 6-12 licensed Hawaii Theatre Arts Educator

808-670-4756

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Aleksander Olvera

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Aleksander Olvera

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Lake Tavernese

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Lake Tavernese

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:05 AM

### Name

Hoku Adachi

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Hoku Adachi

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Ozzie Serle

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Ozzie Serle

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Tyson Keanini

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tyson Keanini,

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Mark Agonoy

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Mark Agonoy

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Rosa Rojas

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rosa Rojas.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Lawrence Luben

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lawrence Luben

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:53 AM

### Name

Kaimiloa Kaina-Allen

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

fund these projects.

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaimiloa Kaina-Allen

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### Name

Zabree Neizman

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

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Thank you for your consideration,

Zabree Neizman

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:17 AM

### **Name**

Derek Higashi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Although am not an alumnus of the various learning centers, I have been fortunate to be active with the Castle Performing Arts Center and the Farrington Performing Arts Center. I am a band/orchestra person so I was not exposed to the theater world till after I graduated. My first experience was at CPAC, which was then under the direction of Mr. Ron Bright. I was amazed at the culture that he instilled in his group. Many of his students have gone on to roles in Broadway, and many are now giving back as teachers themselves.

The learning centers gives the students the chance to learn something that would be out of the comfort zone of most people. I have seen younger students who were so afraid of being on stage to them blossoming to be star performers. All while learning great values.

I am opposed to the proposed cuts to the funding for the various performing arts centers. Now days, there seems to be more interest in funding athletics, but these learning centers help the kids who aren't athletic or can't be a part of an athletic team. I was fortunate to be a part of my schools band and orchestra program which helped me be the adult I am today.

The students in the learning centers gain valuable knowledge on perfecting their craft, but also gain more important lessons on life, and making life long friends.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:05 AM

### **Name**

Jacob Villa-Abiva

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent decision to cut funding for the Learning Centers, including the Castle Performing Arts Center, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center, and Central Theatre Arts. As we prepare for the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, it is imperative that we advocate for the reinstatement of funding for these vital programs.

The performing arts play a crucial role in the development of children, teens, and young adults. Engaging in the arts fosters creativity, builds confidence, and enhances critical thinking skills. Studies have shown that students involved in performing arts programs score higher on standardized tests, have improved academic performance, and exhibit better attendance records.

Moreover, these programs provide essential resources and opportunities for low-income families, allowing children from underserved communities to access artistic expression and cultural education. In a state as diverse as Hawai'i, the preservation of cultural arts is vital for nurturing identity and community pride. Removing funding from these programs disproportionately impacts those who rely on them for personal and artistic growth, thus widening the gap in equal access to education and resources for all.

As a community, it is our responsibility to advocate for those in need. Cutting funding for the performing arts not only restricts opportunities for students to express themselves but also undermines the cultural state of Hawai'i. By ensuring that funding for the Learning Centers is reinstated, we can provide equitable access to the arts for all students, enriching their lives and the community as a whole.

I urge the Board of Education to reconsider the decision to cut funding for these programs. Let us work together to ensure that all students in Hawai'i have the opportunity to thrive through the performing arts.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Warm regards,  
Jacob Kekoa Villa-Abiva

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:05 AM

### **Name**

Rob Duval

### **Organization**

Manoa Valley Theatre

### **Position/Title**

Artistic Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, my name is Rob Duval and I'm the Artistic Director at Manoa Valley Theatre. I'm writing to urge you to oppose the current budget proposal that cuts funding to Hawaii Department of Education Learning Centers. As an arts organization, Manoa Valley Theatre often relies on students in the DOE to assume technical theatre positions for our productions. We've been fortunate to work with teachers from various learning centers who educate their students in these areas, preparing students for current and future paid positions at Manoa Valley Theatre and other arts organizations in Hawaii. Prior to my current position, I spent twenty-five years teaching theatre to middle and high school students. For sixteen years at 'Iolani School, my students thrived because the school had the faculty, funds, and resources to provide excellent arts education programs and opportunities to create meaningful entertainment for thousands of audience members. Students who did not "fit" anywhere else on campus found a home in theatre and the arts, where they were both accepted and valued. I saw firsthand how creative arts changes students' lives. As an arts administrator now, I've worked with faculty and students at Kaimuki High School and Mililani High School. I've also supported theatrical productions at Castle High School. Faculty members go above and beyond their normal, daily hours to ensure every student is receiving a quality education and that their work is shared with the community. They work daily until 6 or 7pm and often meet on Saturdays. Students feel a sense of accomplishment and pride when their work is appreciated by audience members. And faculty members feel grateful to make a difference in the lives of adolescents. It's a win win for everyone involved. Please do not take these opportunities away from them. Our students deserve more, not less.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:33 AM

### **Name**

Kukalia Pililaau

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The public school learning centers are amazing opportunities for students to practice hands on work based learning skills. Not even being in the class, I've still had the opportunity to take part not only in learning about aquaculture, but actually seeing and practicing various processes involving species such as ogo, shrimp, and tilapia. The proposal to get rid of the funding for these types of learning centers is not a good change for the community and should be stopped. The type of hands on learning we get from a learning center is much more effective for us students than normal class work.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:18 AM

### **Name**

Sue Ann Masuyama

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose this bill because it does not provide funding for the PALC (Performing Arts Learning Center) and TLC (Technology Learning Center) after-school programs. I truly hope we can value this education for our students. They are both popular programs and will greatly help students in shaping their future careers. Mahalo.



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:41 AM

### Name

Karlee Skaggs

### Organization

U.S Army

### Position/Title

Public Affairs Officer/First Lieutenant

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I graduated from high school in Northern Virginia, just outside the District of Columbia, home to some of the best public schools in the nation. One of the first things a peer said to me upon my arrival as a high school junior, a transfer student from Mililani High School, was "You are really going to struggle here after attending school in Hawai'i."

I am proud to say this could not have been farther from the truth, and I attribute so much of that academic, social, emotional and technical success to the things I learned while enrolled at Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA), one of HIDOE's Learning Centers for Performing Arts. Because of the things I learned at CTAA, I became a skilled musician and performer, which became the entire basis of my confidence, and in turn, my sense of self. These abilities segued into my college education and funding, and my profession. The girl who learned to stand and speak with confidence at CTAA years ago does so today in front of generals.

To euthanize Learning Centers in Hawai'i is to remove the potential for an entire dimension of learning from students. The regular school day cannot emulate the things that make a learning center a highly beneficial environment for students. Because they provide a safe environment in which to implement more enriching curriculum than a single class period, Learning Centers attract highly skilled, specialized educators that care deeply about their craft. The learning center takes a unique, hands-on approach to mastery, choosing to de-emphasize the numerical grade and elevate practicum. Longer class periods foster true proficiency and enhance interpersonal abilities that, in absence, can devastate adolescent mental health. It has never been more important to maintain quality unconventional learning environments than in 2024, amidst the most significant adolescent mental health crisis the world has ever seen. Learning Centers are places anxious, attention-deficit and depressed children learn to thrive.

In his 2024 book, 'The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness,' Jonathan Haidt says "Experience, not information, is the key to emotional development." Learning Centers are HIDOE's greatest experiential tool; nowhere else do we see this level of devoted time and space for culinary, agricultural, theatrical, linguistic practicum and more. Nowhere else are we putting cameras, power drills, microphones in the hands of students who maybe would never discover their passions otherwise.

The Learning Center concept elevates HIDOE, and it brings passion, proficiency and mental health with it; it is something Hawai'i does better than many other public schools districts in the country. Please consider saving these spaces for Hawai'i's youth.

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:17 AM

### **Name**

Yosef Ben Gershom

### **Organization**

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii Space Flight Laboratory

### **Position/Title**

Operations Manager

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed elimination of funding for Learning Centers across Hawai'i. These centers play a critical and irreplaceable role in our state's STEM education pipeline, offering students invaluable opportunities that foster their academic growth and future career success, especially within STEM fields.

Learning Centers serve as beneficial educational hubs, equipping students with hands-on experiences and foundational skills that better prepare them for higher education and the workforce. Over my years at the Hawai'i Space Flight Laboratory and working with the Hawai'i Space Grant Consortium at UH Mānoa, I've seen firsthand the significant impact these programs have on students. For example, many students involved in Learning Centers, particularly through robotics teams, enter college with skills like teamwork, communication, and time management, which their peers often only begin developing at that stage.

The educators who manage these Learning Centers demonstrate their dedication to their students' success, and their efforts provide students with access to experiences that would otherwise be unattainable. These activities are not just extracurricular; they are essential components of a well-rounded education that bridges classroom knowledge with real-world applications. In a time when STEM skills are critical to Hawai'i's economic future and our ability to participate in global technological advancements, cutting funding for these Learning Centers is counterproductive. These programs are a strategic investment in Hawai'i's future workforce and our local economy.

I urge you to reconsider this proposed budget cut and continue to fund Learning Centers statewide. Supporting these programs is a direct investment in the potential of Hawai'i's youth, our educational system, and our shared future.

Mahalo,  
Yosef

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:57 AM

### Name

Kaylee Neizman

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 4 Large Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaylee Neizman

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Valentino De Ocampo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

It has come to my attention that you folks wanna eliminate learning centers and fundings for it in schools and i strongly disagree with you folks doing so. These learning centers help kids decide what they are interested in doing for a career after graduating and provide a foot in the door for them. They also offer and give valuable experience in fields of work that these kids want to pursue after graduation and more. so eliminating these learning centers and their funding will dramatically restrict the potential of what these kids can do for their future and possibly others.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:28 AM

### Name

Cleonice Hamm

### Organization

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear committee chair and members of whom this project may concern,  
My name is Cleonice Hamm, and I am currently a full-time student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As a 2024 graduate of Castle High School, I requested a geographical exemption to enroll outside of my district purely for the Performing Arts Learning Center program. I can speak for myself and countless others that showcased a desire to attend outside of their geographical district in order to receive the education that the Learning Center could provide. Growing up in Kane'ohe, attending King Intermediate and Kane'ohe Elementary School, my schools were always involved with CPAC as feeder schools for the Performing Arts Program. My upbringing was centered mostly around my passion for theater, and I would not find myself in the same position today if the program had not been funded thus far. Speaking from personal experience due to my involvement in multiple Performing Arts Learning Centers (Castle and Kaimuki High School), I can say with one-hundred percent certainty that I will utilize skills learned in those programs in the rest of my life. Educators in these locations fostered students to build lifelong team-working skills, taught tactile skills such as stage construction, and provided a space that students could explore their talents. My experience is limited to only what I have learned in the performing arts programs, but I know other Learning Centers concerning STEM and Agriculture industries serve the same purpose: to fuel the children of these islands with the knowledge they choose and deserve. My position is strongly opposed to this bill because I believe our DOE students significantly benefit from the education they can provide. Current and younger generations deserve the opportunity to receive public education in the passions they discover at a young age, and these opportunities can pave the way for their life's trajectory. Not only do the Learning Centers provide specific brands of education, but they allow students to build a sense of community and create social networks at a young age. Without the funds to support these systems, how else will students employ themselves in the branches of education they find fondness for? If educators value fostering the best possible next generation of leaders and learners, cutting funds from the Learning Centers will significantly hinder this prospect. As a student apart of the Learning Center legacy, I strongly urge you to consider the outcome of future generations and how the passing of this project could detrimentally impact the DOE subsystems. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:57 AM

### **Name**

Wendy Hamane

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

DOE Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Special programs, such as the Technology Learning Center and Performing Arts Learning Center, provide exceptional opportunities for students to learn and to excel in a way that is not possible in a regular classroom setting. Many Hawaii graduates who have contributed significantly to the science & technology and performing arts fields have participated in these programs. Co-curricular activities transform ordinary classroom experiences into extraordinary learning experiences. Without co-curricular programs, students may not have access to venues that allow them to perform on a grand scale, whether it is through robotics competitions, stage plays, or athletics. Please reconsider.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:07 AM

### **Name**

Pritika Prakash

### **Organization**

KHIS

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of funding for the Kahuku High and Intermediate School (KHIS) Music and Health Learning Centers. The potential loss of this funding would be a significant setback for students, families, and the entire North Shore community, which has benefitted from these programs for decades.

The KHIS Learning Centers in Music and Health have offered students unique opportunities to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Through these programs, students gain more than just an education; they develop resilience, teamwork, discipline, and a sense of pride in their school and community. The Music Learning Center, in particular, has built a legacy of excellence in the Band and Choir programs, providing students with essential skills and experiences that prepare them for the future. For many alumni, these programs have been pivotal, shaping their life trajectories, building lifelong friendships, and instilling values of commitment and dedication.

As we face unprecedented challenges in education, now is the time to support these programs that nurture not only academic but also personal growth. Continued funding for the Learning Centers enables KHIS to maintain the specialized resources, skilled faculty, and high-quality experiences that have become a hallmark of these programs. Eliminating this funding would strip the community of a vital resource that has served generations.

Please help us preserve the distinction and funding that the KHIS Music and Health Learning Centers have worked so hard to achieve. I urge the Hawaii Department of Education and Budget Committee to prioritize these programs and invest in the future of our students and community.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,  
Pritika Purcell

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:18 AM

### Name

apollo harris

### Organization

UH Hilo Performing Arts Center

### Position/Title

Technical Director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

My name is Apollo Harris, and I am writing to oppose the budget cuts to Hawaii Learning Centers and the performing arts programs they enable across the state.

Performing arts programs do more than teach about singing and dancing. Performing arts is the closest thing to real world jobs that young people can get. Let me explain: Putting on performances teach young students about real deadlines and real consequences. Performances have to happen whether you're ready or not. If young performers don't have to skills or put in the effort to practice their lines and hone their performance, they will learn from one bad show just how important practicing is.

I can tell you this because that's exactly how I learned. My first performance was involved a young man being interviewed by a father to see if he was good enough to get a date with the daughter. My co-performer and I were underprepared, went out there, fumbled our lines, got lost during the performance and wound up sitting in silence for a minute and a half. We just stared at each other with no clue how to find the thread of the conversation. The playwright was there to see us perform his piece and he walked out midway. The piece was only 15 minutes long. I'll never ever forget the shame of bombing on stage. I learned the importance of preparation, not just in performance, but in all of life's endeavors.

School is like a playground. Failure during school has no immediate consequences. Deadlines in school barely matter. Learning centers and the performing arts have the unique ability to expose young students to real world conditions and prepare them for reality in ways that school lacks. The funding spent on these learning centers is worth so much more than the same amount spent elsewhere.

Thank you for your time.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:07 AM

### **Name**

Sarah Nupen

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am devastated to hear about the removal of funding from learning centers such as CTAA and PACK. These centers were vital to my development as a student and lessons I have learned at these centers have carried into my professional roles today as an educator and data analyst. Students develop confidence, social emotional skills, confidence, and other life skills in these centers; opportunity for these skills to develop in person amongst peers is increasingly rare as mobile technology is further integrated in student's lives. Please consider providing funding for these havens for the arts and student growth.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:17 AM

### **Name**

Jessa Patrick

### **Organization**

PACK and CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Department of Education's operating budget request for the upcoming fiscal biennium, specifically regarding the proposed reductions in funding for musical theatre programs.

Musical theatre is not merely an extracurricular activity; it is a vital component of a well-rounded education that fosters creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. These programs provide students with unique opportunities to express themselves, develop confidence, and engage with the arts in a meaningful way. The impact of musical theatre extends far beyond the stage; it cultivates essential life skills such as discipline, collaboration, and public speaking, which are invaluable in today's workforce.

Reducing funding for these programs threatens not only the arts but also the holistic development of students like me. Many kids find their passion and sense of belonging within these artistic communities. The benefits of participation in musical theatre—enhanced social skills, improved academic performance, and increased mental health—are well-documented.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and recognize the importance of maintaining funding for musical theatre. Investing in the arts is an investment in our future and in the cultural fabric of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I hope you will advocate for the preservation of funding for musical theatre programs.

Sincerely,

Jessa Patrick

Friend of a student in Performing Arts Center of Kapolei and Central Theater Arts Academy

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:11 AM

### Name

Brialyn Onodera

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed elimination of funding for Learning Centers across Hawai'i. As both an engineer and a product of these vital educational programs, I can personally attest to their transformative impact on our keiki and our islands' future. The timing of these proposed cuts could not be more concerning. In the wake of COVID-19, our students are still working to overcome significant learning gaps, particularly in STEM subjects. The Learning Centers help to provide intensive, hands-on support needed to address these challenges and prepare our youth for tomorrow's opportunities.

I've witnessed firsthand how these centers create dynamic learning environments that textbooks alone cannot replicate. Through programs like robotics competitions, students don't just learn STEM concepts - they apply them in real-world scenarios that spark genuine excitement and curiosity. These centers are particularly valuable because they:

- Provide hands-on learning experiences that make abstract concepts tangible
- Foster teamwork and problem-solving skills essential for future careers
- Create supportive communities where students can explore their interests with like-minded peers
- Offer opportunities that many students couldn't access otherwise

As we look to diversify Hawai'i's economy beyond tourism, we must invest in developing local talent in high-growth fields. Learning Centers are crucial incubators for the next generation of engineers, scientists, and innovators our islands need. By cutting their funding, we risk limiting our children's opportunities and our state's economic future. I urge you to preserve funding for these essential programs. The cost of maintaining them pales in comparison to the long-term cost of losing them.

Mahalo for your consideration

Brialyn

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 AM

### Name

Athena Keehu

### Organization

Punahou School

### Position/Title

Parent & Community Supporter

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to strongly object to the proposed cuts to Learning Center funding within the DOE operating budget. These Learning Centers, including the CTAA at Mililani High School, Castle High School, KHSPAC, and Nanakuli PAC, play an essential role in nurturing creativity, self-expression, and leadership among our students.

The performing arts are not just extracurricular activities—they are vital spaces where students find a sense of belonging, develop lifelong skills like collaboration and communication, and discover talents that may shape their futures. Removing funding jeopardizes these programs that have empowered students for years, including many who go on to excel academically and professionally because of the opportunities provided by the Learning Centers.

The arts help foster emotional well-being, cultural identity, and social skills—qualities crucial in today's world. I urge you to reconsider these cuts and preserve funding that allows Hawaii's youth to thrive.

Thank you for your time and for supporting the future of our keiki through continued investment in these invaluable programs.

Mahalo,  
Athena

Organization: Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center, Mililani Science Learning Center  
Agenda Item Number: [VII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027]  
Position: Oppose  
Testimony Type: Written

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To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Alecander Paul, and I'm a first-year graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they were to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. Without this program, I never would have pursued a B.S. degree in physics and now a PhD in physics.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alecander Paul  
alecanderpaul@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:11 AM

### **Name**

Claire Gearen

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Educator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Claire Gearen, and I am a career public school teacher with 25 years experience in the classroom. Although I attended private school as a child and both of my parents were private school teachers, I entered public school teaching in order to provide a public service and in order to help shape a more equitable Hawaii. I strongly oppose redirecting funds away from Learning Centers.

Just as private schools are investing in new learning commons (for example, Punahou School's Mary Kawena Pukui Commons), the board is proposing cutting such centers across all schools. This is misguided and disappointing.

Learning Centers provide places of belonging for students where they can shape identities that help them invest in the skills to succeed post K-12 education. My calabash nephew was raised by a single mom and Science Olympiad made him excited about STEM learning. He began reading books about chemistry on his own time in middle school, and took the AP chemistry test as a junior in high school even though his school didn't offer the course. He plans to be a chemist or a teacher of chemistry and would like to live in Hawaii as an adult.

This is just one of many stories about how Learning Centers and Science Olympiad shape students in positive ways.

I urge you to invest in Learning Centers and ensure all public school students have access to them.

Mahalo for your time,  
Claire Gearen



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:11 AM

### Name

Mariam Jaffar

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Mariam Jaffar, and I'm currently a Grade 9 student at Mililani High School. I am writing to share my concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe would seriously harm our education. I'm reaching out on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center, as these funding cuts would directly affect the programs we value and rely on. I strongly oppose the reduction in funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770), which is part of the department's budget realignment.

As someone who has greatly benefited from the Learning Centers, I can't emphasize enough how essential they are to my education. These programs, along with those at other schools in Hawaii, have been around since the 1990s, giving countless students unique learning experiences outside the regular classroom. The Learning Centers provide not only academic learning but also specialized instruction, hands-on projects, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a range of college and career opportunities.

I have personally benefited from the robotics program during my 3 years at Mililani Middle School and now at Mililani High School. Since joining the program, my interest in science and math has grown so much. I've learned to work with circuits, code, and design small robots. Our teams have participated in state and national competitions and have seen a continuous improvement in our skills over the years. I ended my Middle School robotics program being part of the team that won the state championship for First Lego League competition. Being part of the program has also helped me develop critical thinking skills and problem solving skills which have made me a better student overall. This hands-on experience has shown me how STEM skills apply in real-world situations, sparking not only my interest in a possible career as an engineer or programmer but also for all my teammates who want to pursue a career in the STEM fields..

Our High School robotics team also volunteers to support science and robotics programs in elementary schools in our district and I can see the impact being part of these programs is having on the younger students.

If these funding cuts are implemented, we risk losing an essential resource that has helped countless students achieve their potential and pursue their dreams. Losing the Learning Centers would mean far fewer opportunities for students at our schools to grow, explore creativity, and develop personally.

11/01/2024

I strongly urge you to reconsider these cuts. Investing in our education and future is vital for our success in the future. Please help keep the Learning Centers a source of hope and support for all students.

Regards,  
Mariam Jaffar  
Student (Mililani High School)

the lychee and me (Jiro's Poem)

the soft pitter patter on the lychee tree  
a gentle breeze, soft as a breath  
drops gather, then slip, then fall  
and in their descent I feel it all

the leaves bow down, burdened by sorrow  
as if they, too have known goodbye  
in the quiet, nature holds my ache  
her branches bend but do not break

I sit with grief, a heavy weight  
each drop a tear, each tear a grace  
drops gather, then slip, then fall  
and in their descent I feel it all

October 30, 2024

The Honorable Roy M. Takumi, Chairperson, and Members of the Board  
State of Hawaii Board of Education

RE: Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027

Dear Chairperson Takumi and Board Members,

I am writing to oppose any cuts to funding for DOE Learning Centers, especially the Castle Performing Arts Center (CPAC), in the proposed biennium budget for FY 2025-2027.

Superintendent Hayashi states in his transmittal of the proposal that the purpose of this budget proposal is “Preparing our students to be globally competitive and locally committed with recognition of the lingering pandemic impacts on students’ attendance, academic achievement and social and emotional well-being.”

Cutting funding and positions for CPAC would directly and negatively impact students’ attendance, academic achievement and social and emotional well-being.

I am an 80-year old person, born and raised in post-WWII Hawaii, graduated from Punahou High School and the University of California at Berkeley. I am committed to the quality and performance of Hawaii’s statewide public school system and have played an active voluntary role. My wife and I both support public schools and sent our 3-children through those in Kaneohe with all three graduating from Castle High School and obtaining advanced college degrees. I was a member and chairperson of the Windward District School Advisory Council in the 1990’s and am familiar with many of the schools and programs, including current programs.

Two of my daughters and one of my granddaughters participated in CPAC during their years at Castle. We were fortunate to have participated in and supported the program with Ron Bright and his successor, Ms Karen Meyer. We have seen so many of the students going through CPAC positively affected in their attendance, academic achievement and social and emotional well-being.

We all know of the many alumni of CPAC who have gone on to star on Broadway and other performing arts programs. We also know of the many alumni who have gone on to contribute to Hawaii in professional, cultural, and vocational endeavors.

I’ll just tell you of one in particular – my granddaughter who graduated last year and now is attending the University of Hawaii, Windward Campus. She dealt with the challenges of ADHD issues since her pre-school days. Because she was not succeeding in a

private elementary school in Kailua, my daughter moved her to Kaneohe Elementary School where she began learning. She got by with passing grades but it was not until she was at Castle High School and participating in CPAC and the Polynesian Music classes that she began to blossom. Despite her learning difficulties, she graduated as an honor student and is a responsible, caring, contributing member of our community.

Attached is a poem that my granddaughter wrote just 2-days ago, upon the passing of a 10-year-old dog who was part of our family. My granddaughter never took a class in poetry, but the lessons she learned at Castle High School and CPAC have impacted her positively in being able to create the beautiful words and feelings that communicate her grief and her love.

Please retain funding for CPAC and other learning centers, so our young people have the opportunity to learn, understand and communicate in a way that empowers all of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Clyde B. Morita

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 AM

### **Name**

Zoe Philippou

### **Organization**

Punahou School

### **Position/Title**

Administrator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

I stand before you today to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to our Learning Centers. While I understand the need for the Department to realign resources and make strategic decisions to achieve its goals, I urge you to reconsider the impact these cuts will have on our students, educators, and the broader community.

Learning Centers play a crucial role in supporting educational equity and fostering a love of learning. They provide vital services such as tutoring, mentoring, and specialized programs that cater to diverse student needs. These centers are often the first line of support for students who may struggle in traditional classroom settings, offering personalized assistance that can significantly enhance their academic performance and overall well-being.

Our Learning Centers serve students from various backgrounds, including those with learning disabilities, language barriers, and socio-economic challenges. Cutting funding to these centers would disproportionately affect the most vulnerable among us, further widening the achievement gap. Eliminating these resources would diminish the holistic education that our students deserve.

Additionally, Learning Centers are more than just academic hubs; they are community pillars that foster collaboration between schools, families, and local organizations. They offer parents a space to engage in their children's education and provide resources that empower families. Budget cuts would disrupt this vital connection, weakening our community.

Research consistently shows that students who utilize Learning Center resources demonstrate improved academic performance, higher graduation rates, and increased college readiness. The investment in these centers is an investment in our future leaders and citizens. Reducing funding now would ultimately lead to greater costs in remedial education and support down the line.

In conclusion, while I appreciate the Department's efforts to realign resources to meet strategic priorities, I implore you to recognize the irreplaceable value of Learning Centers. These facilities are essential to achieving our collective goal of providing a high-quality education for all students. Let us not sacrifice the future of our children for short-term budgetary adjustments.

11/01/2024

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to prioritize the needs of our students and communities by preserving funding for Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:29 AM

### **Name**

Erica Gideon

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Its programs like these that truly teach our Keiki life lessons and life skills, they allow our keiki to feel like they belong, inspires them to make a difference in the world and gives them the fundamental outlook they need to survive in life!

That's exactly what the Waianae Marine Science Learning Center did for me!

I learned about the stock exchange, how to run a business, self sustainability, how to navigate, how to be active in my community, the ways of our ancestors and so much more!

Please continue to fund these programs! Our children need these programs! Hands on interactive programs are extremely important to our Keiki!



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:29 AM

### **Name**

Erin Watson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I have watched Hawaii thrive over the last fifteen years with STEM programs and specifically Robotics. Removing this funding is an embarrassment. How do we expect our students to succeed if we aren't giving them the skills to be in the real world? Vocational training and programs that encourage our students to learn a trade and interact with technology in a meaningful way are vital to their future success. Please don't take these opportunities away from our children. I strongly oppose this budget proposition.

Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:07 AM

### **Name**

Melinda Hamm

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern: Regarding the DOE decision to cut all funding from Learning Centers in next year's budget.

Your decision to cut funding on learning centers affects not only this generation but future generations who deserve the benefits these branches of education ensure.

Both of my granddaughters have been in Castle Performing Arts Center for years. I can not overstate the positive impact this organization has had on their growth and development while they were young and moldable. They have learned consideration for others, commitment to themselves and others. They have learned how to work hard with diverse groups of people, the reward being a job well done and solid friendships. I love the joy I see in their lives as they realize their full potential of heretofore unexplored talents. They have each developed a can do attitude along with rich relationships with leaders and new friends. Their experiences at Castle have taught them how to be resourceful and creatively find solutions. Because of Learning Centers like Castle they, and fellow students have become and will become a better all-around people.

I, therefore, urge you to use wisdom and reconsider defunding these educational and foundational programs with far reaching outcomes and consequence.

Mahalo, Melinda Hamm

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 AM

### **Name**

Nancy Usher

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

When my son was 14, he participated in the after school supplementary science electronics program at Waiakea High School as well as took his first math class across the street at UH Hilo. These science enrichment programs are very important for our students. My son benefited from this program and helped him to succeed in getting his math and computer science double major at UH Hilo at the age of 19. He now works at on of the telescopes on our island. Having quality science enrichment programs available at our high schools is very important to further interest in science careers here in Hawaii.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:29 AM

### **Name**

Tiare Toetuu-aipa

### **Organization**

Marine Science Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, My name is Tiare Toetuu-aipa Graduate of WHS 2018. I am a PROUD alumni student that went through the Marine Science Learning Center at Waianae HS. This program has been an AWESOME experience and key factor to my aspirations for continued higher education. This program offered lots of awareness to a marine ecosystem as well as sustainability for the west coast. I've learned so much while being in this class that I don't think I would've learned if I didn't go through this class. Much of what I learned I still live by it till this day and plan to forever. But not only have I gained great education through this program, I have gained extended friends that feel like family. The staff for MSLC has been very supportive and have a calling to support youth at WHS. They have a strong support for our youth to be great leaders in our schools and community. They are always trying to lift up and help where they can and I believe they are doing great work. MSLC should continue and have access to resources so that they can be the foundation for growing leaders!

Heavenlee Hōkūnani Laka Botelho-Sarcedo

October 30th, 2024

To HODOE

## My Testimony Against Learning Center Funding Cut

Hello, my name is Heavenlee Hokunani Laka Botelho-Sarcedo. I am a junior in high school. I attended Kaimuki High School for my freshman and sophomore years and then transferred to Farrington High School for my remaining years. I am testifying against the state cutting the budget for Learning Centers throughout Hawai'i. Although I speak for every education facility whose funding is being cut, I will mainly talk about performing arts learning centers and their impact on my life and the students and parents around me.

Since I was young, my mom took me to plays and musicals at various schools, including Kaimuki. The play that I watched there was Grease. From there grew my love for performing arts, acting, and singing. I aspired to be the bright star on the stage, hearing the applause roar after every number. Little did I know I'd end up working with the man who played Kenickie years later in my first production. Back then, the theater was just bright lights, and fairytales came to life. I didn't realize how deeply connected I'd be to the art as I grew up, and I couldn't imagine a reality where little me couldn't live up to her full potential because of budget cuts.

Around three years ago, I decided to transfer to Kaimuki from Anuenue because Anuenue didn't have the electives I wanted to take to pursue the careers I desired, one of them being performing arts and acting, but Kaimuki had that and they're actually known for their performing arts learning center and the amazing productions they've put on throughout the years. My dad is a Kaimuki graduate and encouraged this, as did my mother because they both knew my passion and drive to perform on stage.

Following up on my transfer to Kaimuki, one of my electives was chorus, and there I met a fantastic vocal director from Diamond Head Theater who has helped me expand my vocal range and abilities in numerous ways. As I met up with her after school to prep for my Footloose audition, I met a senior who was also preparing for his audition. He is now one of my best friends, and we have been in two shows together, thanks to KHSPAC. He has also been able to further his career in community theater and has been able to meet various Hollywood actors through this.

During my Footloose audition, I met the stage manager who praised my performance and my techniques in remembering lines. Her opinions about my performance has boosted confidence since. Through her, I've seen shows that I can barely afford living on this island, one of them being Hamilton when the Broadway tour brought them to Hawai'i.

And I can't forget the man who has had the most significant impact on my acting career thus far, our talented and passionate director and choreographer, and the man I watched play Kenickie all those years ago. It was a full circle moment for me, a moment that wouldn't have been made possible if it weren't for learning centers helping my director succeed back in high school to me being able to meet him and him casting me in my first role in my first show.

Being part of this KHSPAC production has allowed me to meet many local actors who have helped me improve my craft and given me hope for my future as a performer. I have also been able to meet other students who have the same dreams and aspirations as I do, building a community of friends who understand my passion for the art of performing and self-expression through the arts, one of them being my other best friend, who graduated from Kaimuki High School last year and is now starring in his first production outside of high school at Windward Community College. I wouldn't have met him if it weren't for theater, and now I see his face on posters all over the island and on social media which inspires me to continue performing.

Theater doesn't just improve your ability to act or perform; it builds a community that can't always be found in many places naturally. I've passed these students in school, but I've only been able to connect with them through auditioning for performing arts learning center productions.

Since then, I have been in one other KHSPAC production, which was just a repeat of all the fantastic opportunities I received the first time and increased my community of people who understand my passion. Now, I am a student at Farrington High School, and not only do I need to worry about grades, but I also need to worry about the future of my career before it's even started.

I'm looking out for my future and the future of young aspiring performers following in my footsteps. I am privileged to have the opportunities I have been blessed with, and the last thing I'd want is for the little actors behind me to receive less than I've received.

Right now, I see kids around the island who have found a sense of passion and inspiration to step on stage someday, dreaming of saying their first line after seeing their first musical. And in the future, I see those same kids doing introductions at their first rehearsal and not realizing that the friends they made were the same people they walked past the other day. I see them bonding over a musical they saw when they were kids and how it inspired them to pursue the same, not realizing they were both there that night, unaware of each other till now. And I see that someday, that could be my son or daughter, belting out notes just like I did in high school. All of this, all I speak of, has only been made possible with the help of performing arts learning centers, and I imagine it's the same for other learning centers.

I see a future that I hope my kids and other young students can see for themselves someday. The HIDOE says they care about the future of its citizens, so I don't know why diminishing and decreasing the ability to express the passion of the people is even a thought. If you see a bright future for students across Hawai'i, please reconsider the cut in funding for learning centers.

Thank you,

Heavenlee Hokunani Laka Botelho-Sarcedo

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 AM

### Name

Rebecca Foley

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Hello Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions regarding reduction in funding for Learning Centers. I am in opposition of cutting the funding for these programs because they are a significant investment into our communities. Learning Centers provide valuable education to students. They encourage students to explore specialized interests together. These programs give students access to career paths and opportunities that they would not otherwise have access to.

My student has been involved in Nanakuli High & Intermediate Performing Arts Center for the last year. He has benefited immensely from this program. He's developed friendships and bonds with other students from all over the Leeward side of Oahu. My child has developed confidence, leadership and communication skills. He has a greater sense of responsibility and is a better student as a result of his involvement with NPAC. This program has given him insight into career opportunities that he can pursue after High School. Before enrolling in NPAC, he was undecided about attending college. Now he is looking at attending a college that offers a Performing Arts program and pursuing a career in that field.

These programs have lasting impact on the communities in which they exist. Nanakuli High & Intermediate Performing Arts Center has a positive reputation in the community at large. It allows folks to see the school and Nanakuli in a positive light, when there is often a lot of negative attention directed at Nanakuli. NPAC creates a space for people in the community to gather and work towards common goals. This is highly valuable to our society as a whole, as civic engagement has been in drastic decline.

Cutting the funding for these programs would have significant and lasting negative impact on our students and our communities. I hope that you will take this information into consideration when finalizing the budget. Please continue to invest into these programs. You'll be investing in the future of our students and our communities.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider my thoughts on this matter.

Regards,  
Rebecca Foley  
Nanakuli





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Charlie de Coligny

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:57 AM

### **Name**

Vanessa Carlson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

At late notice, stakeholders were made aware of the proposed DOE operating request for 2025-2027 which would defund a critical program at Waiakea High School. The Technology Learning Center is a crucial part of the large success that Waiakea High students robotics team has had, and the students there share their experience and knowledge with many younger students. Programs like the Technology Learning Center should be a part of every campus. By defunding one, you ensure that future generations do not have the same access to STEM programs unless they pay for them themselves, reinforcing the belief that public school is just babysitting and that a student's success is dependent on their family's foundation in education and economic standing. By defunding this program (and others) you ensure that our more disparate populations who qualify for Title I free/reduced meals, will not be able to participate in extra curricular programs like robotics.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:20 PM

### **Name**

Bella Guiney

### **Organization**

Mililani theatre arts program CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

As a former student of the performing/theatre arts program in Mililani High School, the class and program is beneficial. Since my graduation, I have been steadily employed in the theatre industry because of the connections I was able to make through my Play Prod classes. I oppose the idea of cutting funds from these programs.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:55 AM

### **Name**

Peri Moore

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Hilo area, needs more STEM students. UH-Hilo is expanding its ability to teach and offer STEM degrees and the local schools need to be active in getting students ready to transfer to UH-Hilo or other higher learning institutions

It is important for the State of Hawaii to maintain a strong program to encourage students to take STEM related topics. Many students won't otherwise get exposure to the kinds of future jobs and employees this state will need to provide incomes to allow local students to grow up here and raise a family.

The evidence of the success of the Technology Learning Center includes:

The team has been able to travel all over the United States for First Robotics Competition regionals, placing as semi-finalist or winners in multiple competitions over the span of 21 years

Some of our previous students are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA, launched a rocket, and one worked on a microsatellite.

With the astronomy, computer science, and pre-engineering capabilities at our local university. We need more funding for STEM activities not less.

### Template for Parent/Stakeholder Testimony

Testimony Submission Link:

<https://boe.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony/submit-testimony-october-31-2024-general-business-meeting/>

#Organization: Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

#Agenda Item Number: [VII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027]

#Position: Oppose

#Testimony Type: Written

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To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Sheila Yuasa, and I am the parent of two 12th students at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

One of my sons participated in the robotics program. And I am also a MHS teacher who has seen numerous students find their voice and confidence through the Theater programs. All of these programs allow students to explore possible careers as well and offer so many opportunities that we cannot offer just in the classroom.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sheila Yuasa

Sheila.yuasa@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:32 PM

### **Name**

Laura Manuel

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

It has come to my attention that operating costs for the learning centers will be cut and eventually taken out of the budget.

These funds are vital to students as they are used for programs that challenge them and use their creative abilities along with incorporating what they have learn during the regular school hours.

Most learning centers are after school hours but they provide an opportunity for students to hone their skills and to develop their self esteem. Without these outlets students would be engaging in activities that may not develop them and they will not be in a safe haven place rather than out in the streets.

Over the years I have seen many students attending Nanakuli Learning center exceed in the projects they were involved in to achieving great grades and going off to college, military, performing arts and/or trade.

Cutting these funds will impose hardship for the centers to operate and could eventually close the program. Plus reconsider this budget cut because developing a student's character and motivating them to better themselves is priceless and needs everyone's support to continue on.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Laura Manuel



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jazmine Rei Constantino





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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, Catelyn Bayne



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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Yiramor Chip-Hernandez



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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kanale Dela Cruz



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Mahalo for your time and consideration. Angelica



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Paul Leong





STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Jeremyah Toilolo



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*Darious Mariakis*



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Kirie Bowman



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Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Michael Harris

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:45 PM

### **Name**

Julia Gregory

### **Organization**

Oahu Resident

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am submitted testimony in support of the learning centers - KHSPAC including but not limited to Castle Performing Arts Center, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center and Central Theater Arts.

These programs provide a vital to promoting the students participation in the arts. I have personally witnessed the positive impact is has on my loved ones, elementary, intermediate and high school students. These students have developed incredible skillsets and relationships that have added value to their lived, education, and aspirations.

As result of participating in CPAC performances I have watched these students grow confident in their communication, mature and take on responsibilities willingly, and bring about immense feelings of pride and admiration from their friends and family.

Please do not cut or eliminate the funding for these programs.





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

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I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

*Jazzahlei Satele*



STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School



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Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities. The world is mainly digital at this point in time, and that will increase throughout time. That would take away many ways for people to learn, and options could end for students in schools when it comes to classes.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sophia Meinert



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Mahalo for your time and consideration. The world is mainly digital at this point in time, and that will increase throughout time. That would take away many ways for people to learn, and options could end for students in schools when it comes to classes.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jazmine Rei Constantino



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

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The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, Catelyn Bayne

# Henry J. Kaiser High School

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511 Lunalilo Home Rd.  
Honolulu, HI 96825  
(808)2039449 / (808)8920093  
yvaiata@gmail.com/tezkapfer@gmail.com

October 30, 2024

Dear Mr. Josh Green,

Aloha! We are Kaiser high school seniors, Vaiata Yarbrough and Tezeru Kapfer, who are enrolled in IB Film. Recently we heard news of a potential cut in funding for the learning center and wanted to share our experiences in hopes of preventing this. The funding has been crucial for our class and community as a whole. As you may know, Kaiser is the only public school on Oahu that offers this rigorous film course. We officially joined this class in our Junior year, and have had endless amazing opportunities since. We started this class knowing very little about the film industry and operation of technology. Due to a previous project, we were offered a position to create Kaiser High School's very own news broadcast, *Kaiser Pause*. The learning center's funds provided us with the proper equipment and enhanced its quality. We have since founded and ran a very successful news broadcast that has heavily influenced our community by bringing it together. Alongside this endeavor, we have worked on multiple short films in which we were able to learn more about the process of creating films. One that stands out in particular is the Photovoice project with HIDTA that we had the honor of participating in, alongside three other students. Through this we worked with the state to create a 7-minute film that addressed various social issues within adolescence today. The two of us (Tez & Vaiata) created a film that aimed to address teen drug usage, and had the amazing experience of presenting this as a HIDTA meeting. This meeting consisted of personnel such as the FBI, DEA, military, state attorney, various police chiefs, and many other influential individuals. From this we were presented with many amazing opportunities that wouldn't have been possible without the learning center's funds. We later presented at other events such



as a DOE conference, and were directly asked by the attorney general, Anne Lopez, to create a film about cyberbullying for her. We are currently working on this project, but it is already seeming to hold even more incredible opportunities. One last thing we would like to mention is the amazing trip we are looking forward to in February-March of 2025. We will be traveling to Florida to participate in the STN Film Competition. None of this would have been possible without the generous support and funds that've been provided to us. Although we may be graduating soon, we wish nothing more than for the future generations to have access to such amazing opportunities. These funds have blessed us with amazing experiences, allowed us to learn many skills both within and outside of the classroom and even inspired some of our future career pathways. We thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Vaiata Yarbrough. & Tezeru Kapfer

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:56 PM

### **Name**

Tilly Hetherington

### **Organization**

Kalaheo High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

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In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Tilly Hetherington

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:18 AM

### **Name**

Lanaly Cabalo

### **Organization**

Hawai'i Thespians

### **Position/Title**

Chapter Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I vehemently oppose cutting funding to our valuable learning centers, which include Castle High School's Castle Performing Arts Center, Kaimuki High School's Kaimuki High School Performing Arts Center, Mililani High School's Central Theatre Arts Academy, Nanakuli High School's Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center, Baldwin High School, Hilo High School, and Kauai High School.

This is beyond a travesty. Americans for Arts conducted the study Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 showed the vast benefits of the arts. According to the 2015 study, "the nonprofit arts industry generated \$166.3 billion of economic activity in 2015 - \$63.8 billion in spending by arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences." This then translated to 4.6 million in jobs and \$27.5 billion in revenue for local, state and federal governments. Even though this may not seem like it is directly linked to us at the community level, I feel it most definitely does. It is our students and community that become these arts practitioners at the profit and non-profit level.

Beyond data, these are our colleagues', students' and community members' lives. Our Learning Centers are free for the students to participate in and therefore provide equity and access for all to the arts. This can, at time, change the trajectory of someone's life. Aside from being the Chapter Director serving the theatre teachers in the thespian society and teachers and students in various theatre programs, I have also been an active member of the community, even stage managing for KHSPAC. I have seen first-hand how the performing arts impacts lives. Not all students move on to careers in make-up, costuming, lights, sound, projection, set design and construction, music, choreography or acting. But some might, and isn't that what we want for our future generations. A place where people can have meaningful experiences? For some it is a place of belonging, where they find people who are like themselves. It is a safe space where people are among people for whom they feel the most free. For these reasons alone, the Learning Centers are worth advocating for. Truthfully, in my opinion, the data be damned. All the Department of Education needs to do is go to a show, any of the many shows and programs that these Learning Centers provide, and see the impacts they make on the community.

We should be proposing to provide MORE funding for these programs. Not proposing to phase them out.

The arts are essential to our humanity and should be supported.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Lanaly

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:32 PM

### **Name**

Ke'ala'iliah Ford

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to withdraw funding from learning centers across Hawai'i. As a former member of the Nānākuli High and Intermediate Performing Arts Center (NPAC), I know firsthand the impact these centers have on students' lives. NPAC was my safe space—a place where I could freely express myself and feel a sense of belonging.

With rising violence, especially on the West side, these programs are more crucial than ever. Reducing support for learning centers will disproportionately affect students who rely on these spaces for creative expression and community. In a time when safe, supportive spaces for youth are already scarce, pulling funding risks leaving young people without essential outlets for growth and connection. Please consider the far-reaching impact this decision will have on our students and communities.

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my concern about the Department of Education's proposed cuts on funding for our learning centers in Hawaii. As a recent graduate and former student of The Castle Performing Arts Center, I have firsthand experience of the invaluable education and opportunities these learning centers provide. These programs are instrumental in developing not only artistic talent but also critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

My own experience at the Castle Performing Arts Center not only shaped my confidence and individuality but also helped me to develop close relationships with people from different backgrounds and ethnicities. These places have been around for more than three decades, becoming a vital role in nurturing success and fostering a sense of community. Many of these students have become teachers, attorneys, nurses, and doctors, who make essential contributions to our community. By funding these learning centers, we invest in the future of Hawaii's keiki. I urge you all to reconsider and invest in Hawaii's children.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kamakanoeliilii Kaimulua

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:55 PM

### **Name**

Jessica Jusseaume

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

They should not cut funding! The learning centers are some of the only opportunities underprivileged children have to learn skills that benefit their future.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 12:43 PM

### Name

Christie Brooke

### Organization

Lionsgate, ABC, CBS, Sony Pictures

### Position/Title

Film/TV Actress

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

The Castle Performing Arts Center is not only my proud alumni, but it was the stage on which I was discovered to pursue a career in the entertainment industry. The benefit of keeping funding for the performing arts at Castle High School is to provide future generations of artists the education, hands on experience, and opportunity to land work professionally as an entertainer with careers in the arts. Ronald E. Bright's legacy depends on keeping this program alive, specifically at his theater at Castle. I've also had the great opportunity to teach and assistant direct shows on this stage which enhances students grades, school attendance, overall morale, communication skills, and confidence in the workforce. My classmates have gone on to work with A List artists on stages in Los Vegas, in film and TV, and on Broadway in New York City. For myself, you can reference my work here as a professional artist in the entertainment industry (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3105863/>) landing a job in the #1 movie in America MIDWAY by Lionsgate. Our resumes go on and on thanks to the education in performing arts and culture here at the Castle Performing Arts Center. I strongly urge you to reconsider as our arts community disagrees with defunding of this great organization. Losing funding will deter students their hope for a brighter future in whatever career they pursue as the arts lifts us, inspire us, challenges us, and elevates us to become stand up, hard working, tax paying citizens who deserve the right to have education in performance art available to them at school. On behalf of the arts community from Kanēohe working professionally in the entertainment industry now, I urge you to keep funding at CPAC for future generation of artists you are robbing the opportunity of education in fine arts. The responsibility you carry by denying young artists of education in the arts is not a representation of who we are as Kaneohe ohana, nor Hawaii as a state. We the people demand funding to remain for the arts in education who will stimulate the economy by hard working artists who provide jobs in production locally and beyond. It starts with education, it starts on the CPAC stage. SAVE OUR STAGES. Keep all funding in place for the Castle Performing Arts Center. Keep Ron Bright's legacy alive. Educate our keiki and keep them in school, and as future leaders thanks to what this program provides. The students and families of our future depends on your decision to keep the funding in fine arts.

Christie Brooke

Professional Actor & Artist

Midway Movie (Lionsgate)

"Jazz in Waikiki" Big Band Show at Blue Note



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:43 PM

### **Name**

Madison Audette

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the funding cuts to the Learning Center. That program needs the money to stay active and available for students. As an alumni of a theatre and dance program funded by the learning center I am appalled to see this cut to the funding.

The program that I was apart of was integral to my well being and my ability to express my artistry as a teen. Without it I could have spent my time doing unsavory things instead of going to rehearsals and honing my craft. Without it my mental health would have suffered and I probably would have had no friends.

I think that it is well known that art and performing art in its many forms has been known to help children of all ages express themselves which can be incredibly helpful when dealing with difficult emotions. It gives them an outlet for those emotions and oftentimes an escape from other difficulties in their lives. We want our next generation, our future, to know how, and to have many ways to deal with difficult emotions. Without the programs funded by the Learning Center we are severely impacting the future of our community.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:56 PM

### **Name**

Duane Shikiya

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

math and science teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I currently teach physics at Mililani High School. Our students vastly benefit from Learning Center funding through operations like Robotics and Science Fair. My physics students often are highly motivated by such programs. So many of them are inspired to take advanced math and science courses and pursue endeavors such as Engineering or Computer science.

Our robotics program uses my classroom after school, so I have the pleasure of witnessing their passion and hard work. Some of my best AP physics students are members of the Robotics program each year.

Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Patrick Agullana and I am an assistant faculty specialist for the International Programs of Outreach College at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am also a proud community member serving on the World Languages Learning Center (WLLC) advisory board at Moanalua High School.

It has been brought to my attention that the Department of Education is proposing budget cuts that will affect not only the WLLC but other Learning Centers in the State of Hawai'i. I am greatly disappointed at this proposal and I am vehemently opposed to this proposal moving forward. I believe limiting educational funds to problematic and detrimental for students, and the consequences of budget cuts will ultimately have lasting effects.

Regardless of their educational content, well-funded Learning Centers provide students with opportunities and resources beyond the classroom, and establishes a safe-space for communication and collaboration between different schools that participate in the Learning Center. In the case of the WLLC, I have seen first-hand students develop and reinforce their language learning. Language learning has been found to foster students' global awareness as well as their multilingual and intercultural communication skills. I have also been a part of and witnessed community members, teachers, and students working together to implement inter-school events promoting world cultures and languages.

I strongly urge the Department of Education to reconsider these budget cuts and continue to financially support not only the Learning Centers but also our teachers as they diligently work to educate the children of the State of Hawai'i.

Very respectfully,



Patrick Agullana



Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Patrick Agullana and I am an assistant faculty specialist for the International Programs of Outreach College at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am also a proud community member serving on the World Languages Learning Center (WLLC) advisory board at Moanalua High School.

It has been brought to my attention that the Department of Education is proposing budget cuts that will affect not only the WLLC but other Learning Centers in the State of Hawai'i. I am greatly disappointed at this proposal and I am vehemently opposed to this proposal moving forward. I believe limiting educational funds to problematic and detrimental for students, and the consequences of budget cuts will ultimately have lasting effects.

Regardless of their educational content, well-funded Learning Centers provide students with opportunities and resources beyond the classroom, and establishes a safe-space for communication and collaboration between different schools that participate in the Learning Center. In the case of the WLLC, I have seen first-hand students develop and reinforce their language learning. Language learning has been found to foster students' global awareness as well as their multilingual and intercultural communication skills. I have also been a part of and witnessed community members, teachers, and students working together to implement inter-school events promoting world cultures and languages.

I strongly urge the Department of Education to reconsider these budget cuts and continue to financially support not only the Learning Centers but also our teachers as they diligently work to educate the children of the State of Hawai'i.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Agullana'.

Patrick Agullana

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 12:56 PM

### Name

Justin Franz Dela Cruz

### Organization

Lahianaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Justin Franz Dela Cruz, and I am a senior at Lahainaluna High School, currently enrolled in the period 6 Animal Systems Work-based Learning class as part of our Agriculture Learning Center. I am writing to urge you to reject the Department of Education's proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LCs) across the state. The \$17,000 each learning center currently receives is essential for funding hands-on projects, field trips, and work-based learning opportunities. My classmates and I have been in the LC for 4 years and it taught us many agriculture skills and I feel like it would be beneficial for future students to have the same opportunities.

Through our LC, I've had the chance to gain valuable skills and experiences—like working with Maui Cultural Lands to clear invasive species and learning about native plants. Later this year, LC funding will allow us to visit Kahoolawe with KIRC and attend the Hawaii FFA Convention, experiences that deepen our understanding of agriculture and conservation. Our LC also supports projects that make a difference in our community, such as growing plants to help replant yards impacted by the recent Lahaina fires. This funding is vital to keep learning agriculture skills that will help Maui become more self-sustaining and give students like me a pathway to careers in agriculture.

Please consider the impact these proposed cuts will have on our learning and futures. I respectfully ask that you require the DOE to continue supporting our learning centers so the students that come after me can gain the same skills needed to help our community and our island thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Justin Franz Dela Cruz  
Lahainaluna High School c/o 2025

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:55 PM

### **Name**

Leah Yee

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am an alumni of Central Theatre Arts Academy at Mililani High School. I was part of the program from 2011-2014. Over ten years has passed, yet I still hold the memories from my time at CTAA near to my heart. Through CTAA I came to truly appreciate all that goes in to theatre- the talent of the cast, the costume and set design, the unseen work of the tech team. I have never viewed any production the same since experiencing it hands on for myself.

CTAA gives students the opportunity to shine with their true God given gifts. For some, it has revealed talents they didn't even know they had. I witnessed many of my peers at the time grow in their talents in ways they didn't know they could and it was because of the opportunities presented by CTAA. During my time, I know I grew as a performer, but also as a person. I gained confidence in myself and just fell in love with having a good time on stage.

Since graduating from the program, I have seen a few productions and the talent has only increased. To defund this program and those like it would be a complete disservice to the children of our communities. Students deserve an accessible program to express themselves and learn what can't be done in the classroom.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:31 PM

### **Name**

Dustin Gosnell

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I have seen students perform in performance in learning center.

If you guys do budget cut for the learning center, students will not get to express their feelings through dancing and singing . Also if might ruined their dream to perform in front of peoples during their high school years and forward.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:56 PM

### **Name**

Jaeden-Ian Pascua

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 6 Large Animal Systems Work-based Learning and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section. By cutting the Funding for the LCs we risk losing a vital educational resource that not only benefits our local economy but also contributes to the broader goals of environmental stewardship and sustainable development. The LC funding also supports other important programs like automotive. At the start of the year our automotive teacher left and since then our Agriculture teacher stepped in to help us obtain a honors certificate in automotive, by teaching us to repair and maintain the schools tractor.

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we currently experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:05 PM

### **Name**

Jayden Ragusa

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am a student of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 6 Animal Systems Work-based Learning and I am against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for our school's LC students. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

In our group we are doing a performance-based assessment (PBA) on livestock fencing and we will need the learning center funds to complete our project. If students next year do not have the same funding they will be limited in the types of projects they can do that will prepare them for similar high skill, high wage careers.

My first year in the class was super helpful and useful and I learned how to use power tools. I was taught well by my teacher and I also use them in my daily life now. We could not afford all the yard equipment we have if we did not have the LC funds. My second year I took care of big animals in my Large Animal Systems class. I learned how to trim goat hooves, make fences and houses for chickens, and raise a baby goat till it has matured. Livestock are expensive to raise and the Lc funds make this possible.

Now in my forth year, I will get a CTE Honors Certificate at graduation for my experience and learning abilities for putting them all together for a final performance-based assessment. For the last three years I have had this class and I have learned so much that will help me in the real world and also help me teach other people if they need help with something I have learned. If we get our fundings taken away then the up coming kids that are looking forward to go into the learning center programs will be disappointed and won't be able to pursue what they want throughout high school.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jayden Ragusa

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 12:56 PM

### Name

Kefu Mendoza

### Organization

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 6 Large Animal Systems Work-based Learning and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY 2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

In my class me and my group are doing a Performance based assessment (PBA) on a livestock fence. We need money to get the equipment for our livestock fence and other things. The LC would help us and others in the future be able to make something like we are this year. Losing funding would make it harder for other students in the future if they wanted to do what we did because they won't have what they need. Not having the money would limit a lot of stuff that we've been doing over the years. The LC also funds the Future Farmers of America (FFA) that helps us learn and do more for agriculture. It also funds the FFA to go on field trips to learn and actually do stuff. FFA would also help you get into good programs including agriculture.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High students and would greatly decrease all of the advantages a Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less. In order to ensure that local students are “Globally Competitive and Locally Committed” for their future, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Zealynn Makua

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 12:55 PM

### **Name**

Rick Vermey

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 6 Large Animal Systems Work-based Learning and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for us at our school. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

I am doing my PBA this year for large animal systems and I have been in the animal systems pathway for 3 years of high-school and it has been one of my favorite classes. I love actually being able to do things with your hands and take care of our animals. I am making a drum from animal products such as hides and skins for my PBA. Next year my girlfriend is going to try to do a PBA as well but if the funding to our program gets cut that will probably not be possible and she will have spent 3 years in agriculture and not have anything to show for it.

Thank you for your consideration - Rick Vermey

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 1:56 PM

### Name

Erik Tanaka

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Special Education teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Erik Tanaka, a Special Education teacher at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted / currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erik Tanaka

Mililani High School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:56 PM

### **Name**

Katherine Roseguo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I support continued funding for robotics programs

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:56 PM

### **Name**

Leon Schwarz

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

From my understanding, the passing of this budget will cut funding for Learning Centers across Hawai'i, affecting multiple high-schools including my own. This will take away so many amazing programs and opportunities for students to find a place where they can feel like they belong. Multiple of my friends have benefitted from these programs, especially those in CTAA, and taking these programs away would not only hurt them but also incoming students who planned on joining. I urge you to not cut the funding for these fantastic programs.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:49 PM

### **Name**

Kathy Pulotu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please maintain the special Music and Health Learning Centers' distinction and funding. Cutting this will be detrimental to the students at Kahuku High School. These centers and the additional funding and support that comes from the state are critical to many students' success at Kahuku. This rural area has limited resources and expertise in these areas, and these centers help make up for that by providing quality educational experiences for our students.

Having these centers has made a huge difference in two of my own children's lives, and countless others that I know. Being a part of these centers has taught them specialized knowledge, discipline, hard work, team work and the accomplishment you get from working together for a common goal outside of the classroom. The vast majority of these types of experiences at Kahuku are usually only available through athletics. But not every student is athletic or wants to participate in sports. These learning centers give students purpose and valuable skills for life.

My son is participating in the Music Learning Center as a member of the low brass section of the Marching Band and Symphonic Band. He told me it feels so good to be a part of, and committed to, something that he likes and has interest in. My daughter graduated from Kahuku two years ago and was an active participant in the Health Learning Center. The specialized help, volunteer opportunities and paid internship opportunities at different medical offices and facilities, in addition to HOSA and other activities, she got through the center helped solidify her desire to go into the medical field and helped her get training and scholarships so that she is now a Human Biology student in college.

Please don't remove the special distinction or cut the funding for these centers. These centers are critical to providing quality educational experiences for ALL students at Kahuku High School.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Tiare Sabellano-Tsutsui

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the cutting of funding for Learning Centers. The Learning Centers must keep their funding. Performing arts and other learning centers are vital for child and teenage development. Growing up, my music program gave me structure, mentors, and a stage I can be proud on. I developed discipline, passion, and life long relationships within my program. I want the present and future generations to have access to such programs as well.

The monies allotted to the Learning Centers fund teachers, supplies, and other jumping off funds to put on annual productions. Without these funds, I greatly fear they will shut down.

Please do not close these children's programs. Give them the chance to be part of an ongoing culture they are proud of. I am counting on you to help keep Learning Centers open.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:39 AM

### **Name**

Melanie Afualo

### **Organization**

Kahuku High and Intermediate School Band and Choir Program

### **Position/Title**

Teacher Licensing Coordinator, BYU Hawai'i, Parent and Choir and Band Alumni of KHIS

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, my name is Melanie Afualo. I am the Teacher Licensing Coordinator for BYU Hawai'i.

I am also a parent of 5 children who have gone through the music program at Kahuku High and Intermediate from 2013 to present. I am also a proud Kahuku Alumni and I also went through the music program from 1992-1996. During these years I was introduced to the wonderful world of music, choir and band. I participated in choir under the direction of Mrs. Hanneman and Band under Mr. Michael Payton and Ernest Taniguchi. Throughout my time in music helped me to learn and grow in so many ways. We learned music theory and discipline and to work together. We learned teamwork and dedication, and I gained life long friendships and lessons. During my time we traveled to California and outer island, my first time out of state. We were exposed to opportunities away from home and i would not have had that opportunity had it not been for these important programs.

Today, I am the Teacher Licensing Coordinator for BYU Hawaii. Being in Band and Choir has helped me in my job to work with a wide range of people and students towards a main goal, similar to music and marching band. My job at BYUH is to help and prepare our Education students to become teachers and licensed with the Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board and I am noticing more and more students becoming licensed in Secondary Education Music. Cutting the funding would also mean that all of these local students that are going to school to become Hawai'i's teachers will be unable to teach here in Hawai'i if we no longer have placements for the programs they've worked so hard to fill. We are already at a gap of teachers and programs here in Hawai'i, and cutting this budget will make a long lasting negative impact on so many things not only budget cuts.

My children have also gone through both programs and have enjoyed the arts. Arts are so needed in the school system. Not everyone is athletic and flourish in other ways. My youngest son is Autistic but also tests at a 13 grade level, which is college level yet his favorite class is Band with Mr. Furukawa. It teaches him discipline, hard work and to be consistent. He is not a straight A student, but he is happy to learn and grow in this field. We are so grateful that he has a place like the arts where he feels seen, valued and appreciated. For our family, that and the fact that he has his sense of place and is learning life long lessons along the way with these music programs are the most important thing for his well being and the thought of these being taken away from him and those like him will be a great disservice to children in similar situations.

It is my hope that my testimony helps in your consideration to make sure that these funds are kept in for music and

11/01/2024

the arts. They are vital to help our children become well rounded adults and help to keep the funds needed for these to continue to help our kids succeed.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

Melanie KS Afualo

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Jason Libarios

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA)

### **Position/Title**

Concerned Parent of CTAA student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

It is truly truly heartbreaking to hear the news that all funding for the State Learning Centers is endangered of being cut off. I have two daughters who are part of Central Theater Arts Academy (CTAA) and theater is their life! My eldest daughter has been with CTAA since the 3rd grade and she is now in the 9th grade at Mililani High School. She is just devastated to learn that her musical theatre journey with CTAA may come to an abrupt end. Being in musical theatre has not only allowed my daughters to express themselves through singing, acting, and dancing, but it has also helped them to build their self esteem and foster their creativity as well. My daughters are very interested in musical theatre beyond high school and not being able to participate in CTAA will certainly derail their dreams. I implore you to please not take away funding for the State Learning Centers and keep the hopes and dreams of all "musical theatre kids" across the state of Hawaii alive and well!

Mahalo,

Jason Libarios

Jacqueline Libarios

jlibarios@yahoo.com

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Nalu Iwata

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I'd just want to say performing arts is a way to build not only yourself but also relationships too because performing arts made who I am today. I started doing it when I was in middle school I did 2 shows and it helped me build friendships and build trust with everyone. Then during my junior year I got to do a show for KHSPAC and they helped me reignite my spark for acting and it helped me build trust and friendships too. I'm so grateful for that experience because it's apart of me. If you so much cut this you're cancelling life itself

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 2:30 PM

### Name

Kimi Tokioka

### Organization

Mililani Learning Center

### Position/Title

opposing/student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To whom this may concern, it has come to our attention (the students of Mililani Learning Center) that the theater and STEM programs are at risk for complete defunding. I would like you to reconsider. Theater is more than singing and dancing. It's a safe space and community for kids, not just in Mililani but statewide. If it's taken away, you are taking a second home from them; you're taking away opportunities and their friends. I move a lot, almost every year, and making friends was not easy. This program helped me make friends and has taught me so many things. Think about the kids performing; if you watched them practice, defunding wouldn't even be a decision that would have to be made. The work they put in, the work that all the instructors put in, goes to their performance; think of all the kids inspired by their performance. Children with a passion for performing and your taking away their opportunities. Funding for theater is already low; there are kids from other schools that come to Mililani just to perform and be apart of this program. There aren't many opportunities for students as it is, defunding our learning centers.

This isn't just theater, but agriculture and STEM. You aren't just taking away learning opportunities; you are changing the future of Hawaii. Tourism is Hawaii's leading industry, and what does tourism rely on? Agriculture. How will the future of Hawaii be affected if our future leaders aren't taught this now? This goes for STEM too. STEM is already in short supply of workers. Who is expected to work these jobs when our future workers' learning opportunities are taken away? Another big reason tourists come to Hawaii is the culture; this includes performances, such as theater. Hawaii would have no appeal if the land wasn't taken care of and there were no good performers. Hawaii's whole appeal is the land and culture; what happens when students aren't taught these things? Yes, you could look into other programs, but that's not easily accessible. Programs like these make it easy for students to participate in. Also, the decline of workers in these areas (agriculture, STEM, theater) would eventually lead to demand in pay, that is, more money you are going to need to put into in the future. Why defund programs that are already under-funded, especially programs this important to our state? If you fund and invest in these programs now, in the future you will have knowledgeable and educated workers, then jobs in these field won't be as high in demand and won't demand higher pay.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, I hope our testimonies and stories are taken into consideration and moved you as much as these programs moved us.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Ilaisaane Haiola

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I strongly oppose to the Hawaii DOE Fiscal year budget cuts affecting learning center programs including Music/Band. The pride of the north shore originated in referencing Kahuku High and Intermediate Band program back in the 80s-90s that traveled nationally to represent not only our school but the State of Hawaii. These programs enhanced cognitive development through improved memory, focus, and spatial reasoning, boosted social skills by fostering teamwork and collaboration, increased self-esteem from achieving musical goals, positive emotional development through creative expression, and potential academic benefits like higher test scores, all while providing students with a valuable life skill and a potential avenue for future artistic pursuits. Please give this generation and future generations the opportunity and continue to provide the necessary environment in high school to pursuit artistic dreams including Music/Band. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Ilaisaane Haiola

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Sarina Ganancial

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

All performing arts centers are a crucial part to students who thrive in acting, singing, dancing, and theater craft. Cutting the budget for these programs would not only be detrimental for students who want to pursue a career on stage or behind the curtains, but the budget loss could be harmful for students who use these courses as an emotional outlet, those who pour their hearts out on stage.

These courses that the board wants to cut the budget for have a tremendous impact on the students who take them, the students who have a true passion for them.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Tori Lynn Yang

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Good afternoon board, my name is Tori Lynn Yang and I am a senior at Mililani High School. As someone who has been in theatre and appreciative of the performing arts it breaks my heart to hear of the possibility of its defunding. Theatre is the gateway to many people out there including me and my close peers. By signing this bill, it will cause many people to lose their gateway of identity and self expression. Please do not take this away from so many people out there. Thank you for your time.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Karen Brewer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Kahuku Marching Band is a staple in our community. Being a part of the marching band in my high school days, has profoundly shaped my life and influenced my future. Growing up in a family of marching band members, I've seen firsthand the impact it has had on each of us. The camaraderie, discipline, and teamwork cultivated within the band not only create lifelong friendships but also instill invaluable life skills.

Participating in the marching band has taught me the importance of dedication and hard work. Each practice session requires commitment and perseverance, and through this process, I have learned how to set goals and strive to achieve them. These skills are transferable to any area of my life, whether it be academics, future career endeavors, or personal relationships.

Moreover, the experience of performing at football games and competitions has boosted my confidence. The thrill of playing in front of a crowd, feeling the energy of the audience, and sharing that moment with my fellow band members is something truly special. It instills a sense of pride not only in our music but also in representing our school. I've witnessed how the marching band can elevate school spirit and bring the community together, as it did during my sister's time when our band used to be even better and more well known than our football team!

The lessons learned in marching band extend beyond music. I have discovered the importance of resilience—overcoming challenges, whether it's mastering a difficult piece or enduring long rehearsals. Each performance teaches us to embrace both success and failure, fostering a growth mindset that has served me well.

As we advocate for the budget to keep our marching band alive, I urge decision-makers to consider the profound impact it has not only on current students but also on the legacy it carries for our community. The marching band is more than an extracurricular activity; it is a cornerstone of our identity, providing us with skills, memories, and a sense of belonging that lasts a lifetime. Please support us in ensuring that future generations can experience the joy and benefits of being part of this incredible band.

Mahalo

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:42 PM

### **Name**

Shandal Asuega-Aso'au

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

It's frustrating to see decisions made that seem to overlook the immense value these programs bring to students' lives. The skills gained from STEM, agriculture, and the performing arts aren't just academic—they're life skills, and character-building experiences. It's incredibly disheartening when budget cuts target areas that foster creativity, innovation, and self-discovery. I'm a parent of students that came out of these programs, It feels like there are smarter places to find savings rather than cutting what genuinely enriches young minds. What do you think the community can do to push back on this?

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:30 PM

### **Name**

Alohilani Asuega

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I OPPOSE to the cut of funding towards the performing arts organizations. These organizations are just as important as other major programs that are needed for students to flourish. The students, teachers, volunteers etc. do not deserve to have their funds cut! Let's find other solutions before deciding these students future for them!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:42 PM

### **Name**

Joni Kamiya

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board Members,

I am writing to you to ask that the funding for Castle High School's Performing Arts program not be cut. This is an essential program for our community that engages parents, students, and teachers in the arts that is so needed in these times.

Please consider funding this program for the betterment of our entire windward community to give opportunities to our up and coming generation of students.

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Sutton Tucker Bennett, and I am the parent of an 8th grader (soon to be 9th-grade student at Mililani Middle & High School. I am also a teacher at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

\*\*[Insert a personal story or anecdote about how the Learning Centers have impacted you or helped you overcome a challenge. Learning center programs at Mililani HS include: Central Theater Arts Academy, FIRST Robotics, Science Olympiad, Science Fair]\*\*

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Sutton Tucker Bennett  
(808) 728-1477

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:30 PM

### **Name**

Ember Isabelo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Access to Theatre and Stem education is absolutely essential. Theatre provides a safe space to risk, fail, and then risk again. It opens hearts and minds and provides an outlet for any student. Theatre is my passion and what I want to dedicate my life to. If it were not for the theatre program at my school, I would not have discovered the thing that brings me the most joy. Don't take this opportunity away!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:42 PM

### **Name**

Ellen Zanetos

### **Organization**

Department of Education

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

In my 6 years teaching at Hilo High School, I've seen firsthand how important the Performing Arts Learning Center (PALC) is to our students. In a community where resources and hands on learning opportunities are already limited, cutting funding from this program would have a detrimental impact on our school community. I strongly oppose budget cuts that would negatively impact these programs.



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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### Name

Alexis Libarios

### Organization

Mililani Learning Center (CTAA)

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I'm Alexis Libarios and I am currently a freshmen at Mililani High School. I have been performing with Central Theatre Arts Academy for 6 years. I did my very first musical with CTAA when I was in the 3rd grade, and ever since then my forever love and passion sparked for musical theatre. I can say in confidence that without CTAA I would have never found my love for the arts and I would not be the person I am now. Theatre is something that I always look forward to at the end of the school day. That exhilarating feeling of performing on the stage is what I live for. Growing up in this program, it was always the talented and supportive community that has drawn me back to the stage every year. Now being that I'm a freshmen, I thought I would finally be able to perform having the high school experience. But, cutting this budget would mean that I won't be able to pursue the dreams of performing musical theatre in high school, and maybe even in the future.

By cutting funds to public high school theatre programs across the state, it robs the dreams and futures of young artists full of great potential. Theatre isn't just about the acting, the singing or dancing. Theatre serves as a VOICE of those who struggle to find one. It's our way of expressing ourselves. It is our passion, our future, and our hope. We live for the arts. And that is what makes us so special.

Cutting funds to learning centers also affects the future of students who want to pursue careers in STEM or agriculture. Although having diverse interests, we are all brought together by sharing such strong passions for what we love. Why take that away? As someone who has been involved in theatre, robotics, and the science club, it would be so devastating to see what we love being taken away from us.

I do believe there are other solutions, but taking the budget away from learning centers shouldn't be one. I'm not just speaking for myself and my peers, but on behalf for the future generation of young people who deserve to have the right to pursue what they love.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:06 PM

### **Name**

Katherine Hahn

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Costume Crew

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I became a part of CTAA in my senior year (2023-2024), and the only thing I wish was that I had joined sooner. It's hard to describe in words the absolute joy I felt and fun I had being a part of something that was bigger than myself, surrounded by peers who were incredibly passionate, talented, and genuinely good people. It was like a second family. I wanted to spend as much time as I could at CTAA whether it was painting the set, designing and constructing costumes, and most of all, collaborating with my friends and the individuals I both admire and respect.

I learned a lot at my time in CTAA. I joined the costume crew even though I knew practically nothing about costume design, and I was welcomed. I was scared that my inexperience would be met with disapproval, but instead my instructor and my crew mates were excited that I expressed interest which in turn fostered my learning. With their help and support, I can now proudly say that I know how to use a sewing machine, take full body measurements for clothing, and I'm pretty handy with a seam ripper. In addition, I can safely use power tools (which is honestly a useful skill to have in general), and I would list more skills I have learned at CTAA, however, that would take quite a while.

My time at CTAA has also deepened my appreciation of theatre. There is so much work, time, and collaborative effort that goes into making a production successful, ultimately providing an awe-inspiring experience for an audience of peers, friends, families, and teachers. Even when I wasn't a member of CTAA, I had so much fun attending their theatre productions with my friends. It's hard to imagine my high school experience without the productions put on by CTAA whether I was a spectator or an active participant during its making. CTAA provides learning through hands on experience unlike a traditional classroom setting, and I sincerely hope others will have the chance to develop skills and build lasting friendships while they work as a close knit community to produce something truly wonderful.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 2:42 PM

### Name

Kamuela Kimokeo

### Organization

Windward Community College

### Position/Title

Assistant Professor of Music

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education,

As an educator, musician, and parent, I write with a deep commitment to Hawai'i's students and our future leaders, urging you to continue your support of performing arts education in the upcoming Biennium budget. I am Kamuela Kimokeo, Director of the Music Department at Windward Community College and hold a Ph.D. in Education. My own life and professional career have been profoundly shaped by the performing arts, beginning with my involvement in the Ronald Bright Performing Arts program. Today, my children benefit from the Castle Performing Arts Center, a program that opens doors to opportunities they might not otherwise have.

The performing arts play a vital role in offering Hawai'i's youth a safe, creative space where they can explore, learn, and grow. For many students, performing arts programs provide not only a refuge but a chance to develop self-expression and confidence. Through music, dance, and drama, students encounter a rich, dynamic form of exploratory learning that complements traditional academics. The arts foster creative problem-solving, collaboration, and resilience—skills that prepare them for success both in school and beyond.

These programs are particularly essential for underprivileged youth who may not have access to such enriching experiences outside of public education. Not every family can afford private lessons or tuition to private schools with dedicated arts programs. By supporting the performing arts in public education, the Board of Education can help to ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to life-enhancing and potentially life-changing opportunities.

My own career as a professional musician and educator is rooted in the exposure I had to performing arts as a young person. It was through these early opportunities that I found my passion, honed my skills, and ultimately found my life's calling. Today, as a music professor and director, I see firsthand how programs like the Ronald Bright Performing Arts Program and Castle Performing Arts Center continue to inspire and nurture our youth. These programs build communities and encourage our young people to engage with each other and their cultures in meaningful ways.

I respectfully urge you to recognize the immense value of performing arts programs by allocating critical funds to them in the Biennium budget. Doing so will demonstrate a commitment to the holistic growth and development of Hawai'i's students, ensuring they have access to safe, inclusive, and empowering environments that celebrate their

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unique talents and aspirations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of Hawai'i's young performers.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kamuela Kimokeo  
Director, Music Discipline  
Windward Community College

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 2:30 PM

### Name

Donna Blanchard

### Organization

Kumu Kahua Theatre

### Position/Title

Managing Director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

If anything, funding for arts education should be increased, not cut. Students who study are score higher scholastically, are more likely to move on to college, and contribute more to our communities and tax base. Arts are not only entertainment, they play a vital role in our economy.

Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 (AEP5) is Americans for the Arts' fifth economic impact study of the nation's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences. By every measure, the results are impressive. Nationally, the nonprofit arts industry generated \$166.3 billion of economic activity in 2015—\$63.8 billion in spending by arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. This activity supported 4.6 million jobs and generated \$27.5 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments (a yield well beyond their collective \$5 billion in arts allocations).

AEP5 is the most comprehensive study of its kind ever conducted. You can read the statistical report here:  
[https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF\\_Files/NationalFindings\\_StatisticalReport.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/NationalFindings_StatisticalReport.pdf)

Our art distinguishes our society, by stimulating our minds, bodies, hearts, and imaginations. Let us learn from both Sparta and Athens and strengthen our society through the values of both!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:17 PM

### **Name**

Kekoa Shope

### **Organization**

Independent

### **Position/Title**

Independent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Kids need these learning centers. Doing this would be a detriment to vital resources for the youth of Hawai'i.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:28 PM

### **Name**

Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

Recently, it has been brought to our attention that the TLC at Waiākea HS is being defunded (as part of Article VIII, DOE operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027) meaning they will not be provided with funds for the 2025-2027 SY. This is a travesty.

We are asking as many people as possible to vote against the budget proposal. As people who have supported us in the past, we ask that you join us in opposing this bill. We require 250 opponents to the bill from our learning center alone to have a chance at bringing down this proposal.

This Learnin Center has been an asset to the community as they have:

- collaborated with local companies and business to hold STEAM camps and events and that were able to reach over 2700+ of Hawaii's keiki that showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM
- provided various learning opportunities for our students to learn all aspects of STEAM including building, programming, design, modeling, and business.
- placed 10th place out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition—and the 8th overall team in the state of Hawaii.

Please do not cut funding to this necessary program.

Mahalo,

Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:22 PM

### **Name**

Annie Innes-Gold

### **Organization**

Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology

### **Position/Title**

PhD Candidate

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose this agenda item, which would remove the budget of the Waianae MSLC, which provides important hands-on learning experiences that teach students sustainability, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and personal responsibility. Their mission is to develop young men and women into confident, caring, and aloha 'āina-minded individuals who have the desire and ability to fulfill their kuleana to their family, community and world. Cutting the budget of this organization, as well as the performing arts centers, would be extremely detrimental for schools and communities they serve.



October 30, 2024

Members of the Board:

I write in opposition of the budget cuts to the arts and after school programs in our schools, in particular Castle Performing Arts Center (“CPAC”). I am the mother of three children, all of whom have been educated by Hawai‘i’s public schools. One of my children currently attends Castle High School (“Castle”). We are active members of our community; my husband is a contractor and I am an attorney. As such, we understand the unique challenges our community faces, including the highest cost of living in the nation. *World Population Review*, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/cost-of-living-index-by-state> (last visited Oct. 30, 2024). This is particularly evident at Castle. My understanding is that Castle would qualify as a Title I school, but not enough qualifying students turn in their forms. Parents are trying to make ends meet, and are not always able to be present in the home. This is precisely why arts and after school programs, such as CPAC, are invaluable.

After school programs provide a safe place to grow life skills. Receiving arts educational opportunities has proven to reduce disciplinary infractions, improve writing achievement, and increase students’ emotional empathy, school engagement, college aspirations, and cognitive empathy. Daniel H. Bowen & Brian Kisida, *Investigating the Causal Effects of Arts Education* (Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, Nov. 15, 2022), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pamschool> engagement, college aspirations, and cognitive empathy.22449. The future health of Hawai‘i rests in the hands of the children being educated today. Our children need the arts and a reduction or elimination of these programs would be shortsighted and detrimental to not just the children, but our community at large.

I urge you to keep our arts and after school programs funded. We need our children to be empathetic, engaged, and desire to learn, grow, and achieve more. If we can collectively raise these types of community members, Hawai‘i will thrive. Our children need the arts. Please fund their programs.

Yours truly,

Monika M. Wurlitzer

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:45 PM

### **Name**

Michelle Simmons

### **Organization**

Castle High School

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Michelle Simmons, and I am the parent of a student at Castle High School. I am writing to express my unwavering support for continued funding for the CPAC theater program, a program that has significantly impacted not only my daughter's high school experience but also her growth as an individual.

Since my daughter joined CPAC in the 5th grade, I have witnessed remarkable transformations in her confidence, self-esteem, and social skills. The theater program has provided her with a safe and inspiring environment to explore her creativity, build meaningful friendships, and learn valuable life skills that go far beyond the stage. Through rehearsals, performances, and collaborations, she has developed resilience, discipline, and communication skills that will serve her well in any future endeavor.

The sense of community within CPAC has been invaluable. The friendships she has forged and the skills she has acquired are critical elements of her education and her high school experience. I firmly believe that, without this program, her high school years would lack the joy, purpose, and engagement that theater has brought her. Programs like CPAC contribute immeasurably to the personal growth and academic success of our students, offering them opportunities to thrive in ways traditional classrooms often cannot.

I urge you to consider the profound and lasting impact that the CPAC theater program has on our students and the Castle High School community. Please continue to support funding for this program, as it is not just an extracurricular activity—it is a vital investment in our children's futures, equipping them with confidence, skills, and friendships that will carry them through life.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your commitment to the well-being of our students.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Simmons

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:35 PM

### **Name**

Shayna May Udani

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong opposition of the agenda item: Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027.

The proposed budget decreases Learning Center funding for 2025-2026 and cuts all funding by 2026-2027. Many programs at various intermediate schools and high schools are at risk, ones that enrich students in subjects such as: performing arts, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, and business. Many schools have already cut funding to these areas, and some programs have even been completely dissolved. This budget change would further the loss of these important programs and take away educational experiences and opportunities from our rising youth. As a 2024 graduate who has seen programs such as these slowly suffer when I was still in school and saw the way it negatively affected the school community and students, I believe that we need to preserve and improve the programs that are still in place, and even create more to give current and future students the best learning experience that will accommodate and further their interests and passions. With this in mind, please continue to fund and value the Learning Centers that enrich and educate our keiki.

Mahalo.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:35 PM

### **Name**

Nathalie Lui-Kwan

### **Organization**

DOE Castle High School

### **Position/Title**

Department Chair / teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I wasn't sure whether to write as a parent, a department chair or as a teacher. my role has been all of the above. I have seen the Learning Centers be the highlight and magnets of our schools. they address many students who often can't seem to find a safe place and yet thrive in our theater. as a department chair I know how expensive it can be to get the rights for plays and musicals going up to \$6,000 each one. Without These funds we would be doing "rinky dinky" plays which do not attract The Best of the Best. We can probably say that some of our students have gone on to Broadway, London, or are part of traveling tours.

As a department chair I am familiar with school finances and its distribution. It is unreasonable to expect a school to therefore address the needs of students from other schools since the purpose of the Learning Center is to actually service all students from across the islands.

As a 30-year veteran world language teacher, I have seen the money for the drill master (native speaker ) program come directly to the schools, where most languages had a drill master in each school go on to completely disappear as soon as the money was distributed through the student weighted formula.

You would think that the money is in the school account therefore it should be available for the program..

Unfortunately every principal or leader has the opportunity to choose what their priorities are and can dissolve a program by simply not hiring a person for it, even if they were given the money to do so. We have a high turnover rate of principals and the school often shifts direction with new leaders and eliminates positions. This is going to be the fate of most learning centers over time if we switch the funding. We have lived it, experienced it!

Please don't let this happen

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 3:58 PM

### Name

Kainoa Hayashi

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kainoa Hayashi, and I'm a 9th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. I've already gained so much from the experience, even though I haven't competed yet. One of my favorite moments so far was during our team's brainstorming sessions for our robot design. Everyone brought their own ideas to the table, and it was inspiring to see how our diverse backgrounds contributed to the creative process.

I was particularly involved in the mechanical design aspect, which was new to me. When we started working on building our prototype, I encountered challenges that seemed daunting at first. For example, figuring out how to create a mechanism that could lift objects efficiently was tough. But with the support of my teammates, I learned how to use tools and apply engineering principles to solve the problem.

The hands-on experience has been incredible; I've learned about CAD software and the importance of teamwork in problem-solving. This journey has not only fueled my passion for robotics but has also helped me develop skills like critical thinking and collaboration. I'm excited about the upcoming competition and can't wait to see how our hard work pays off!

I would be deeply saddened, knowing that so many students like me would lose access to invaluable opportunities in robotics. The chance to learn, create, and collaborate with my peers would be significantly diminished, impacting not just our education but our passion for innovation. Losing funding for FIRST Robotics would mean missing out on the experiences that inspire us to pursue careers in STEM fields. It's disheartening to think that future students might not have the same chance to grow and explore their interests as we do now.

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If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kainoa Hayashi  
Phone (808-763-8720)  
Email: 2421600985@k12.hi.us

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:47 PM

### **Name**

Rainna Tomlin

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The MLSC is a way to help kids learn and grow. The program itself promotes innovation between other organizations and allow people to dive into their creative, caring, and intelligent selves. It offers experiences and knowledge that will translate later on in life, which is something you can't put a price on. To stop funding this program, would not be beneficial to the community in any way, shape, or form. I hope the board is able to see that and act on it

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:47 PM

### **Name**

Erik Jennings

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha

My name is Erik Jennings and I am a special education teacher at Lahainaluna High School. I am oppose to cutting funds to the Learning Center for the Agurculure Department. I teach students who are in a workplace readiness program to enter into the work life after high school. My students need to accomplish vocational training on the school campus before being able to be placed at a job to shadow off campus. These learning center funds along with the Ag department have provided my students with realistic job training that help them get placed in a agricultural related job. The learning center funds help provide opportunities for my student to be trained on realistic machines and tools necessary in this profession. Wirhout these funds my students would miss out on the opportunity to be trained with the support of their special education teacher and agriculture teacher. Please do not cut funding to this necessary students program.

Mahalo for your time

Erik Jennings

808-385-6592



**Reid Chung**  
**91-3524 Iwikuamoo St Unit 502**  
**Ewa Beach, HI 96706**  
**reid.chung@gmail.com**  
**10/30/2024**

**The Honorable Ken Kuraya**  
**Chairperson, Finance and Infrastructure Committee**  
**Department of Education**

**Subject: Testimony Against Reduction of Funds for Learning Centers Ref # 8901**

Dear Chairperson Kuraya,

I acknowledge that the Department of Education is operating within significant budget constraints, driven by various factors such as reduced state revenues and competing priorities for public funds. These financial limitations require difficult decisions regarding resource allocation and program funding. However, while I understand the necessity of fiscal responsibility, it is crucial to recognize that reductions in funding for programs such as the learning centers can have lasting negative impacts on student engagement, achievement, and overall educational quality. Striking a balance between budgetary constraints and the need for comprehensive educational programs is essential for fostering an environment where all students can succeed.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of funding for learning centers, specifically the impact this will have on the Central Theatre Arts Academy at Mililani High School and other learning centers affected across the state. These programs are critical to the educational and personal development of our students, providing unique opportunities that enhance their academic experiences and foster creativity and expression.

I have personally been impacted by the work done specifically at the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) at Mililani High School. My wife, Carolyn Chung served as the Learning Center Coordinator at Mililani High School for 6 years. During that period, I had the privilege to serve as the Central Theatre Arts Academy Foundation Treasurer for 4 years alongside dedicated parent volunteers to help raise money for the program. Learning centers, such as CTAA at Mililani High School, play an essential role in nurturing students' talents and interests beyond the traditional curriculum. These programs offer specialized instruction and resources that empower students to explore their passions, develop their skills, and build confidence in a supportive environment. I

have personally seen hundreds of students participate in the learning center and each student builds invaluable technical skills, creates lifelong friendships and connections, and gains confidence. All skills they have used well beyond the classroom.

Additionally, Superintendent Hayashi has personally witnessed the impact of arts programs like CTAA. In November 2023, Superintendent Hayashi and other DOE officials coordinated and helped to fund public school showings of the original musical "Peace on Your Wings" (<https://www.peaceonyourwings.com/>) at Moanalua High School. The DOE felt it was important for public school students to view a show that carried a message of peace and was operated and performed by their talented student peers. Many of the students performing and working in the show were from the CTAA and other learning centers across the State. The show itself was written and directed by Jennifer Rubin-Taira and my wife Carolyn Chung. Both of whom are Mililani High School learning center alumni.

The proposed reduction in budget for FY 2025-26 and elimination of the budget for FY 2026-27 that support these learning centers, will result in decreased student engagement, diminished opportunities for artistic expression, and a significant loss of cultural and technical enrichment within our schools. Learning centers like the Central Theatre Arts Academy not only supports students' educational goals but also contributes to the cultural vibrancy of our community. CTAA's shows have brought thousands of students, community members, families, and dignitaries to learn about the passion and talent of Hawaii's public school students. Reducing funding for these programs undermines the DOE's commitment to a well-rounded education and the importance of arts in our society.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and advocate for the preservation and enhancement of funding for learning centers. Investing in these programs is an investment in the future of our students, our schools, and our community. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I hope you will advocate for the importance of learning centers and ensure that our students receive the support they need to thrive.

Sincerely,



Reid Chung  
Proud Mililani High School Graduate  
CTAA Supporter

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:13 PM

### **Name**

Donna Kam

### **Organization**

HIDOE

### **Position/Title**

Vice Principal

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed reduction in funding for state Learning Centers (LC), agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and specifically the Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC.

This exceptional program offers our students invaluable opportunities to develop critical skills, explore their passions, and prepare for future success. By providing specialized instruction, hands-on learning experiences, industry-standard equipment, and certifications, the LC empowers students to become globally competitive and locally committed.

A reduction in funding would have a devastating impact on our students. It would limit access to essential resources, curtail innovative programs, and hinder our ability to provide the high-quality education our students deserve. The following initiatives would be affected: reduced internship opportunities, fewer field trips, or limited access to advanced technology.

By investing in our Learning Centers, we are investing in the future of our state. A well-educated workforce is essential to driving economic growth, attracting businesses, and improving the quality of life for all Hawaiians.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to support our students. The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC is a valuable asset to our community and deserves your continued investment.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Kam

Vice Principal

Kalaheo High School

Dear Hawaii Department of Education,

I am the Community Based Instruction (Life Skills-Severe Disabilities) teacher at Lahainaluna High School. I was very upset to hear that the funding may be cut for our Agriculture programs Learning Center (LC). The agriculture teacher and I have been collaborating together in order to bring opportunities to our students with disabilities. Our special education students that have more severe disabilities already have limitations placed upon them in society in general due to their disabilities. They often struggle with opportunities to learn independent living, how to care for others and vocational work ready skills. These Learning Center opportunities are important for all students but crucial for the students I serve. These LC programs offer my students the opportunity to try things they may not have been exposed to otherwise. These opportunities will increase their ability to work and live independently once they graduate from high school. So far this year our students have learned what it takes to build a habitat and care routine for two of our animals on campus. These students have spent so much time researching what our animals eat, their needs and have set up a care routine that they have been doing independently for the last three weeks. It took the first six weeks to teach them what to do and now they know and understand what their role is with the animals. They have gained so much confidence and learned so much in this program. One student has even gone on to volunteer at Maui Animal Farm with his new found skills. This student is now showing interest in working with animals after he graduates. This is huge for a student who a few months ago could care less about animals in general much less want a job working with them but because of this class he now has a life goal!

The Agriculture teacher, Nate Pallet and I, have collaborated on lessons for the remainder of this semester. We have ideas on how to get our students more involved next semester and use gardening equipment such as lawn mowers, weed eaters and leaf blowers. These activities can easily be translated into job skills that will make them more independent adults. We have also been planning for next year (adding in more power tools and building habitats/gardens around campus) in order to grow the program in order to explore more vocational opportunities that only these types of programs can offer. To lose the funding for this program would put the whole program and all of the potential for our students in jeopardy. With this program and the planning we have put in place here at Lahainaluna High School we are offering opportunities to students with disabilities who would NEVER have been able to gain these skills otherwise. Losing these types of programs would be detrimental to their overall outcomes. The more we can offer students in vocational areas the better it is for ALL students and the community at large. Please reconsider defunding the LC programs; our students want and need these programs to thrive after they leave school!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Community Based Instruction Teacher  
Lahainaluna High School

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 3:58 PM

### Name

Anne Alves

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

As a current HIDOE educator in the Leeward district and a former stage manager with Kaimuki High School Performing Arts Center (KHSPAC), I am extremely disappointed with the DOE's decision to cut all funding for Learning Centers from next year's budget and encourage you to reject this measure.

These learning centers provide hands-on experience for our youth in a variety of different areas such as performing arts, agriculture, and STEAM. These centers also help establish partnerships between our students and the professional community, something that we as teachers are increasingly being directed to do ourselves, but without any supports from the DOE. Why would the DOE then choose to cut funding from programs that already have these established partnerships between schools and the community, from students and professionals in a variety of fields?

What our students are learning in these programs not only helps our youth to develop as well-rounded, dedicated, and disciplined individuals, but it fosters a sense of community in a genuine way. In an ideal situation, ALL HIDOE schools would be providing the opportunities that these learning centers provide our students. But the fact of the matter is that the education budget has already been chiseled down so extremely that individual schools cannot provide this, and therefore learning centers are necessary in order to ensure these programs can continue to operate, ensuring that students from various schools have the opportunity to come together and continue their engaging education. These learning centers are more necessary than ever, thanks to the long-term effects that Covid isolation brought on. More than ever, we are seeing disengaged, apathetic adolescents. Why take away the funding from programs that are doing the most to reverse the Covid damage, providing extremely engaging educational opportunities for Hawaii's youth, and connecting them with one another and the right adults to support their growth?

These learning centers are extremely underfunded as it is. For example, the funds that go to KHSPAC are only enough to cover the minimal requirements to get the school year started. With inflation at a high, it costs exponentially more to run this program than it did in years past, but thanks to the creativity and efforts by those involved, especially the program director MJ Matsushita, the program continues to run year after year, providing opportunities for students to develop lifelong skills in both performance and technical theater. Production box office monies cover all the additional funding necessary to continue to run the program. Without the \$17,000 in initial funding, the program will collapse as it will be impossible to start each school year with \$0. Over the years, a number of students from this program have gone on to have successful careers in the performing arts including Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Regional roles. But beyond that, KHSPAC has provided a safe haven for underserved youth from marginalized and vulnerable populations, helping them build community, develop self-confidence, and learn a variety of skills that can be applied in numerous aspects of their lives.

It is hypocritical that the HIDOE is willing to take incredible opportunities away from our students all while claiming to produce college and career ready graduates. Beyond that, it is shameful that at a time where youth violence and crime is at an all time high, the DOE is pulling funding from these programs that keep our youth off the streets and develop them into positive members of society. I recommend you reconsider cutting funding to our learning centers

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across the state.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:54 PM

### **Name**

Yoshimi Claborn

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Wai'anae Marine Science Learning Center is an important program for Hawai'i youth and future resilience. I am writing this as a private citizen, but I have worked with Dana Hoppe and her crew at Waianae MSLC for a project I engaged in as part of University of Hawai'i. We connected with MSLC and Native Hawaiian fishpond stewards across the island to revitalize traditional and customary practices related to the native striped mullet ('ama'ama) production, and their natural behavior of journeying around O'ahu, called 'anae holo. This annual migratory event was seen for many many years by the local fisher community and was crucial to sustenance and food security; however, 'anae holo disappeared due to changes in land use, pollution, and decline in traditional and customary practices such as fishpond and taro field management. Our research looked at striped mullet diet to see what they are eating so we can revitalize their recruitment into coastal areas; we partnered with MSLC who are working with their students to develop and maintain a striped mullet nursery. They were one of the hosts as we made a human field trip (huaka'i) mimicking the 'anae holo in spirit - stopping at their nursery center. When we visited, we were astounded at how well spoken, determined, and mature the students are, and by their dedication to the project. They shared their challenges in funding as well as their hope for their work playing important roles in the future of Hawai'i's food security and climate resilience. The programs at MSLC, including the nursery as well as others, prepares students for the future of Hawai'i, the workforce, and equips them with confidence, team building skills, and other professional development skills to succeed. In addition, MSLC reared baby and juvenile mullet and supplied other nurseries and fishponds with their mullet, becoming a seedling and a multiplier for education as well as food web production across the state. For these reasons, and many more, this program should continue to be funded and supported by the state.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:23 PM

### **Name**

Daelyn Doeh

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a parent of a student who is in beginning band at Kahuku High and Intermediate school. I am submitting testimony to help keep our special Music Learning Center distinction and funding. The funding plays an important role in what makes it possible for students like my son to get the necessary equipment to fully support his education and participation in his band class. This class has played such a big role in helping my son boost his self confidence and learn how to play an instrument which has so many positives for the community and our children.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:12 PM

### **Name**

Christian Lee-Tomita

### **Organization**

DOE- School Food Services Branch

### **Position/Title**

School Food Services Manager IV

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Why take away funding from programs that give our children a creative outlet to find themselves? This is a form of education that children need, use, and can take advantage. My daughter who is now in seventh grade has been in four CPAC productions and looks forward to them every year since the fifth grade. She is in the honors program at King Intermediate who gets straight A's but has found a passion for the performing arts. Please do not do this to our community and our children. This would be utterly unjust and a travesty if the BOE were to follow through on this matter.



# Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

1321 Kino'ole Street - Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

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**2024-2025**

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Tracie Yoshimoto

Hawai'i State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96804

October 30, 2024

Dear Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to your budget proposal to defund the Technology Learning Center (TLC). TLC is a critical supporter of various robotics programs across our state, collaborating with local companies and businesses to hold STEAM camps, events, and learning opportunities for Hawai'i's keiki interested in pursuing a career in STEAM.

By defunding TLC, we risk losing a vital resource that has been instrumental in sparking curiosity and building foundational skills among our youth in fields like engineering, technology, and science. This defunding could have several significant repercussions, including, but not limited to: 1) Reduced interest in STEAM careers, 2) Continued local STEAM workforce shortages, 3) Decreased equitable access to STEAM education, and 4) Lost relationships between students and local businesses, mentorships, internships, and other career-building connections.

Mahalo again for the opportunity to express our opposition to this measure. We urge you to reconsider this proposal and to invest in programs that develop the next generation of skilled professionals. Supporting STEAM education not only benefits our students but also strengthens Hawai'i's position as a competitive and innovative state.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carla Kuo

Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:13 PM

### **Name**

Auree Domingo

### **Organization**

CTAA Mililani Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a fellow student from a learning center I was sadden to hear that the DOE is shifting their budget away. This can negatively affect learning centers because not all schools can pay for it on their own. These are not just learning centers, these are centers where students can connect with others and learn more about their passion. I was in the CTAA Mililani Learning Center for three years now that the experience and learning opportunities it has given me is irreplaceable. I am not just fighting for the current students that are apart of learning centers today but also for the future children that are planning to join. In CTAA I was able to gain new friends who had similar interest and also gain more knowledge on something that I was passionate about. CTAA is the reason on why I was able to work in professional theater in high school. Not only does it teaches students theater skills but skills that they can take outside of theater. I have gained more confidence from CTAA, which is why I have found the confidence to write this testimony right now.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:13 PM

### Name

Moria Nisbet

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha to Whom It May Concern,

As a parent to a student who are about to enter the Hawaii Public Education System and a former student myself, I am strongly opposed to the proposed budget cuts for the arts, agriculture, STEM, and other learning center programs. Although this budget proposes a "shift" of the financial support from the DOE to the specific schools, it is clear that these programs are no longer a priority for the DOE or the state. Many of these programs are already largely supported by volunteer hours, fundraising, and the community. They do not have the margin or the means to be cut any further.

In the strategic priorities, the DOE lists recovery from the pandemic learning losses. Obviously these types of educational programs took the largest hits from the shift to virtual learning during the pandemic. Most - if not all - of these programs require hands on skill learning and in person interaction.

The performing arts teach students empathy, communication skills, creative problem solving and teamwork. The STEM programs allow for students to become critical thinkers, develop innovative skills, and allow students to explore future job skills. Agricultural programs are vital to the state initiatives to become more self sustaining on locally grown food. How will students get access to these types of opportunities if they are not available within the public education system? The answer is only those who have the means to afford it. Public schools are the only resources available to all children regardless of income level.

Students that do not find a community within athletics thrive best in these programs and are able to find the support to explore talents and interests. A loss of these opportunities will have devastating repercussions because once they are cut, they rarely are ever able to return.

My daughter is about to enter the school system next year and I fear that the opportunities that I had a public school student will no longer be available to her. Our keiki deserve a future with more opportunities to shine, not less.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:24 PM

### **Name**

Lara Cheney

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to oppose the elimination of the Learning Center Funding for Kahuku High and Intermediate School for both the Music and Health Learning Centers at the school. I am an alumni of the Music Learning Center and I am a parent of a current band and choir member that is benefitting from the Music Learning Center. I was able to learn so much from the Music program and was able to continue to play music in college because of the things that I learned via the Music Learning Center. Our school already has limited resources and through this Music Learning Center, both the choir and the band have earned many awards both locally and nationally. The Music Learning Center has made it possible for its members to travel and perform and share aloha with the world. I personally was able to travel to the Rose Bowl in 1994 because of the Music Learning Center. I am afraid that if funding is discontinued, we might lose a lot of talented musicians to other schools, that have stronger programs. It is so sad that due to budget cuts over the years, we have lost trade classes and now you are wanting to cripple the arts. The performing arts are so important to help our students be well rounded. Please don't sacrifice the Music and Health Learning Centers for Kahuku High and Intermediate Schools. It matters to the children that might not be able to do sports but that enjoy Music and Health. We want well rounded individuals to be our future leaders.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:24 PM

### Name

Elizabeth Young

### Organization

1967

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

Thank you for all you do to support the education of the children of Hawai'i. I am writing testimony as a parent, a teacher and community member out of my grave concern over the plan to reduce and ultimately cut funding to the Learning Centers in public schools across Hawai'i. These programs provide invaluable spaces for students to learn and grow outside of the standard classroom. The General Learning Outcomes so proudly presented by the DOE are being constantly developed and practiced by students in these non-traditional learning spaces. The goal of equity so confidently declared by the Superintendent is being provided to at risk, non-conforming students within these uniquely nurtured organizations.

As a teacher, I know that finding a way for students to look forward to attending school is crucial for their academic success. I smiled over the years as I listened to many performing arts students state, unequivocally, that if it weren't for the performing arts program that they were participating in, they would not be attending school at all. These Learning Centers draw a small portion of their funding from the DOE budget, making up shortfalls through fundraising and donations of time, talent and treasure. If individual teachers, staff members, friends and family so readily contribute to the success of their Learning Center, where they are first-hand witnesses to the program's successes and challenges, why in the world would the DOE determine that this a place to cut the budget?

I strongly oppose any budget does not continue to fund the Learning Centers at the 2024-25 level or higher.

Mahalo for your attention.

Beth Young

Kāne'ohe resident

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:33 PM

### **Name**

Devin Elting

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The theatre program at Castle Performing Arts Center was an integral part of my high school experience and helped me become a more rounded individual. It also set me on the path as a professional, working actor in New York City, something I pursued with success for a decade before changing careers. I continue to use the skills learned from the program; listening, communication, and the general ability to be personable serve me well. Ignoring my own undeniable benefits from spending four years participating in theatre and learning from Karen Meyer, it would be a crime to eliminate the decades of life changing effects the CPAC program has had for thousands of students. It would be ashamed to take that away from future classes so I ask you to reconsider and continue to fund the yearly start up costs. As a program that generates much of its own funding, this seems like a very efficient return on investment.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:47 PM

### **Name**

Jeremiah Chaney

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

For years it has always been an uphill battle for these programs in schools to appeal for funding, where as other extracurricular school activities (particularly sports) never have to worry. Performing arts are just as necessary and deserve to be funded as well. The kids that participate always show how much they care about it, it's time you show that you do too. Please consider putting some funding towards the future of performing arts for both the aspiring young thespians of Hawaii and the teachers that put their all to provide them with the means to perform.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:13 PM

### **Name**

Carolyn Chung

### **Organization**

Mililani High School Performing Arts Program

### **Position/Title**

Former Performing Arts Learning Center Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Carolyn Chung and I am a former Performing Arts Learning Center Coordinator at Mililani High School. I was recently made aware that the learning centers are not a part of the proposed budget for the incoming 2026 fiscal year. This is very concerning and I am writing to ask for your reconsideration of this budgeted money.

I was the Performing Arts Learning Center Coordinator at Mililani High School from 2016-2022. In that time, I had the opportunity to work with hundreds of students ages 8-18 from all different public schools. Since there are only a handful of Performing Arts Learning Centers on Oahu, students travel from different schools coming to rehearsal and classes after school to participate in the program. Students not only learn technical skills in acting and performing, but also have opportunities to learn skills in sound design, costume design, set construction, and stage and house management. Through these classes and hands-on learning experiences, students come together to create student directed performances, stage plays, and musical productions. The growth that I've seen in the students who go through this program is amazing. For most of these students, participating in performing arts becomes the highlight of their high school years.

Also, many of these students go on to use these skills (whether in performing arts or other careers) after graduating from high school. I have former students who are working professionally on island in sound design and stage management because of the opportunities that they had to participate in the performing arts learning center. I also have former students who are now working professionally as actors and performers all around the country because of this program. Not only do students learn technical theater skills, but students also gain experience and knowledge in life skills such as; communication, team work, problem solving, and responsibility. This hands-on learning program (like all the other learning centers around the state) are so important for students development as they go to college or straight into the workforce.

Personally, I too was a part of the Mililani High School Performing Arts Learning Center for 3 years when I was in high school many years ago. This experience also helped to form my adult years and gave me a foundation that I wanted to build upon. Not only did I end up getting a Bachelors of Arts in Acting from the University of Portland after graduating from Mililani High School, but I also co-founded a performing arts non-profit program called Ohana Arts. In 2023, Superintendent Keith Hayashi attended our musical production of Peace On Your Wings which I directed. Superintendent Hayashi was so inspired that through the support of the DOE, Ohana Arts was able to perform Peace On Your Wings to many schools at Moanalua High School back in November of 2023. We did a weekend of shows for

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many public schools around the island and the feedback from students and teachers was so positive. Students that have never been a part of musical theater or performing arts suddenly wanted to learn more about how they can get involved. I don't know if my path would have taken me this route if the performing arts learning center was not an option to me when I was in high school.

The Learning Centers for the public schools in the State of Hawaii are some of the most important programs necessary to help students learn and develop into successful young adults. For some, programs like this keep are what keep students coming to school as it can provide a welcoming and non-judgmental environment for those who need a certain kind of learning space to grow and change. As someone who was once a part of this program and then the coordinator of this program, I know first hand how important it is to keep these programs thriving for years to come. Please reconsider the proposed budget and keep our learning centers a part of Hawaii's schools.

Thank you,

Carolyn Chung

Mililani High School Former Learning Center Coordinator and Alumni of the Performing Arts Learning Centers

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:24 PM

### Name

Mina Darr

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Mina Darr, and I'm a junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Science Olympiad is a part of a STEM learning center program at Mililani HS, one that has impacted me strongly. The fundings that are given have helped us pursue our academic goals and achievements, and by taking them away it would bring harm to our academic goals and traditions that we have here in MHS. The event has brought me a stronger understanding in STEM concepts and helped me to be a better communicator and planner, it has also impacted me to try new things and explore areas in STEM that I wouldn't usually look at. Without this event, many of us members positively impacted by our programs would be at a place where we are unable to continue forward with our competitions and our events. We would be losing a large part of our education, we would also lose many of our academic traditions as a school community.

I have full sympathy for the tragic losses for the Lahaina Fire, I truly wish to bring support to it and advocate the lingering situation. However, taking fundings away from our education that prevents us from exploring further into our passions and foundations of education is not a just response to this. There should be no sudden sacrifices made, especially ones with a good cause and not many close ties to the tragedy itself. As much admiration I have to this concept, I disagree to saying this is the right solution. We should not have to lose our education.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

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I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mina Darr  
email: 1121401479@k12.hi.us  
phone #: (808) 754-8362

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:33 PM

### **Name**

Jade Vaiaoga

### **Organization**

Kahuku High

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

I am a mother of 4 Hawaii DOE students and I oppose the budget as it states the music and health programs will be cut by the 26-27 school year. The music program especially is equally as important as any school subject or activity. It would be a major disservice to the community, especially our children, if you were to get rid of these programs.

Thank you

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:47 PM

### **Name**

Mejelyne Simon

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Extra curricular activities such as the performing arts and STEM have as much right to be funded as sports have. These programs allow students to be off the streets and have a reason to do well in school. By stripping away these programs, we are endangering them and stripping their reason to do well away. Supporting these programs allows them to be supported in a way that helps their future.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:33 PM

### **Name**

Tyler Roque

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi my name is Tyler Roque I am submitting this testimony to oppose this agenda. The MSLC program was a very vital part of my high school life. I lost my mom to cancer my second day of my junior year entering this program. When I came back it was stressful for me not wanting to talk to anyone but, all of my peers made me feel extremely welcome, to give me the time to heal and find my own space in a world that I thought I hated. Mrs. Hoppe will forever have a space in my heart that I didn't think could be filled at the time. My entire 2 years of the program I made friends for life. Some friends became family that I chose. Til this day my passwords for my life have something that has to do with this program. If I had the right support from my own family I would've continued a career within this space! Please continue this program and give another child the opportunity that was given to me. To save a life of someone that you don't know that maybe one day he/she will make a positive impact on OUR community!!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:58 PM

### **Name**

Julian Miel Sanchez

### **Organization**

Farrington High School

### **Position/Title**

Student/Associated Student Body Audio/Visual Co-Chairperson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As someone who has regarded theatre as a major factor in turning the tide of my high school career, the importance of funding public learning centers should not only be upheld, but also be considered a necessity as it allows for youth to garner important real life skills and experiences that they can carry on into their future. While I cannot speak for all learning centers, I can confidently say that the sense of community that these performing arts centers have fostered is nothing short of incredible, and I'm sure this can be said for all types of learning centers. Theatre has given me the opportunity to explore my sense of self and gain a level of confidence that I never knew I could reach. On top of that, it has also given me the privilege to understand and personally experience how professional theatre is like despite being relatively young still. Ever since my Freshman year, it has opened many doors for me and has allowed me to meet many new faces all throughout the different public schools within Hawai'i; many new faces that I now consider some of my closest friends. Seeing the sheer passion and talent that each production held was a joy to see, and I found it touching to see that there were people out there just like me; people—YOUTH—who were just as excited to not just share the storyline of their given productions, but also the story of themselves as people who have worked hard to achieve greatness. People have found a home in these performing arts centers as it has allowed them the opportunity to do what they love. Communities have flourished under the roofs and stage lights of these very buildings that are planning to be cut. To stop funding learning centers is to cut the dreams of the generations who come after us. The Hawai'i high school theatre community has continued to inspire many youth—with me previously being one of them—to try the path of the performing arts. We perform not for ourselves, but the community at large, and we will continue to perform to inspire. Art is what keeps us alive, and I'm certain that this cycle of passion will continue on in future generations to come. But this passion is nothing without a place to foster it in.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:59 PM

### **Name**

Goldium Wu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:59 PM

### **Name**

Aloalii Asoau-Asuega

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The DOE should continue to have funds sponsoring school learning centers and extracurricular activities, these will help build the kids that want to pursue and have the resources and centers to keep learning and enjoying what they do outside of the classroom.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 4:52 PM

### Name

Aaron Shumway

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am opposed to the portions of this bill that eliminate the Learning Center Funding for Kahuku High and Intermediate School over the next two years. I am a beneficiary of the Choir and Band programs (1983-86), and all of our six children have participated in both Choir and Band at Kahuku. We all have learned invaluable lessons in musicianship and performance, team building and execution, goal setting and discipline, just to name a few. Cutting this funding right when Kahuku is resurrecting its marching band will limit students' ability to experience this growth and development.

I played in Kahuku's marching band in their heyday (1985-86) under band director Michael Payton. We worked hard in a pre-school, week-long band camp, both in musicality and in marching. We drilled relentlessly during the Fall, and each section bonded as we learned to rely on each other and to trust each other that we'd hit our notes and our paces correctly. That hard work garnered all sorts of competitions and awards, and the following year the band marched in the Rose Bowl parade. All six of our children played in Pep Band and Concert band. They made friends and found a passion for music that provided a stabilizing force during their intermediate and high school experience. Our youngest daughter enjoyed her percussion experience in Kahuku's band that she is now majoring in Instrumental Performance - Percussion at BYU-Hawaii. That would not have happened without her band experience at Kahuku.

Choir was also an important part of our children's experience. Our four oldest children performed in Kahuku's show choir "Vocal Motion" and developed their talents in singing, acting, projection, choreography, and so many others, not to mention the confidence they gained being on stage. Due in no small part to her music experience in band and choir at Kahuku, our second daughter majored in Theater Education and is now teaches drama at Hau'ula Elementary School.

Funding Kahuku's Learning Center will allow these programs to continue to flourish. Just this year, Kahuku's band director, Pablo Furukawa, announced that they are resurrecting Kahuku's marching band, once called "The Pride of the North Shore." Next year the band has been invited to play at the Merrie Monarch festival on the Big Island, and while they are paying their own travel, funds are needed to ship instruments, transport students, provide food, and so on. Cutting their funds will be hurting their futures. Please do not allow this bill to pass in its present form.

Mahalo!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:09 PM

### **Name**

Chase Jorgenson

### **Organization**

Erhs theater

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Theater's needs to be funded and helped to fulfill kids dreams.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:54 PM

### **Name**

Sara Nielsen

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, I am here to share a written testimony in support of keeping the Learning Center funding for KHIS. When I attended Kahuku High and Intermediate I was a part of band and I loved it. I loved being a part of it and being able to do the things I did when I was there. My older siblings attended Kahuku and they were a part of band and choir. Seeing them doing those programs with marching band, concerts, etc. helped my love for music grow even more and made me want to join band when I got older. I am grateful for my time in band and the opportunities I was given. Grateful for my teachers and fellow classmates. It helped me learn in many ways with studying something I wanted myself to do and learn, working with others to accomplish a goal and working hard and being dedicated in finishing that goal. I've made memories and relations that will stay with me and I will always be grateful that these programs were available for me to do. I truly think it's important that these programs keep running to help our current and future generations. Mahalo

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:23 PM

### **Name**

Emily Plicka

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a parent to three children of which two have already greatly benefited from the LEARNING CENTER FUNDING granted to KAHUKU INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL. My third child will be attending KAHUKU intermediate and high school beginning next year. I cannot express emphatically enough how essential LEARNING CENTER FUNDING is to these programs and how directly it benefits students. We are a small school in an economically challenged area. Our community rallies around and support sports most especially football. It is a really special part of our community! It brings us together. However, the number of players who are involved on the football team are only small minority compared to the great number of students at the school. In recent years we have seen our community start to rally for our music programs too! It is wonderful to witness all these students, both athletes and music arts students supported and loved by our community. It as taken a few years of hard work for the music programs to build momentum and get recognized, especially after Covid. Music programs funded in great part by the LEARNING CENTER funds, specifically VOCAL MOTION choir, and Kahuku's band, MARCHING BAND and PEP BAND, have been life saving. My oldest child essentially missed the majority of two years of high school due to Covid. When she was able to return with her class for her junior and senior year, it was the LEARNING CENTER funding through the music programs that provided her the connection that she needed with her classmates. In these programs she met her best friends, there she was able to be part of a group that worked together to create beautiful music. The camaraderie and the joy, and therapeutic quality that it brought to her daily life in a challenging high school environment and a challenging post Covid environment in which she had withered, was irreplaceable. The two years of Covid fallout before school got back to normal were so incredibly depressing that I watched my daughter go through a deep depression and even suicidal ideation. But when KAHUKU INT HIGH SCHOOL got back into session, it was through the LEARNING CENTER FUNDED programs that she found her place of belonging. As a parent, this was such a relief and joy to witness, it did indeed feel lifesaving and life-giving. I know for a fact that this has been the case for the majority of students who are involved in the music programs that are funded by the LEARNING CENTER. Dare I say that if LEARNING CENTER FUNDING is lost, more funding will be needed in other areas for counseling services and mental health crisis. My second child is currently in his final year of high school at KAHUKU and his most memorable experiences through these school years have been in the CHOIR and BAND programs funded in large part by the LEARNING CENTER FUNDING. A somewhat shy child with a stutter, he is now a saxophone section leader in the concert band, he participates in nearly 12 to 16 hours of out-of-school-music practice which keeps him busy and out of trouble (something that we should NOT underestimate!), and on his own time he is learning how to write and record his own music. The good that this brings him in his life is immeasurable. And the same is true for every student in these programs. He is looking at colleges that have marching band programs! He learned how to sing in the VOCAL MOTION choir, and let me tell you, he is much better at singing on tune and harmonizing! The skills that he has developed through his years in the LEARNING CENTER funded programs include far more than playing musical instruments and singing in choir. He has to lead his section of saxophones in sectionals practice, he has to come early and stay late to band practices and meetings so that he and the leadership committee can do things such as ready the marching band uniforms that have been stored in a closet (in humid Hawaii!) for 30 years! In both Choir and Band he has participated in special musical workshops with PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS funded by the LEARNING CENTER funds. For example, for band they have had the amazing opportunity to work with the USA NAVY BAND! Up close and personal, they met with Navy Band musicians who played

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with them. The Navy Band were dressed in their traditional uniforms and IT WAS IMPRESSIVE. It made a huge impact on these kids from Kahuku. It gave them a model of what is possible for them! In Kahuku Choirs they have been able to be directed by guest university directors and even visit college campuses, for a lot of these kids they will never do a college visit! These special educational opportunities are made possible by the LEARNING CENTER FUNDING. Another specific example of the good that LEARNING CENTER funding provides is that finally Kahuku high school marching band is RESTARTING their MARCHING BAND! He is part of the NEW GENERATION bringing back "THE PRIDE OF THE NORTH SHORE" after having been discontinued for the past 30 years! He is proud of their hard work to make this happen. He talks about how difficult it is to bring marching band back, and how he envies the younger classmates who, next year and the following years, will have marching band players who already have a year or two or three years of experience behind them. Whereas this year, everyone is new and learning! And at the same time, he is very excited to be part of the inaugural comeback of "The Pride of the North Shore" Kahuku marching band. However, sadly, this, and other music programs may not be possible without LEARNING CENTER FUNDING. If you look at our small community, and the economic challenges that we face, and the price that we pay such as having windmills constructed in our community because we don't have money to prevent others from taking advantage of our low income economics, you will see that funding such as that provided by the LEARNING CENTER is a huge deal that brings a richer learning environment to a population of students and families who have a big heart, and who care deeply about the welfare of our community, but who do NOT have the pocket books to fund these essential programs. Music and arts funded by the LEARNING CENTER are not "extras" that can be cut. They are ESSENTIAL to the healthy development of our children. I urge you to please renew LEARNING CENTER funding to our music and arts programs at Kahuku intermediate and high school! Please do it for my third child who is beginning his first year next year at KAHUKU. My youngest is already talking about his desire to sing in choir and to play saxophone in MARCHING BAND like his big brother. We need people like you to help people like us! It feels like we are finally gaining momentum and the other students at Kahuku are starting to notice and become more interested in these programs too! With renewed FUNDING, the programs will grow even more and benefit even MORE STUDENTS! Mahalo nui loa for reconsideration of renewing LEARNING CENTER FUNDING for KAHUKU INTERMEDIATE & HIGH SCHOOL.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Gina Figueira

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha esteemed decision-makers,

I am here to strongly oppose the proposed funding cuts for our island's learning centers to include robotics programs. These programs are more than educational resources; they are pathways that empower our keiki (children) with a vision for their futures that includes meaningful opportunities right here in the islands.

Through access to hands-on learning in STEM fields, robotics, and other innovative areas, our keiki develop critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that are essential in today's workforce. These experiences give them a sense of what's possible in terms of careers and higher education here at home. By understanding the range of opportunities available in the islands, our young people can envision successful futures without feeling they need to leave Hawai'i to find fulfilling careers.

Our learning centers and robotics programs don't just teach technical skills; they build confidence, inspire creativity, and help students realize their potential within their own communities. I have seen firsthand how these programs foster a sense of pride and belonging. Students who might not feel at home in traditional classroom settings find new purpose and discover passions that can lead to real jobs and futures here in Hawai'i.

By discontinuing funding for these programs, we risk not only limiting our keiki's education but also the future of our islands. Please consider the far-reaching impact these programs have in preparing our children to be skilled, connected, and invested in the place they call home.

Mahalo for your consideration and for listening to the voices of those who believe in these vital programs for Hawai'i's youth.



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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 5:22 PM

### Name

Prince Joseph Lloren

### Organization

Mililani Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

The arts are dying. And you're supporting that. What was the most recent movie, show, cartoon, or any piece of entertainment you've seen? You see, all those originate from the work of fine arts, theatre, and many different programs. These talented and well taught people who put in their souls to tell their story. What would be a world where there are mundane and mediocre forms of "art". My name is Prince Joseph Lloren, I'm 14 years old and an aspiring actor who wants to live in a world where art, music, performance, and creativity is widespread. As a kid, I had been inspired by various forms of comedy and entertainment, like sit-coms and comedy shows such as Wizards of A Waverly Place, Good Luck Charlie, Jessie, the musical Curtains, the musical Anything Goes, and many other creations. Then we also get the engaging and entertainment intensive shows like Mean Girls, Be More Chill, Heathers, Funny Girl, Hello Dolly, and The Sound of Music, shows that not only tell a story, but really use the arts to create beautiful works that are put onstage. What will happen to people who want to be that person onstage and live in Hawaii? Two things will happen, one they get forced out of the state due to its lack of support in art, or they just don't exist. Many programs on this island inspire these children to be performers, to be that person who gives you an experience outside of your regular life. For example, many elementary and middle school students in Mililani cannot wait to join the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) to meet new people, to learn about the arts of theatre, music, and performing. You are taking their dreams away. The future generation of performers are threatened by your choice in this.

Not only does your choice affect performers, but it affects kids in STEM. What is STEM? STEM is the future for the technology industry and innovation for all of the world. Now correct me if I'm wrong, but you're shifting educational funding, to pay office workers and IT workers more cash than they already get? I'm not sure if you noticed but it sounds honestly unreasonable. IT workers are related to STEM in many different ways. They both work and construct technology. So the reasoning I'm getting is that you're increasing pay for IT workers, but lessening funds to help teach future IT workers? The whole state is confused by this reasoning. Think about this question, when you want to regrow the population of a tree, do you water the tree? Or do you water the seed? Reasonably, you'd water the seed since they will be the new generation. The thing is, you are watering the tree. This can be for everything in the education system as well. Why would you cut from education organizations when the future of the world comes from them? What happened to taking care of the future? Where is allowing the children to choose their career path? How can you say every child can have an equal chance at having any career they want if you remove programs for the students? And not only that you are removing learning opportunities, but you will have unemployed teachers, who already don't get paid enough for their work. And don't expect OUR schools to support STEM. Some schools just can't or their

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principal's don't care enough, and those Learning Programs are the only things keeping them running.

And also, don't you think removing the funding for learning centers WITHOUT the Learning Centers and the people they support's knowledge is just rude? You didn't let us have a say. Did you want us not to have a say? Honestly, it's just infuriating to think that this was the reason you hadn't told us earlier. We want straight to the point answers. What's the real purpose for taking OUR funds. Were we one of those "obsolete" programs to you? If you're trying to solve an issue, don't attack our education. We deserve to have quality programs.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:19 PM

### **Name**

Casey Park

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Casey Park and I am writing to oppose the proposed Department of Education budget which phases out critical funding for Learning Center programming. I am a lifelong Hawaii resident who grew up both watching and performing in productions at Castle Performing Arts Center. Watching these productions as a child inspired me to pursue performing arts. This became an outlet for creative expression, building my confidence, and connecting with like-minded youth in my community. In the same way that we value youth sports for the benefits they bring to children's mental, social, and physical wellbeing, programs like performing arts and STEM provided through Learning Centers do the same for children who do not or can not participate in sports. Youth already have a difficult time in school. We know that we are in a youth mental health crisis. Healthy outlets that provide meaning and enjoyment cannot be threatened without also negatively impacting youth mental health and school performance. Learning Center budgets are a non-negotiable. Please, I ask the Board of Education to oppose the proposed DOE budget in favor of preserving State Learning Center funding.

Mahalo.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:41 PM

### **Name**

Vaughn Cook

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Foundation

### **Position/Title**

President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Waiakea High School Foundation's charitable mission is to support educational opportunities at Waiakea High School. The Foundation has always supported WHS Robotics and STEM education as these are critical for developing the thought leaders of tomorrow. The WHS Robotics team depends on funding through the Technology Learning Center (TLC). It has come to our attention that the DOE operating budget for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 DEFUNDS THE TLC. This defunding of TLC results in serious harm to the WHS Robotics team and STEM education generally.

WHS Robotics has benefitted the community tremendously through such measures of success as:

- We've collaborated with local companies and business to hold STEAM camps and events and we were able to reach over 2700+ of Hawaii's keiki that showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM
- We provide various learning opportunities for our students to learn all aspects of STEAM including building, programming, design, modeling, and business.
- This previous season we placed 10th place out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition-and the 8th overall team in the state of Hawaii.
- Our team has been able to travel all over the United States for First Robotics Competition regionals, placing as semi-finalist or winners in multiple competitions over the span of 21 years
- Some of our previous students are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA, launched a rocket, and one worked on a microsatellite

PLEASE SUPPORT WHS ROBOTICS AND STEM BY NOT DEFUNDING THE TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTER!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Wei Liu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing this testimony in opposition of the budget cut to learning centers on page 33, row 77 in the proposed budget document.

I believe that cutting the budget for learning centers goes against the plans of the department to "sustain operations that support teaching and learning." In fact, it seems that the department is heading in the exact opposite direction of this goal.

By cutting the budget of these centers, less children will have the opportunity to learn and explore themselves as individuals. These learning centers include performing arts centers, which is why I am strongly against this. As a student who's been in theatre, I can confidently say that it has provided me with a unique and wonderful experience. Theatre is often a place where kids find the place to be themselves, and discover others who are just like them. Many of my cast mates regarded theatre as their second home, most having been in previous plays before. Performing arts centers provide students with a safe place, a sense of community, and a support system. In theatre, I learned to connect with others, be myself, and if that's still not enough 'learning', I learned how to drill and build a set. If you ask me, helping kids is the most important thing a place could provide.

These places are important to people, they support and uplift people. In a time of rising rates of depression and anxiety among young people, these places are the most valuable things we can have. Please reconsider, if not for you, then at least for the kids.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:58 PM

### **Name**

Zane Rawlins

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I think that there's no reason to restrict students and children's opportunities for classes or activities that they enjoy or want to try out. Having extracurriculars for all types of subjects is what makes schools stand out and makes it even more enjoyable for students. Most of the times, it even leads to passionate careers correlating to those extracurricular academics so keep these opportunities and chances for students to enjoy the education furthermore and let find their passion.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:58 PM

### **Name**

Rylie Martinez

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi, my name is Rylie Martinez. I am 14 years old and I go to Mililani High school as a freshman. I grew up singing and screaming at the top of my lungs, so I naturally love music and talking at loud volumes for hours and hours. What did these qualities go well with? Theatre. Since I was interested in theatre, I joined CTAA, also known as Mililani Learning Center. I joined CTAA not knowing what to do. There were so many options like props, costumes, set, lights and sound. So I decided to do something I knew nothing about, costumes. I learned so much after being there for only a quarter. Not only did CTAA teach me the fundamentals of costume making, it helped me make friends. I love CTAA so much and I'm so glad I am able to be a part of it. Unfortunately, without funding, we lose staff and materials. Without funding nothing will be the same.

Fine arts, agriculture and STEM is very important for the keiki of Hawaii. Fine arts gives children a way to express themselves creatively whether it is painting, dancing or singing. STEM helps children learn how to work together to come to revolutionary solutions. Agriculture is important because it helps children learn the importance of taking care of our planet. Without these creative outlets, children are less likely to find valuable career opportunities such as engineering, acting, singing, dancing, creative writing, art, gardening and arming. These things are so important for people to have because without these occupations Hawaii will be even less represented than it is now. Overall, the future of Hawaii seems dim without fine arts, stem and agriculture. Unless we want the success of Hawaiian people to die out, we need to keep these departments afloat.

Thank you for your time and I hope you reconsider this decision.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Shannon Tamimi

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Parent of previous and current Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center students

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please continue to fund the Learning Centers. The Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center had a dramatic effect on my children's lives. Both of my children started off in robotics through programs in Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center at an early age. They learned coding, design, building, circuits, teamwork, problem solving and sportsmanship in robotics under Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center. Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center provided opportunities for technology exploration and career discovery. Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center gave both of my children a sense of purpose, direction and connection to their school and education. Please continue to fund the Learning Centers. Mahalo



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:51 PM

### **Name**

Mark Branner

### **Organization**

University of Hawaii at Manoa

### **Position/Title**

Professor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose the proposed budget that cuts all funding for State Learning Centers by 2026.

Many of these learning centers are the primary sources of theatre and dance education for our public schools. This is especially true of our smaller, less well-funded, and rural communities. These learning centers are crucial spaces for young lovers of the performing arts to discover themselves as artists and to find the critical sense of COMMUNITY that we all need so dearly in high school. Additionally, quite a few public school students in these programs matriculate the UHM Department of Theatre and Dance. Additionally, at least two of the current faculty members of our Department "came up" through one such learning center and may not have pursued these valuable careers without the presence of these learning centers.

To give a final specific example, the money being eliminated directly supports the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) at Mililani High School. Without it, there is no guarantee that CTAA can continue in any capacity. We have had students from this program come to study at our Department. We have also had graduates from our program teach at Mililani High School and at other State Learning Centers.

Once again, I strongly oppose these funding cuts for State Learning Centers by the year 2026.

Mark Branner, Professor  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:09 PM

### **Name**

Elijah Cabiles

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Education in all forms is key. By removing any and all forms of education would be a disappointment not only to the children but our community. Band and choir are no exceptions to this disappointment.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:03 PM

### **Name**

Xiaoqin Sun

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Xiaoqin Sun, and I am the parent of a 12th grade student at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I have two children who attended Mililani High School. They both attended First Robotics, over the years learning from FIRST Robotics they learned how to make projects successfully. They learned to work hard as team members are supposed to do and contribute their best effort. Through the FIRST Robotics program, they gained real experiences of competition.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Xiaoqin Sun

95-206 Kaukini Place

Mililani HI 96789

Ph: 808-368-8896

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:58 PM

### **Name**

Nishimura Dane

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Once again, you are trying to take away opportunities for your students beyond the school day. Don't you guys preach supporting our youth and providing them with opportunities that main are not able to get on their own? What other project is more important to fund beside our school programs. These programs give our students a sense of belonging. For many these is an outlet to show off their skills and be apart of something they are passionately about. With out these programs it not only provides them with less opportunity but there is a less sense of connection to our school and community. Some of the student truly benefit from participating in these programs. This also give the student's something do and keep them out of trouble after school. These programs are essential for the growth of our students and for them to pursue a career after high school. No one benefits from these and you are essentially taking away something that is so valuable to our students.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 6:09 PM

### Name

Malulani Bohnet

### Organization

Kahuku Music program

### Position/Title

Parent

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Malulani Bohnet the music programs at Kahuku High and Intermediate school have been beneficial to 2 of 3 of my children. It has given a sense of pride, friendship and belonging. Both programs have help each of my daughters learn the importance of being part of a team. It has also taught them responsibility, respect, and resilience. All skills that they will need once they leave school. Cutting the budget for these programs would harm the progress that not only my children have made but that of those who are also in these programs. I would greatly implore to not cut budgets due to the beneficial nature that these programs offer to their students.

Mahalo

Malulani Bohnet

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:09 PM

### **Name**

Mayette Pahulu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha e, my name is Mayette Pahulu a recent graduate of Kahuku High and Intermediate School and a proud representative of Kahuku High's Health Learning Center. I strongly oppose the budget cuts that are being proposed due to the significant impact it would have on our students education. With this specific funding from the state, we were able to connect students to internships which could later turn into a job or career. We were able to provide trainings, that without this funding, would not be accessible to our students. Kahuku is already considered a rural area with Kahuku Medical Center being titled a "critical" hospital. The Health Learning Center provides students with a place to learn not only about careers, but to learn preventative health techniques that benefit both the students and our community. It is a disgrace that we have people within our education system that is working towards disassembling programs that allow our students education to be competitive and vital for their futures. These are the type of programs that "level the playing field" when our students apply to colleges. Without these programs we are limiting our students and their potential. We need these programs within our public schools. I personally needed this program to develop my passion for medicine and it is a shame that the board doesn't have the same perspective. Once again, I heavily disagree with this proposal and strongly encourage the board to rethink about their decisions and the impact it can have on our students and their careers and potential. Mahalo!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:03 PM

### **Name**

Daelynn Hunter

### **Organization**

University of Texas Tyler

### **Position/Title**

Esports Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a Kahuku Alumni, my experiences to improve opportunities for personal development have impacted my current career at the College Level.

All this time Kahuku has had Band and Choir for students. Unlike them, I regularly walked to the nearby college orchestra to participate in order to expand upon private violin lessons. Though it was a developing experience, it was lonely for a High Schooler because Kahuku did not offer Orchestra. During this time I yearned for the experiences other students were getting on Kahuku's campus through band and choir. It was my dream that Kahuku might expand their Funding to allow Violin in the same grounds. That never happened, so of course it surprises me that I'm hearing it's might defund more of what I wish I could have experienced at that age.

As a tween, Choir and band seemed to be the most structured and disciplinary class that students could actually look forward to. Even in the years I was never in it, the classrooms remained as social locations due to the talents we shared during recess. I'd like to hope it's removal doesn't occur so those unique levels of expression can remain.

Signed,

a Kahuku 2015 graduate, who probably got 4 million views from her graduation song due to her years in choir.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 6:42 PM

### Name

Genevieve Javier

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in strong support of maintaining and investing in performing arts and music programs in our schools. The impact of these programs extends far beyond developing artistic skills; they play a crucial role in shaping well-rounded, engaged, and successful students.

First and foremost, performing arts and music education have been shown to enhance students' academic performance. Numerous studies have demonstrated that students who participate in music and arts programs perform better in areas such as mathematics, language, and critical thinking. Music education, for instance, helps to improve pattern recognition, memory, and spatial reasoning, which are foundational to subjects like math and science. Engaging in performing arts fosters discipline, focus, and a strong work ethic—qualities that benefit students in all areas of study.

Additionally, performing arts and music programs are essential for developing social and emotional skills. In these programs, students learn how to collaborate, communicate, and express themselves in constructive ways. Through ensemble performances, theater, and other collaborative arts, students cultivate empathy and learn the value of working as a team. These skills are not only vital for personal development but also for future career success, regardless of the field they choose to pursue.

Perhaps most importantly, arts and music programs provide a creative outlet for students. In an increasingly structured academic environment, these programs offer students a space for self-expression, allowing them to explore their identity, develop self-confidence, and reduce stress. Especially in today's world, where mental health issues are on the rise among young people, it is essential to maintain activities that help students manage stress and build resilience.

Finally, arts and music foster a sense of belonging and community. For many students, these programs are a safe space where they feel accepted and appreciated. Schools are not merely places for academic learning but are also centers for personal growth and community building. Removing these programs would strip many students of a place where they feel valued and connected.

The benefits of performing arts and music education are profound and far-reaching. Reducing or eliminating these programs would be a disservice to our students and our communities. Instead, we should be working to ensure that every student has access to these invaluable opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed.

Sincerely,

Genna Javier



11/01/2024

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:31 PM

### **Name**

Amber Ooka

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Amber Ooka. I am an alumni of Mililani High School and have been involved with theater for my whole high school career. The communities these learning centers create affect students like nothing else. It's a way to express themselves and find confidence within. Cutting these budgets is directly cutting off a whole generation of actors, business men, scientists, mathematicians, and so many more. You never know when the next genius will pop up. They may be in a small school that fully runs on funding. If that person is unable to get the right education, they may never discover their love for STEM or agriculture or other subjects **ONLY** because the state cut funds and schools are unable to continue providing these learning centers for their students. Please reconsider these cuts and think about the future of students.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 5:51 PM

### Name

Mary DeAngelis

### Organization

all of hawaii

### Position/Title

concern citizen/Mother

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I have recently become aware that the DOE has decided to slash the budget for all High School Performing Arts Centers across the board. I am deeply disappointed in the decision and hope that in writing this testimonial the DOE will reconsider its position and continue to fund a very important and necessary program

My Ohana have spent many wonderful evenings enjoying the performing arts center at Kaimuki High School. The shows this theatre has brought to the community have been second to none. The students that are involved in these productions are given a fantastic education on what it takes to put on a top-notch musical. I know this from experience because my daughter was fortunate enough to be part of their amazing program. From beginning to end I watched my daughter blossom while being a part of this special community. She enjoyed this program throughout high school, and I would be remiss not to mention she did not attend KHS. The confidence and commemorative she experienced was a gift and the beautiful friendships that were made have lasted over many years. It is truly difficult to bring the true meaning of this program to your attention unless you have experienced it for yourselves. As a parent it is wonderful to watch your child have a place where they feel comfortable, welcome, safe and loved. So many of these kids have gone on to become very active in theatre and acting throughout our community and on the mainland.

This program, these programs are IMPORANT to our keiki! please do not overlook their importance. I implore you all to reconsider this action and let the performing arts program continue to flourish throughout our community.

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Aidric Robinson, and I'm a freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I have been doing FIRST Robotics for about 2.5 years now, doing 2 years in middle school and half a year in highschool. I have committed a lot of time and have gotten a lot out of it. I met many of my friends here and will most likely continue to meet new people. Not only have I made new friends, but made connections with mentors who have helped me learn more about my interest in coding. It is the thing I look forward to doing each day. The fun challenge of figuring out what is wrong with our robot, and the feeling of accomplishment when after all that hard work, the robot turns on and competes in competitions. From my time here at high school alone was an invaluable experience, letting me learn how to advance my coding skills from my simple block coding to Java.

Our robotics program also helps the community, hosting things like our STEM camp that we hold at the high school each fall. We are able to teach younger kids about STEM and let them learn the possibilities with STEM. I personally have gone to them when I was young and where I was first introduced to the robotics program at the highschool. This led me to joining robotics and eventually getting to high school, where I can now help teach others and hopefully encourage them to do the same. I have gone back and helped my middle school robotics team and other elementary school teams to spread my knowledge. Without this program I would not have been able to do any of these things.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has helped us and countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. Losing the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for us at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every one of us students. Please help ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Aidric Robinson  
aidricrob@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:31 PM

### **Name**

Devina Ayala - Billings

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I wholeheartedly support the continued funding of the Marine Science Learning Center (MSLC) at Wai'anae High School. As a former student of the program, I can attest that the education I received extended far beyond traditional classroom learning. The MSLC equipped me and many others with essential life skills, a strong work ethic, cultural appreciation, and a deep understanding of science.

The program's hands-on learning approach fosters responsibility and teamwork, as students work in the facility weekly, where the success of each task is critical to overall productivity. For years, the Wai'anae MSLC has positively impacted our community by providing students with summer job opportunities that instill real responsibilities and work ethics modeled by dedicated staff.

The relationships built within this program create a lasting sense of community, enriching the lives of students and educators alike. Personally, I graduated with STEM honors, gained valuable supervisory experience, volunteered for educational field trips, and interned at Oceanic Institute—all thanks to the opportunities provided by MSLC. Currently, I am pursuing a degree in marine science, motivated by the knowledge and values I acquired through this program.

The MSLC has proven to be an invaluable asset to both its students and the wider community, and I strongly believe it should remain an integral part of Wai'anae High School's educational offerings.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 6:53 PM

### Name

Kai Johnson

### Organization

CPAC

### Position/Title

Alumnus

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha kākou.

I have heard that there is an attempt to cut an area of funding that would negatively affect many art programs in this state. As an alumnus of the Castle Performing Arts Center I could not be more disappointed. It is a program that is recognized internationally, being consistently invited to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland.

Furthermore, my father has worked in art administration for many years and every year I remember him coming home stressed out of his mind that the government of our state was trying to cut art funding once again. Watching him work hard so that would not happen has instilled a passion in me for keeping the arts alive.

Cutting funding for the arts is a laughable proposition. As a graduate student of world history at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa I can say with certainty how important the arts are to not just culture, but learning in general.

Without funding for the arts we are no better than AI and should disappear. Creativity is a gift, not a curse and it kills me that the arts have to justify themselves year in and year out. It is truly disheartening, disgusting, and disgraceful.

Mahalo for listening to what I have to say.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Kamryn Lapinid

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kamryn, and in my second year at the University of West O'ahu. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am strongly opposed to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students with unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

In high school, I was part of the Science Olympiad team at Mililani High School for all four years.

Being in Science Olympiad allowed me to pursue events I could passionately compete in and to learn valuable lessons that transformed me into the person I am today. All of my experiences may not have been positive for me, but they were life-long lessons where without them, I have no idea who or where I would be.

At the beginning of my Science Olympiad career, I believed I was a burden to my Science Olympiad team because of how effortlessly my upperclassmen would place first or second while I on the other hand could barely make the top five. I felt confused, defeated even. However, thanks to the encouragement from my coaches, teachers, and teammates, I was able to pick myself off the ground and try again.

Science Olympiad has taught me how to hone my study habits, time management skills, and teamwork— all skills that are applicable and important even long after leaving the classroom. Some competitions were back to back, so there was not much time to study for my events due to juggling my extracurriculars and academics. Nonetheless, I was eager to accept this challenge. I made myself study for countless hours and stayed up late several nights to create my note sheets and binders; my teammates sacrificed their free time to study for their events; our advisors were willing to sacrifice their weekends to allow my teammates to go on campus for study sessions. It is thanks to these combined efforts that I began to place in the top three in my events.



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Science has become the mold that formed my identity. The dejection, rigor, intensity, and triumph of the Science Olympiad have taught me that despite the downfalls that happen in life, putting your heart into achieving the impossible is possible. For students to have these experiences will not only allow them to use the information that they have learned in their classes, but it is an amazing opportunity for people to explore future career options, meet people with similar interests, and enrich their learning as students. Taking away this opportunity from students deprives them of an invaluable chance to discover themselves, develop critical skills, network with their classmates, and experience personal growth that only hands-on competitions like Science Olympiad can provide. If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kamryn Lapinid  
Klapinid808@gmail.com  
(808) 859-0748

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:29 PM

### **Name**

Tori Kaya

### **Organization**

DOE

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a teacher, I believe that cutting the learning centers is a terrible idea. Having these learning centers allows students to find what they enjoy and love, and may possibly lead to a future in said learning center. If we take these learning centers away, it is the equivalent of keeping students from being who they are. Though it's being left up to the school principals, not having the support of the state is sending the message to the students that the state doesn't support them. Students, especially high school students, are constantly going through uncertainties in life; those who find their home in one of these learning centers are going to be devastated if they aren't already. The nation, the state, the BOE, the DOE, they all say they want to give students the best opportunities, but how can we say that if we can't support them? Not everyone wants to be a pro athlete; why should the students outside of athletics suffer and get what they love taken away? I'm not saying that sports should be taken away instead, but students should have as much exposure as possible to ensure that they will have an enjoyable and successful life after high school.

I think it is absurd that everything we want for the future is being taken away before it can even come to fruition. How can we say we want to be more sustainable when we take away from the Agriculture programs? How can we say we want to become more advanced in technology when we take away Robotics, Science Olympiad, and Science Fair? How can we tell our students to find their voice and calling when we take away theatre and performance programs? Students across the state need to have their voices heard, and we aren't doing them any justice if we take these programs away from them.

In Opposition of Budget Cuts- Agenda Item 8

My grandson, a current student at Mililani High School, was excited and happy when he heard the good news...that he was accepted into the Beginning Acting class. That class was at the top of his elective list because of his prior experience in theater. Before moving to Hawaii, he was part of an ohana called the Arizona Rose Theater in Marana, AZ. There he thrived in the children's theater for 7 years.

As a young child, socializing and making friends can be challenging. The theater provided a safe place where he felt accepted and valued. Not only did he portray characters on stage, but also he wrote and produced his own play. The theater experience gave him confidence, improved self esteem, and motivation to think creatively.

After moving to Oahu at the age of 15, he expressed how he missed his friends and the good times they had at the Arizona Rose Theater. To this day, he is in regular contact with one of the adult mentors connected to the Theater. This mentor has been a source of support and friendship during his formative years.

My two adult sons were in Performing Arts in 2004-2009 at Kamehameha Schools. One was in orchestra and the other was in band. Both boys benefited tremendously from their experiences.

Band gave my older son the opportunity to perform in West Side Story, where he played several percussion instruments from the pit. That play alone was a highlight for his freshman year in High School. He still talks about it today.

My younger son found the orchestra room to be a safe place to hangout after school. Besides developing a love for classical music, he made some long-lasting friendships from time spent in orchestra.

Both sons have maintained their love for music to this day.

Please consider my testimony in opposition of budget cuts, Agenda Item 8. I am hoping you will continue to fund Theater Arts. It would be a shame to deprive children of the opportunity to grow creatively and personally through performing arts.

Sincerely,  
Cindy Taketa

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:19 PM

### **Name**

Alona Dinio

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha! My family moved to the beautiful islands of Hawaii from the Philippines when I was just 3 years old. As a female and 1st generation immigrant whose 3rd language was English, the public school system provided opportunities for me and my family to succeed through programs like the Learning Centers. I am disheartened to hear about the DOE's decision to cut all funding from Learning Centers from next year's budget and encourage you to please reconsider and oppose this counter-productive measure.

My family and I experienced many hardships coming to a new country with 4 children: ages 2, 3, 11, and 13. My parents barely spoke English but they were determined to learn the language by teaching themselves and going to classes. Both my parents were subject matter experts of their craft back in their home country but sacrificed that to start over in a new country in order for a better life. They were the true definition of how immigrants get the work done. When my siblings and I entered the public school system, we also realized how valuable education would be for our future and family's future. They continued to struggle and unfortunately, due to the pressures, my father became an alcoholic and became very abusive mentally and physically. The Arts became my getaway and coping mechanism for all the negative experiences during that time. If it weren't for the many opportunities that were available to me via the Learning Centers, I don't know where I would be today. What I do know is that I am a high school Summa Cum Laude graduate, I am a recipient of multiple college scholarships and grants, I am a college graduate, and I am a professional Federal worker for nearly 20 years. These are accomplishments in my life that would not have been possible if it wasn't for these programs that you now are willing to cut funding for so easily.

Now I am concerned for our keiki's future. If these programs are taken away, how are these children, who were like me, supported and nurtured so that they become positive, contributing members of our society? I've seen first hand through our new hires in our government system of the pitfalls that our workforce are facing. Our keiki are lacking the social skills, independence, and support for individuality that are learned through these Learning Centers. They need constructive direction and guidance so they don't become another negative statistic in our world. The Learning Centers provide this. Please do not take these Learning Centers away from our keiki!

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 3:45 PM

### Name

Taurie Kinoshita

### Organization

Hawaii Conservatory of Performing Arts

### Position/Title

Artistic Director, Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

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[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_OI1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_OI1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Taurie Kinoshita

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:29 PM

### **Name**

Nathan Strain

### **Organization**

Kahuku HS Alumni

### **Position/Title**

N/A

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Good Afternoon,

I attended Kahuku High and Intermediate School and graduated in 2019. During my years of schooling I got to enjoy the dying days of academic and vocational instruction at Kahuku High School. I witnessed tens of millions of dollars being invested in athletic facilities while attending classes in KHIS' 27 portable classroom buildings. I witnessed vocational classes and clubs being pushed out of their spaces, only for them to be taken over by KHIS' bloated athletics program. Now, once again, the DOE budget calls for cutting Learning Center funding while budgeting more for new and improved athletic facilities that benefit only a select few students.

I emphasize, the State of Hawaii has spent tens of millions of dollars to Reconstruct KHIS' football field, construct a new locker room, renovate existing locker rooms, replace field lighting, replace gym flooring, renovate buildings formerly occupied by defunded vocational programs, and more. All while KHIS students learn in 27 portable classrooms, most dating to the 1970s and 1980s. KHIS has (to my knowledge) more portable classrooms than any other school in the State of Hawaii. Despite the increases in funding for athletic facilities, and the lack of meaningful investment in academic facilities, BOE is proposing to eliminate a key source of funding for some of the most core academic programs that remain.

The DOE is becoming an athletics organization that sometimes teaches Math and English. Please reconsider defunding the few meaningful programs KHIS has left, and please consider the construction of a new classroom building to replace the portable classrooms that have long outlived their intended lifespans.

Thank you,

Nathan Strain - KHIS C/O 2019.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:41 PM

### **Name**

Orion Sun

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Orion Sun, and I'm an alumni of Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

In my four years at Mililani High School, I was a dedicated member of the Mililani High School FIRST Robotics Team throughout all four of those years. To me, it was more than just a club, it was a home, it was a family, it was an inspiration. I worked my way into a leadership position within just one year of being on the team and in turn it has developed me into the engineer I am today. I am grateful for all the technical knowledge I gained through the FIRST Robotics team, but the opportunities that I gained from the experiences are so incredibly invaluable. It has not only gotten through university with a Master's Degree, but even allows me to continue networking with people in the workforce. I feel that every student needs the opportunity to gain experiences of this caliber before needing to fully worry about adulthood. The Learning Centers provide that opportunity and these funding cuts would risk losing this invaluable resource that has given me direction in my life and my career.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Orion Sun



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:26 PM

### **Name**

Jamie Kubo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Funding for Learning Centers are crucial for our students to participate and develop skills they are passionate about in schools. It give them life lessons and they are able to really pursue passions or discover talents they didn't know they possessed. Providing the funding for these centers allows these programs to continue year after year. Without the funding these programs will slowly disappear from our schools and will limit access for our public school students to thrive in these areas that may not be covered during the school day.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:26 PM

### **Name**

Noelani Montas

### **Organization**

UH Mānoa

### **Position/Title**

MFA Hawaiian Theatre candidate

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Students deserve access to extracurricular education. Taking away STEAM programs from public schools across the island does not set up the next generation for success in creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. I know many of us cannot imagine our lives without STEAM programs, and I urge the continued financial support for Learning Centers in Hawai'i.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:36 PM

### **Name**

Brandon DiPaola

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 7:31 PM

### Name

Tristan Martin

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRbHdRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRbHdRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Personally, drama instruction and theater programs in schools have helped me, an individual with an extremely high likelihood of Autism Spectrum Disorder, navigate aspects of socialization that are overwhelming and difficult, such as

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confrontation, conflict resolution, general time management, and organizations skills due to working behind-the-scenes. Without such programs, I'd be struggling with these aspects of everyday life neurotypical adults don't even consider true challenges, and would not be able to cope with this loud, volatile, unforgiving world; I'd be a completely unadjusted, endangered adult. If the 'real world' isn't going to cater to neurodivergent children as I have been rudely and angrily reminded over the course of my entire childhood, the least the government could do is NOT REVOKE one of the most useful tools those children have available to learn to navigate it.

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:36 PM

### **Name**

Lauren Johnson

### **Organization**

DECA CLUB

### **Position/Title**

President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a student at Mililani High School who has grown with these learning center programs and I oppose the decision to not fund these departments. This includes but not limited to business, agriculture, STEM, and performing arts centers. The entirety of my growth in high school was due to the opportunities these departments offered me, whether it was the science fair or the business store my classmates and I created, all weren't possible without funding. In order to give students the hands on education they need, funding is essential.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:36 PM

### **Name**

Sarah Duggan

### **Organization**

Ilima Intermediate School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Performing Arts has always been a place for students to be themselves and be free when they were the outsider in a typical classroom. Taking away Performing Arts, Health, and Music means that you're taking away from student culture, growth, confidence. As a teacher, former Performing Arts students, if it wasn't for that program, I wouldn't be where I am today.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:15 PM

### **Name**

Devin Garcia

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I don't believe funding should be cut from all performance arts learning centers. These programs are some of the best for inclusion and learning. With funding of these programs it will continue doing what it has been doing. Teaching others about lifelong skills, relationships and responsibility. Some of my best years, relationships and experiences have come from a performing arts learning center and or program. When I was in high school I joined the Central Theatre Arts Academy(CTAA) at Mililani High School. I met some of my best friends and learned the coolest skills that I use to this day. There was nothing like coming from a long grueling day of school to go to this program afterwards and not only learn, but to have fun doing it. This is not only because the information was so interesting but also because I was doing it with my best friends. I may not have been a traditional performing arts student because I did not act. I was part of the technical side of performing arts, learning about sound, speakers, lights, cables and more. Tech always fascinated me but CTAA took it further and further advanced my skills. Without this program I would not be the person I am today. If there is a chance the department of education is taking that away from all future learners, they will not have a fraction of the experience I would come to have and that, is unfair. To rob the future of the joy, the learning opportunities and the lifelong relationships they may end up having would be outright immoral and unjust.

-Devin Garcia

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:26 PM

### **Name**

Catherine-Grace Balmilero

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,  
From what I have gathered, this will cancel funding for some amazing programs, including Castle Performing Arts Center. My husband, his ex-wife, and his cousin (actress) Kimee Balmilero are all alumni of CPAC. Just a few weeks ago I was able to witness my shy step-daughter shine on stage at CPAC with her Ahuimanu Elementary classmates.

She is so excited to continue her journey in their program! This program has benefited not only Castle High School students but so many of our elementary students across the community!

Please don't take away the funding for this program! We are tax-paying citizens and want our money to benefit our children! We all know extra-curricular activities like this not only empower our children with confidence and new skills, but also help prevent them from getting into negative activities.

Please hear our plea!

Mahalo

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:31 PM

### **Name**

Noelani Kupihea Kahala

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha!

My name is Noelani Kupihea. My son is an 8th grader at Kahuku High & Intermediate. When he was little, he always enjoyed beating on a drum, hitting keys on a piano or keyboard but as he got older, I noticed that if there was a song or instrumental he took interest in, he would bring out his keyboard and start finding the keys to match the song. A couple weeks into it and he'd call me to his room so he could show me that he figured out the song on the keyboard.

As a 13 year old, he now makes his own music on garage band and can replay music on his keyboard in less than a week without a mistake. My son reminds me of an old soul. He loves 70's, 80's, and 90's music, but most of all, he enjoys being a tuba player and playing for his teacher Mr. Furukawa at Kahuku High School.

Our communities on this side of the island doesn't have much extra curricular activities after school, so being able to have band to look forward to during school and have concerts for winter performances every year or just coming together and being around like minded students means a lot to me but especially my son. Taking away this program would mean you'd be taking away yet another enjoyable thing that these students love doing and the families who enjoy watching them as well.

Mahalo,

Noelani Kupihea Kahala

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### **Name**

Heather Ramiro

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I urge you to reconsider cutting funding for school learning centers like the Castle High School Performing Arts and Nanakuli Performing Arts Centers. These centers provide endless opportunities for students of all ages and grade levels across their communities. These centers are open for all students to visit to watch performances, learn about the arts, and interact with their community. The centers are also open for all students from elementary to high school level to audition to perform in plays or to work with stage and lighting, props and backdrops, or costumes. All of these opportunities these centers provide help to enrich the students lives and the communities they are part of by increasing connections within the schools and community members. These connections help to promote a positive image and well being and help students have a sense of belonging. Again, I urge you to keep the funding for these learning centers for our students and communities.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:51 PM

### **Name**

Joshua Yeager

### **Organization**

Honolulu Fire Department

### **Position/Title**

Senior Fire Helicopter Pilot

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose the proposal to remove funding for the Department of Education Music and Health Learning centers for Kahuku High and Intermediate School. My father and I are both alumni who have benefitted from the music, performing arts, and health learning pathways at Kahuku. My two sons are students there, enriching their own education with band and performing arts. I was on track to follow in my father's footsteps to go to college and get education and training as an Emergency Medical Technician when my Health Services teacher encouraged me to enroll in the health services pathway and get an edge on my educational journey ahead of time. Concurrently, I was involved heavily in the performing arts program and learned how language and public speaking were a critical part of becoming a professional. The variety of educational opportunities at Kahuku High allowed me to love learning and further that passion well into adulthood. After working in the EMS field, I joined the Honolulu Fire Department. I continued to pursue education and training opportunities until reaching the capstone of Army helicopter flight school. I am now able to serve the community I grew up in as one of HFD's Helicopter Pilots. Every journey begins somewhere, but without each brick in the road, some may not be able to traverse the path. Thank you for your consideration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:04 PM

### **Name**

Ethan Fang

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Ethan Fang, and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. I'm here to address a large concern to the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are not in the best interest for students. I am writing to you in regards to my participation and experience under the Mililani STEM Learning Center, regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of state funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

Throughout my entire career as a student in school, there was nothing that ever hit close to my goals of finding a meaningful team project experience than FIRST Robotics. I have never seen an opportunity provided like FIRST, and it could only reach the magnitude it has right now due to the support it has received in the past, not only from the people, but also the financing it has from the Mililani Science Learning Center, a cornerstone in the State's Learning Centers. Without the financial support from the Hawaii state's Department of Education, this, and many other opportunities that schools provide such as Central Theatre Arts Academy, various Agricultural and Business Centers across other schools, may lose their ability to stay functioning at a sufficient level that provides students with their encouraged experience into the future that they seek.

I can certainly state that if the FIRST Robotics program were to face budget cuts across many schools in Hawaii that participate in them, it would likely struggle to keep the creative ideas that many of the students have tangible and created in real time, as well as teams having to face cuts in members or having them compete against each other when in reality, everyone should be welcome in a team together. We make a team out of teams in competition, limiting the ability we have to support FIRST in schools will limit the type of collaboration and competition that many students seek in the STEM field.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your time.

- Ethan Fang

Phone: (808) 462-8968

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:40 AM

### **Name**

Tyson Kikugawa

### **Organization**

Mililani High

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers are home to thousands of current and former students that have found a place to pursue their passions beyond the typical classroom experience. Without it, countless students may struggle to find their true place in high school. Most of the Learning Center programs will not be able to continue as school-level budgets are not large enough to fund these programs on top of what is already being asked of them. There is no provision to shift these funds to the schools - so even if the Department says they support these programs, the budget does not reflect any kind of meaningful support.

This proposed elimination of the Learning Centers is misguided at best. The impact of these Learning Centers is huge compared to the budget they are provided. Students in Learning Centers get real-world, project-based, hands-on experience on real problems and projects. They get to work with professionals in their respective fields. They become better prepared for college and career. The Learning Centers have been holding themselves accountable through rigorous annual data collection.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:31 PM

### **Name**

Ross McCormick

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Committee,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts to the Learning Centers. These programs are unexplainably valuable to students in Hawaii. As a student of the Kaimuki Performing Arts Center who is now working in theatre, I can strongly testify that Learning Centers are the best part of Hawaii Public education. Students who participate in performing arts programs consistently perform better in various aspects, including graduation rates, confidence, social skills, and concentration. Theatre helps students develop essential skills like adaptability, memorization, accountability, empathy, and reading comprehension.

These programs constantly prove to be invaluable to students and lead them forward with an improved mental framework of problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations. There is so much talent and joy for the arts on island and it deserves to be fostered.

Please do not approve these sudden and exorbitant cuts to such invaluable programs.

Thank you for your consideration



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:46 PM

### **Name**

Brandie Kasaoka

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I thank you for taking the time to read this. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As a former member of one of these programs, specifically Mililani High School's Central Theater Arts Academy (CTAA), and now as a secondary educator at Mililani High School, I've seen firsthand how programs like CTAA can be life changing for students. Different programs that are available through these learning center programs are unlike anything else offered within the traditional classroom. Students can truly hone in on their interests while collaborating on and producing something larger than themselves. With CTAA for example, students will not find the opportunity to learn from different students and teachers from across the central district anywhere else. Different groups also come together for productions- whether it is the actor/actresses on stage, the musicians in the pit, the choreographers, costume designers, set designers, lighting or sound technicians, there are so many people who are involved. The CTAA program is truly the hub for many within the community. It is disheartening to hear that this may be threatened due to the proposed budget cuts.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:09 PM

### Name

Kevin Molina

### Organization

Windward community college

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

11/01/2024

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,

Kevin M.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:45 PM

### **Name**

Glen Iwamoto

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to oppose the proposed cut in funding for STEM and Performing Arts programs in schools.

We are at an exciting, yet critical time in public education. We have come so far in recognizing that the social emotional welfare of students is just as, if not more important than academic achievement. Part of addressing the social and emotional needs of our students is finding exciting and engaging activities that help them to explore their interests, showcase their talents, and gain a sense of belonging while in school.

STEM and Performing Arts programs are the perfect vehicles for addressing these needs. Traditionally, the most "popular" extracurricular activities have been athletics and school government. However, we all know that not all students will find themselves fitting in here.

STEM and Performing Arts programs allow students a chance to use their talents and develop workplace readiness skills. As participants in these activities, they learn how to work with others, build relationships with peers and adults, and the value of being part of a team. They also build lasting friendships and create lifelong memories. And isn't this what going to school is all about?

I am both a public school administrator and parent. In both of these roles, I have seen the great benefits for students. I have seen shy and withdrawn students thrive when given the opportunity to participate in such programs. Our teachers report that behavior and academic achievement improve when students are involved in activities that connect them to school.

Personally, my two sons are currently involved in STEM related programs at their school. I believe that being a part of the programs has given them opportunities to learn not just technical skills, but interpersonal skills as well. They are more motivated to do well in their classes, and are forced to manage their time. Without involvement in these programs, it's very possible that they would have never discovered their true talents.

Please consider carefully when voting. We should be expanding, not cutting such programs. If the board is sincere about our students, you need to think long and hard about taking away funds that provide so much for so many. I believe that such short sighted thinking is what hampers our school system time and again. The board has an opportunity to show all of us that it cares about students, and it indeed thinks about the future of our state. Any talk of cutting these programs is bad enough. This is a great opportunity for the board to make a statement that it cares about all students.

Thank you.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:04 PM

### Name

Teresa Madden

### Organization

PlayBuilders of Hawai'i Theater Company

### Position/Title

Executive director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the performing arts programs in public schools.

Cutting performing arts programs in public schools is detrimental because it can negatively impact students' academic performance, creativity, social development, self-expression, and overall well-being, while also limiting access to valuable skills like collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving that are fostered through arts participation; essentially, it deprives students of a vital outlet for creative expression and important life skills development.

Key reasons to keep performing arts programs:

Academic benefits:

Studies have shown a correlation between involvement in performing arts and improved academic achievement, including higher test scores and better attendance rates.

Creativity and critical thinking:

Performing arts encourage creative thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, which are essential skills across various disciplines.

Social-emotional development:

Participation in performing arts can foster teamwork, collaboration, communication skills, and a sense of community.

Self-expression and confidence:

Performing arts provide a safe space for students to express themselves, build self-esteem, and overcome anxieties.

College and career readiness:

Artistic skills can be valuable assets in higher education and the workforce, including presentation skills, leadership, and project management.

Cultural awareness and diversity:

Performing arts expose students to different cultures and perspectives, promoting inclusivity and understanding.

11/01/2024

.Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:04 PM

### **Name**

Sylvi Cook

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not defund the Technology Learning Center. Our students need more STEM related opportunities, not less.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:41 PM

### **Name**

Tiani Mora

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this finds you well. My name is Tiani Mora, I'm a freshman at Mililani High School. I'm writing this to reach out about the cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I'm writing on behalf of the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the funding cuts. These cuts will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has greatly benefited from the Learning Centers, I don't believe I can stress enough how vital they are to my education and everyday life. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have created many connections within our community and have allowed people to gain better self confidence, including myself. This program provides not just academic opportunities, but it provides specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. Performing arts, theatre, and other learning centers have been ways to help me break out of my shell and be able to meet new people, and I feel that if we keep funding our learning centers that younger students will be able to achieve this too. I know of plenty of students at Mililani Middle School that are looking forward to doing theatre and it would be a shame that they wouldn't be given that opportunity because of not having enough funds to run the program anymore. The CTAA allowed me to learn that meeting people isn't as scary as it seems and that you can connect with a lot more people than you may think, and I believe that's a very important lesson for everyone to learn.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Tiani Mora

Phone: (808) 206-5609

Email: t.stephanie.christine@gmail.com



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:41 PM

### **Name**

Keenan Yoshizawa

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education,

I am an undergraduate student currently and a graduate of the Hawaii public school system. I am testifying in opposition to the DOE's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. This budget proposal cuts funding for Learning Centers which I heavily oppose. Learning Centers allow students to engage in programs that further their experiences. Many performing arts, STEM, agriculture, and health programs would lose funding if this operating budget is approved. This would negatively affect the outcomes of students across the state. If we want to create a state that excels in these areas, we must provide opportunities for students to participate in programs that promote subjects that reach beyond the classroom.

I hope the Board of Education will reconsider this budget request and the detrimental budget cuts for Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:09 PM

### **Name**

Keke Manera

### **Organization**

Hale Kuhikuhi

### **Position/Title**

Hale Builder

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha kākou, as you all are soon to be finalizing the budget for the upcoming school years, through 2027 I do not support gutting the funding for Learning Centers. I am in opposition to cutting the funding. I also think the DOE Superintendent is being paid an inflated salary where our teachers and the schools deserve that money. Not an individual who's doing bare minimum for our schools, students and teachers. Please be for real.

**STATE OF HAWAI‘I BOARD OF EDUCATION GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL  
BIENNIUM 2025-2027**

**Written Testimony for Thursday, October 31, 2024.**

*Authored By Lorayne H. Aguinaldo, October 2024.*

*I permit and encourage a representative to read this testimony at the board meeting on my behalf.*

My name is Lorayne Aguinaldo and I am an alumni of Mililani High School. I come in my capacity as a Social Sciences Student at the University of Northern Colorado, as an older sister, and former member of the Performing Arts community on O’ahu.

I would like to make clear that my position here is in opposition to this budget proposal. I believe some of its contents to be unnecessary and detrimental to the lives of the performing arts community. Specifically, the Keiki and the hardworking teachers who nurture creative spirit within them. As much of the content affects performing arts learning centers, I will emphasize the importance of art in this testimony.

I myself am no stranger to performing arts, as I was part of Mililani’s colorguard program. I understand the thrill of a performance and how much putting yourself out there can help you grow. Many of my friends and peers in the marching band and colorguard program also were nurtured in performing arts learning spaces. Even if I was not in CTAA, their productions gave me great joy and memories in high school. I look back at them fondly.

I am the oldest of two children. I have a younger brother, whom I love dearly. I love to watch him grow into a person he and others can be proud of, and I love to watch him nurture his interests. As a props and sets guy who works with the Central Theatre Arts Academy, he may not

be in the stage spotlight all of the time, but he is the star of his own journey. I have seen him grow in his time with the CTAA with the support of his peers, educators, and performing arts learning spaces.

In my study of society and social dimensions, art plays a particularly important role in how we live our lives. Here is an excerpt from [\*Imaginative Communities: The Role, Practice and Outreach of Community-Based Theatre\*](#) by Mgr Ivan Lacko, PHD, at Comenius University in Bratislava, “in a community-based and socially committed arts environment, theater fulfills the function of bringing people together not because they are united through aesthetic tradition... they are defined by... “togetherness.”” In my study of finance and economics, I usually conclude budget cuts coincide when programs are no longer needed or deemed important. However, in this case, it is obvious that learning spaces on O’ahu are continuously and extremely relevant. What I find this “operating budget request” to do is grossly disregard their importance to a wide range of Keiki and educators in Hawai’i.

I encourage the board to make a decision that will sustain learning spaces for all of O’ahu. I oppose the budget request in its current form and demand that it be reconsidered with more regard and respect to learning spaces.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:51 PM

### **Name**

Andrew Iwamoto

### **Organization**

Mililani High FIRST Robotics

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message reaches you well. My name is Andrew Iwamoto, and I am a Freshman who is part of the FIRST Robotics program at Mililani High School. I am reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe were not made with the best intentions for all students. I am in strong opposition to the suggested elimination of funding to this program related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers that you are aiming to remove funding for are the main sources that finance the FIRST Robotics program that myself and many others at my school are part of. We are all very enthusiastic about our club, and it is the main reason why I get excited for school. It is how I socialize with my friends, and I also made new ones through robotics.

Robotics can also help me with my future. My goal is to get into the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the hands-on experience I am getting will greatly help me in becoming an engineer. Not only do the Learning Centers support the STEM programs at my school, but the performing arts programs as well. A friend of mine is an aspiring actor hoping to get into the Cambridge School of Performing Arts and Drama. Without the Learning Centers, he wouldn't have known that he wanted to be an actor.

I could go on and on about how the Learning Centers support me directly, but the most pressing reason why it should continue to receive funding is that younger students will be missing out on these programs that have had years of dedication put into them. Future students will not have the same opportunities myself and other members of our robotics club have right now. When I said that FIRST Robotics could help me get into MIT, I also want other students to have that same opportunity, where they could possibly get into their dream college as well. Robotics is helping me to discover who I truly am, and other kids should have the chance to do the same.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

11/01/2024

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student, so please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Iwamoto

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:21 PM

### **Name**

Berkley Spivey

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Berkley Spivey

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I appreciate the time you have given me. My name is Joelle Angelica Evasco, a Senior at Wai‘anae High School, and the current Student Body President. I’m reaching out to testify against the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of the Wai‘anae High School Marine Science Learning Center which would be negatively impacted upon a lack of funding. As a result, I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department’s base budget.

As someone who is a part of a community that has immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. Not only this, but Wai‘anae has a lessened amount of educational resources as compared to other sides of the island. The erasure of a Learning Center that has taught both students and community members the importance of sustainable agriculture and science would be detrimental.

The Wai‘anae High School Marine Science Learning Center has allowed both myself and fellow classmates to learn how to preserve the marine food sources available near us. In response to rising temperatures, the WHS Marine Science Learning Center has been training students to track coastal erosion and its effects on marine wildlife. This has allowed more members of our community to be aware of the vulnerability of our food sources. As a way to combat this, the WHS Marine Science Learning Center has also trained its students on how to properly manage and maintain aquaponics. By teaching the new leaders of our community sustainable agriculture, we’re not only establishing a new food source but we’re also finding ways to combat the effects of marine climate change.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a resource that every community can rely on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joelle Angelica Evasco

[evascojoelleangelica@gmail.com](mailto:evascojoelleangelica@gmail.com)



October 30, 2024

Hawai'i State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

### Testimony To Oppose Article VIII

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee.

I, Tammy Ramangmou, am against the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027.

Over the years the Dept of Ed's operating budget has helped fund programs such as Hilo High School's Performing Arts Learning Center (PALC) and Waiakea High School's Technology Learning Center (TLC). Programs such as these are necessary in our community. They provide a network of resources, foster community collaboration and instill pride in our students. To defund these programs will be a disservice to our students.

The PALC program at Hilo High School has been a long-standing program that has served so many students (grades 7-12) throughout the years. Providing aspiring students of theater arts the opportunity to involve themselves in various projects through means of acting, singing, dancing, theater tech, stage management, and more. I have been to a number of programs put on by the PALC students. To experience their performances in-person, you can witness and truly feel the hard work, dedication and pride these students have in their craft. Many of the students who participate in PALC go on to careers in the arts proving that this program held meaning.

The TLC at Waiakea High School is another program dedicated to serving our Hawai'i students. The program provides students with opportunities to learn all aspects of STEAM (building, programming, design, modeling, and business). TLC enables ongoing collaboration between students and local companies and businesses; holding STEAM camps and events for Hawai'i's keiki (for which 2,700+ of Hawai'i's keiki showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM). It is evident that TLC inspires their youth to go out and become innovators and critical thinkers. This past season their robotics students placed 10th at the Orlando Regional competition and 8th overall in the state of Hawai'i. Some of these youths will graduate and continue to work in the field of STEAM, similar to past alumni who have worked on a microsatellite, launched a rocket, and are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA.

Both programs mentioned are necessary and invaluable sources within our community. It's programs like these that give many of our Hawai'i students a sense of pride and a sense of belonging. Which is the ultimate gift we would like to and hope to continuously emanate within and among our students. To defund these programs will be a disservice to our youths.

Mahalo,  
Tammy Ramangmou

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:42 PM

### Name

Chivalry Butler

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Chivalry Butler

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:42 PM

### **Name**

Olivia Cabibbo

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Abolishing these programs is unnecessary. These learning centers and programs allow students to feel welcome and included in their schools and taking it away from them is unfair. As a student at Mililani High, I enjoy seeing my fellow peers participate in plays that the CTAA puts on, which would be gone with this new funding plan. CTAA united students and their families with the arts. In addition to the arts, robotics and agriculture can go onto further into life to endure jobs in life. Taking this away from kids in school can crush their dreams that they may want to pursue, and I can guarantee that can be avoided. Learning centers are crucial to have for students trying to find new interests and possible futures for what they want to pursue. It can inspire them to work towards a goal later in life. Do not take this away from them. Don't perish their dreams, or crush their spirits. It's not right.

Respectfully, I oppose the decision to completely refund these learning centers. It is unjust and unnecessary. Please reconsider.

Thank you for your time.

Olivia Cabibbo

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 PM

### **Name**

Anthony Labarbera

### **Organization**

Parent

### **Position/Title**

Self

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As someone with a child attending the TLC robotics program, it would be very unfortunate if funding would be cut. This is a huge opportunity for not just them, but everyone involved. This program is one of the most important ones, and allows extremely intelligent students to use and test their knowledge and allow them to be successful in life. Without proper funding, you would be ruining a life changing opportunity.

October 31, 2024

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Ariel Medeiros, and I am a senior at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, as well as a proud alumnus of the Castle Performing Arts Center. I want to express how profoundly this program has shaped my life and inspired me to pursue a career in one of the most challenging fields: special education.

Today, I write to you as a future educator who is deeply concerned about the proposed cuts to our public school Learning Center programs. The performing arts program at my high school was more than just a set of classes; it was a unique experience that allowed me to learn alongside diverse peers, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or ability. In that space, every student had the opportunity to shine, to express themselves, and to collaborate in a supportive environment.

Without this program, I would not have discovered my passion for teaching or the importance of fostering inclusivity in education. Our performing arts program serves a diverse group of students. In my experience I have performed alongside those in wheelchairs, English language learners, and individuals ranging from nine to eighteen years old. It brings together students from well off families and those like me, who spent their entire K-12 experience on free and reduced lunch. This program does not discriminate; it ensures that everyone has a chance to learn, grow, and express themselves equally. Isn't that what public education is all about?

The performing arts program was more than just an after-school activity for me; it was the reason many of us stayed in school. Participation in rehearsals was contingent upon attending all our classes that day, and we couldn't perform on stage unless we maintained our GPA. This program served as a powerful motivator, encouraging many students to excel in their other subjects. Why would we want to take this away?

In my teacher preparation program, they teach us how to teach to a student's strengths, but how are we to do that if we are taking away their chance to express themselves? I refuse to accept that one day I will have to explain to students and parents that we will not be having a school play, we will not be having a dance concert or that many of our extracurriculars were cut by the board that I work for because they refused to see the unique talents and strength of our students.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider these proposed cuts to our public school Learning Center programs. The performing arts are not merely an extracurricular; they are essential for nurturing creativity, fostering inclusivity, and motivating students to succeed. By supporting these programs, you are affirming the value of every student's voice and talent. Let us not

diminish the opportunities that inspire and uplift our youth. As a new teacher, I would like to enter this field saying that I am proud to work for the Hawaii Department of Education. Together, we can ensure that all students have the chance to learn, grow, and express themselves fully. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Ariel Medeiros

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 6:56 PM

### Name

Jaycee Hasegawa

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Jaycee Hasegawa, and I'm a current senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I am grateful to serve as the current president of the FIRST Robotics program at Mililani High School. Our FIRST Robotics program is directly supported by the Mililani Science Learning Center (SLC). This program has become a second home to many of us, including myself. It has helped me to find a place of belonging in a school that boasts over 2000 students. The robotics team is a place where I feel safe, heard, and understood in a way unlike any other. Our FIRST Robotics program has also pushed me outside of my comfort zone and helped me to develop the confidence to become a leader. It has given me the autonomy to enact positive change in our community via STEM outreach projects including organizing an annual fall STEM Camp for elementary and middle school students and mentoring the Mililani Waena FIRST LEGO League team. I'm proud of the person that I've grown to become with the help of the Mililani Science Learning Center.

Furthermore, our leadership team has dedicated ourselves to ensuring the continuity of our FIRST Robotics program because we truly believe in its immeasurable impact. After the COVID-19 pandemic, our team began to get smaller and smaller. This year, we have focused on growing our team back to a sustainable size with various recruitment efforts including a new student-led, FIRST Robotics summer workshop which seeks to onboard incoming 9th grade students to the robotics experience. This school year, we added 26 new members to our robotics family, many of whom have also submitted written testimonies demonstrating their support and love of our robotics program. Please help us ensure the continuity of our FIRST Robotics program by providing learning centers across the state with continued funding.



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I truly believe that the Mililani SLC provides opportunities and experiences like no other. Without the SLC program, I wouldn't have the confidence to pursue a degree and career in computer science after high school. FIRST Robotics and the SLC program has provided me with invaluable experiences including summer internships, opportunities to network with industry professionals, and hands-on learning with large-scale projects. More importantly, it has shown me that there is space in STEM for everyone, including myself. Please help us continue to provide these irreplaceable opportunities and experiences to generations of future students.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jaycee Hasegawa  
jayceehasegawa@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 PM

### **Name**

Erin Dechoso

### **Organization**

Mililani High School - Performing Arts

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The performing arts has always been a home to me and it has been one of the biggest parts of my growth journey throughout high school. I've always felt safe and comfortable in this program, its helped me expand my interests and relationships. By removing this program you would be removing one of my most reliable school programs. You would not only be taking away the home of me and my peers but you're taking away the home for the keiki who are excited to join the program in the future, who want to be able to express themselves in a safe space like the performing arts.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:51 PM

### **Name**

Megan Fila

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

English Teacher and JCHS Drama Club Co-Advisor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Megan R. Fila. I am an English Language Arts teacher at James Campbell High School, where I have worked for nearly ten years. For the past nine years, I have had the pleasure and privilege of co-advising our JCHS Drama Club, and watching it grow into a much greater interdisciplinary collaborative program intertwined with STEM engineering, building and construction, graphic design, and band, to name a few.

I strongly oppose the funding reduction to Learning Centers which will cut funding to many high school performing arts programs. I understand funding is not an easy task, but a failure to fund these programs is a failure to care for the total well being of our keiki and future generation.

Through the funding, guidance, and opportunities provided by the state, our school strives to be a safe, positive place where life skills are learned and applied to meet the challenges of a changing society. Our teachers work to give students opportunities and guide them to set and meet goals with the drive to persevere through adversity. We, and other members of our community, are driven to help our youth to become effective communicators and compassionate leaders who think critically, innovate, and contribute to something greater.

These are not "wants". Programs beyond the classroom like performing arts and STEM are critical places where the leaders of tomorrow have opportunities to learn skills that will benefit them in incredible ways.

Performing arts programs don't simply teach students how to sing, act, or dance on stage. These programs give students real-world experiences in problem solving, trying new approaches, coming to meetings and discussions prepared, promoting civil discourse, synthesizing ideas, and understanding how different members of a team need to work together to achieve a common goal. They develop confidence in their abilities and learn how to respond to criticism. Through these programs, students learn to meet or exceed many proficiency standards across different content areas in an engaging way that authentically creates lifelong learners.

Students in Learning Center programs develop a strengthened sense of responsibility, strive for excellence, and show more aloha to others. These are pillars of the state's Nā Hopena A'o framework. Knowing they belong to a community, many of these students pursue opportunities with Learning Centers at other schools as well, and I admire their

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dedication, commitment, and willingness to learn.

I have witnessed, year after year, students first enter these programs with uncertainty and fear. With some guidance and hope, they truly blossom, and many continue on after high school to pursue opportunities they may not have developed the courage or skill set to if not for these types of programs. These programs don't simply cater to the wants of a select group of students; they connect to many other programs and empower our students to thrive. They need to be funded.

Educators truly care, but we need to be empowered and enabled to demonstrate our care.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Megan R. Fila  
James B. Campbell High School  
English Language Arts Teacher  
Drama Club Co-Advisor

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:31 PM

### **Name**

Evan McCarty

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello,

My name is Evan McCarty, and I am an alumni of Mililani High School c/o 2022. I was a part of Central Theatre Arts Academy for three years while I was in high school. I can wholeheartedly say being a part of CTAA defined my high school experience. I was able to meet and work with amazing people, make unforgettable memories, and start my career in the live events industry all because of what this Learning Center offered. My story is not unique as I can guarantee almost all students who were a part of Learning Center programs in their respective schools can echo the same. Without the proper funding that these Learning Centers require hundreds to thousands of students will be missing out on life changing experiences.

Sincerely,

Evan McCarty

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 PM

### **Name**

Archer Labarbera

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I've always wanted to be an aerospace engineer. Since age 6, I've been spending all my free time studying it, and trying to get that job. It's my life goal, everything I could want, and with robotics, this impossible dream became easily achievable for someone like me. I was overjoyed when I joined my team. It opened up so many opportunities, and I got to meet so many wonderful, brilliant people. If our funding were to be cut and our team was shut down, I don't know what I'd do. My dreams and ambitions would be crushed, and I don't know what life I'd live after that. I give my full support to the TLC and everything involved with that.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 6:29 PM

### Name

Taiki Haitzuka

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Taiki Haitzuka, and I'm a 9th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

In first robotics, I have had many experiences that will shape my well being in the future. Although it's only my first year in first robotics, it's provided many new opportunities for me. I have made new friends that encourage and strive to help me learn and persevere through first robotics. I was a very shy kid growing up and joining first robotics has allowed me to go out of my comfort zone and be more upfront about my voice in school. I feel like I have a second home in first robotics with the connections I've made in such a short amount of time because of how much time and dedication we spend working to achieve our goals together. My uncle works as a full time engineer and also helps orchestrate and advise the robotics team, so I never got to hang out with him. With robotics I am able to have a more personal connection and finally hang out with him. My growth from a immature kid in middle school to someone who knows how to put his foot down and do the work assigned to him is proof that this team means something. I'm an example of how this team changes and shapes future generations for the better. It emulates what the real world is like and takes me from my adolescence that bound me to this way of thinking that I would be able to cheat or lie past everything in life.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Taiki Haitzuka



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:19 PM

### Name

Phoebe Komatsu

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Phoebe Komatsu, and I'm a 9th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As a student who has participated in First Robotics, I can testify that this club has really changed my whole life. I have been doing it since I was in the 6th grade. When I was in 6th grade I was really quiet and my self esteem was very low. However, being in First Robotics challenged and encouraged me to break free. Now as I 9th grader, I feel much more confident to be myself and I want to encourage other young passionate STEM kids to also participate in this club and reap the benefits that I also experienced. Also, as a girl I have a passion to use this club to encourage other young women to participate in STEM. The STEM world is really taken over by men, but I want to raise more awareness and passion for girls in STEM. In addition, being in this club was like a family to me because I was able to spend time with my wonderful team and we were all really close friends. We started conga lines at meets, went to escapes rooms together, traveled for worlds together, and we all have a same passion of STEM. Whenever I go to Robotics and get to spend time with these amazing people, I feel so much socially energized. I really look forward and appreciate this feeling because I usually don't feel socially energized with my normal friend group at school, so being in this club is also a leeway for me to make friends. I personally want to become an engineer when I grow up and this club has taught me many skills such as time management, public speaking skills, building (mechanical) skills, coding, computer foundations, research, writing, and so much more! As a participant in Science Olympiad as well, I cannot stress enough how important that club was for me too. I learned many research and studying skills. My science teacher

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wasn't a great teacher at all during that time, but using this club, I was able to use science topics that I learned to my advantage. This really helped me a lot. Science Olympiad has also sparked a further interest in me in science related topics and has made me more motivated. Without these opportunities being offered, future students will no longer experience these wonderful benefits and my years of participating in these clubs will end in my sophomore year.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Phoebe Komatsu  
phoebeskomatsu@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:31 PM

### **Name**

Kian Jackson

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Programmer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

October 30, 2024

Testimony against budget cuts

To the members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kian Jackson. I am in grade 9 at Mililani High School. Robotics is the first club of my high school career. I believe that it is important for students like myself to begin trying out new things as early as possible to see what they will enjoy. As someone interested in math and computer systems, I joined robotics to get my first experience programming. The other programmers here were very supporting despite all having more experience than me. Robotics has become more than just a way for me to learn things I am interested in. It has become a nurturing community. So far I have learned a lot with the help of new friends. On behalf of the robotics team, and all other clubs students enroll in to find their best future, please reconsider cutting the budget. The education and future of learners in these programs are being risked. Without the proper funding, many extracurricular courses like robotics will suffer.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kian Jackson, Mililani High School

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kianna Uno, and I'm a senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I first joined the FIRST Robotics program under the Mililani High School Science Learning Center as a sophomore. Now, as a senior, I am experiencing this program for the third time. While some of what I will say may be personal, I feel the need to share it in order to prove how much these programs are valued by us students.

During my sophomore year, I had been struggling greatly with my mental health. This program gave me the support system I didn't even know I needed. It helped to connect me with people that were so encouraging and positive, that I started to set more and more positive goals for myself. I met new friends, laughed for the first time in a long time, and regained motivation to try harder in school. The people in this program pushed me to work for my goals, and for once, I wasn't alone. All of this, while learning about skills useful to me for the future, as well as being part of something that meant so much to me. I hadn't had anything like that in a long time. I don't know everyone's stories, but I know that programs like these are a huge part of so many students' lives.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kianna Uno

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:40 PM

### **Name**

Josephine Redondo

### **Organization**

KPAC Board

### **Position/Title**

Treasurer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Board of Education,

I am a board member and concerned parent who strongly opposes any loss of funding for the KPAC Learning Center at Kaua'i High School. The arts are necessary programs for students who might not be into sports but still have a need to interact with fellow students in a creative way. This learning center is another safe space for students to try new things and feel welcome.

Our daughter is an introvert, and I was worried she would have a hard time adjusting to a new school when we moved to Kaua'i from the mainland the start of her junior year. If it wasn't for one of her teachers encouraging her to join KPAC, I know her last two years of high school would not have been great. She's an artist and was able to find friendships by having the opportunity to participate in this learning center program. It was wonderful as a parent to see my daughter come out of her shell.

KPAC is the only learning center of its kind on the island. It's open to other high schools and junior high schools on the island to attend. That's why this learning center is so important to students interested in the arts. It gives those students a way to express themselves in ways they otherwise would not be able to.

I kindly request your consideration to continued funding of the KPAC learning center and other learning centers for the sake of so many students who so desperately need them. Being part of something is everything, especially for kids who may feel like they don't fit in.

Sincerely,  
Josephine Redondo

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 3:58 PM

### **Name**

Geoffrey Draper

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My daughter is now a sophomore in college, but when she was at Kahuku high/intermediate school she participated in band every year, from 7th to 12th grade. Band was one of the formative experiences of her teenage years. In her college application essays, she wrote about band extensively -- stating that it improved her self-confidence and leadership skills. Indeed, I believe that the Kahuku band was one of the deciding factors in her acceptance into university. I hope that the state of Hawaii will continue to provide funding for this program for many years to come.



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to our students' specific needs and interests. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High School students and would greatly decrease the advantages that the Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry-standard equipment and software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry-recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" in their futures, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such tools and opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider your decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and support.

Sincerely,

Gabriela Higgins

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### Name

Shelly Ogata

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

AGENDA ITEM - VIII  
OPPOSE  
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

I am a board member for the Waiakea High School Foundation. Our charitable mission is to support educational opportunities at Waiakea High School. The Foundation has always supported WHS Robotics and STEM education as these are critical for developing the thought leaders of tomorrow. The WHS Robotics team depends on funding through the Technology Learning Center (TLC). It has come to our attention that the DOE operating budget for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 DEFUNDS THE TLC. This defunding of TLC results in serious harm to the WHS Robotics team and STEM education.

WHS Robotics has benefitted the community tremendously through such measures of success as:

- collaborated with local companies and businesses to hold STEAM camps and events reaching over 2700+ of Hawaii's keiki that showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM
- provide various learning opportunities for students to learn all aspects of STEAM including building, programming, design, modeling, and business.
- This previous season the team placed 10th out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition—and the 8th overall team in the state of Hawaii.
- team has been placing as semi-finalists or winners in multiple competitions over the span of 21 years
- previous students are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA, launched a rocket, and one worked on a microsatellite

PLEASE SUPPORT WHS ROBOTICS AND STEM BY NOT DEFUNDING THE TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTER!



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:42 PM

### **Name**

Isabella Craycroft Isabella

### **Organization**

CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a student at Mililani High school and I strongly believe that budgets should not be cut off for any reason. Some reason is that I think this are the following. There is not much theatre and performing arts locations in the state of Hawai'i. Meaning a lot of kids that have dreams of being a performer would not be able to accomplish this. It is also an educational experience as well, learning new skills and learning about different situations in real life and how to deal with them. Lastly, it brings joy and happiness to audiences and performers. Watching your loved ones doing what they love is always so pleasing and inspiring. Please, don't take away such an important part of kids lives.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### **Name**

Mark Fitzgerald

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the elimination of \$1.7 million transfer from the Board of Education to the local schools' for Learning Centers. Because this subsidy has been in place for decades, it is an essential part of a schools budget. If you want to transfer decision making to the school, the money should flow with the ability to make such decisions. Allocate a permanent increase rather than a straight up elimination.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### **Name**

Malia Rivera

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to the proposal to de-fund DOE Learning Centers. I have personally been involved in these wonderful learning program ranging from Castle High School's Performing Arts Center on the Windward site, to the Wai'anae High School's Marine Science Learning Center. To end either of these programs, along with probably many other amazing programs at other DOE schools, is mind boggling. These programs have been nothing short of transformational not only to students, but to the community and families of students as well. The CHS Performing Arts program has been so impactful to me once as a student at CHS myself, now as a member of the Kaneohe Community, and to my daughter who has been part of their early recruiting efforts while still in elementary school. At WHS, the MSLC and their AMAZING faculty have transformed lives of students, many who are of ethnicities historically marginalized from marine science, and through their programs shows them avenues to be productive members of their community and viable career pathways. Why the BOE is considering taking away programs that have been so incredibly impactful to our communities and children is difficult to fathom. I sincerely hope you will reconsider the measure.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### Name

Lauren Johnson

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Lauren Johnson, and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Center programs such as the science fair, have given myself the opportunity to expand my network and knowledge of science related activities. The experience gave me an entirely new perspective on my skills as well as the research I was able to conduct. The science fair was an area in which I was able to express my research and have a very successful turn out, such as being recognized at a international level. This learning experience was immense full and incomparable to any other learning activity I've been through because it introduced me to new subject interests. I highly believe it was a crucial addition to my speaking skills which helped me to grow as a person as it was the reason I have had so many doors open for me.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lauren Johnson

2411300963@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### **Name**

Nathaniel Char

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut funding for State Learning Centers. It affects a number of programs, but I am focusing on the performing arts and Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA). With a number of Hollywood projects being filmed here in the islands, it is imperative that our youth get the fullest support for the performing arts. Support for the performing arts helps to diversify Hawaii's economy away from tourism, as well as simply helping to make our islands a more entertaining place to live.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### **Name**

Syed Shah

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Syed Shah, and I am the uncle of a [grade/year] 9th grade student at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

High school learning centers dedicated to Science Olympiad have been instrumental in helping me overcome challenges. Through Science Olympiad, I engaged deeply with hands-on learning in a variety of STEM fields, including physics, engineering, and biology. The competition pushed me to learn beyond the classroom, requiring me to work with teammates to solve complex problems, design innovative models, and conduct scientific experiments. This experience built my confidence in tackling difficult concepts, improved my teamwork skills, and taught me how to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Science Olympiad gave me an outlet to expand my scientific curiosity, develop problem-solving strategies, and succeed in a field that once seemed intimidating. The skills I gained have been invaluable, not only in my academic journey but also in everyday challenges.

These learning centers are critical. They provide a safe, innovative environment for students to explore and grow beyond traditional subjects, instilling confidence and perseverance. Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Syed Shah  
(808) 462-7897

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:17 PM

### **Name**

Edrik Sereno

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I firmly oppose taking away funding to important learning centers. Education is very important. It should be funded.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:53 PM

### **Name**

Zoe Yogi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I believe that defunding these learning centers is very harmful. These learning centers are very important to many students, including myself. The first time I've ever auditioned for a theatrical production was last year for a production that my school was putting on. I have wanted to perform ever since I was a little kid, but I've always been too afraid to actually get involved with anything. I've had to build up my confidence slowly to feel comfortable enough to audition for anything. Having such easy access to this audition, since my school was doing this production, definitely helped to make me feel comfortable enough to participate. Defunding these learning centers would take away opportunities for students in the future in similar circumstances. Not only that, but this is also important to several of my friends. I've seen first hand how happy and at home they feel performing in the productions put on by my school. A lot of them have even said how much of a safe space it is for them. Future students should have the same opportunity to find their safe spaces in learning centers for performing arts and in the other learning centers being affected as well.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:04 PM

### **Name**

Kyle Le

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Kyle Le, and I am currently a freshman at Mililani High School. I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. These cuts are not just misguided; they risk one of the essential foundations of support the students need to succeed.

Having benefited from the Learning Centers since middle school, I can personally attest to their impact. These programs provide unique opportunities that go beyond traditional classroom learning, enabling students like me to explore our passions and expand our horizons. Participating in FIRST Robotics and Science Olympiad has not only taught valuable skills but has also helped make deep connections with fellow students who share my interests.

Through the Science Olympiad, I've learned essential skills—collaboration, problem-solving, and resilience—that are vital for success both in school and beyond. More importantly, I've found a community where I feel understood and supported. These experiences have shaped who I am and have inspired me to dream bigger and pursue my goals with confidence.

If these funding cuts are implemented, we risk losing valuable resources that empower students to grow creativity and personally. The elimination of the Learning Centers would severely limit our opportunities for exploration and development, and holding back the bright futures we are striving for.

I urge you to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in our education is investing in the future of every student. Please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to thrive as a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Kyle Le

lekyle56@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

April Fitzgerald

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I understand that there are many hard decisions to make. However, reducing funding for school Learning Centers would be harmful for students' educational and life experiences. As a recipient of music education myself and the mother of 4 children who have benefitted from music education, I appreciate the benefit it has made in my family. Schools need this continued funding in order to provide for expenses to the programs that many individual schools would be unable to meet without it. Please consider continuing the funding for school Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Qalb e Zohra Bibi

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Qalb e Zohra Bibi, and I am the aunty of a 9th grade student at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Qalb e Zohra Bibi

(808) 679-5895



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Hale o nā Luna Maka'āinana*

STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

### **Testimony Opposing Cuts to DOE Funding for State Learning Centers**

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Education,

I am submitting this testimony in adamant opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for State Learning Centers as outlined in the DOE's operating budget request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027. This proposal, set to shift financial responsibility for these centers from the state to individual schools, represents a systematic dismantling of programs that are essential to the future of Hawaii's public education. It would, in effect, end critical resources that have long supported unique educational pathways in the arts, sciences, and agriculture—including the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA), Mililani Science Learning Center (MHS SLC), the Leilehua Agricultural Learning Center (LALC), and the Waialua STEM Learning Center.

The Waialua STEM Learning Center is a beacon of hands-on STEM education in our state, inspiring students to pursue careers in technology, engineering, and innovation. This center has produced award-winning robotics teams, successful Science Olympiad participants, and alumni who have gone on to impactful careers in the sciences and engineering. By cutting centralized funding for such vital programs, the DOE is signaling a lack of commitment to a critical, skills-based learning model that prepares students for success in a global, technology-driven economy. Dismantling a program so essential to Hawaii's place in the future of STEM is not just a budgetary miscalculation—it's an outright dismissal of the skills our students need to excel and succeed.

Even more importantly, in my view, is the Leilehua Agricultural Learning Center. The work of this center, for which its leader, Jackie Freitas was recognized as the 2024 Hawaii State Teacher of the Year, embodies a forward-looking approach to education that ties student learning directly to our state's agricultural heritage and future food security. For decades, this program has provided hands-on experience in agriculture and sustainability, aligning with Hawaii's broader goals of local food production and environmental stewardship. The Center equips students with technical skills, nurturing future farmers, botanists, and environmental scientists who will be vital in addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in Hawaii's agricultural landscape. Dismantling a program that contributes so directly to our state's goals and students' aspirations is not just misguided—it's irresponsible.

This budget proposal reflects the priorities of a DOE leadership that appears more intent on following orders than on advocating for students and educators. The superintendent’s “good soldier” approach—following directives to present a “no growth” budget—is a disservice to the people of Hawaii, especially when those directives originate from incompetent decision-makers whose policies have drained public resources. The fiscal constraints driving these cuts are the direct result of regressive policies, such as HB 2404, which handed significant income tax cuts to the wealthiest 1% while leaving our public services in a state of austerity. These cuts now make it “necessary” to chip away at education, a vital public good, rather than finding ways to fund programs that are essential for developing future innovators, artists, farmers, and civic leaders.

Instead of a budget proposal from a “good soldier” willing to cut at the heart of our educational programs, Hawaii’s students and teachers need a champion. We need leadership that fights for public education, that seeks to expand opportunities for students, and that refuses to put destructive budget priorities above their well-being. A champion would recognize that these learning centers—serving thousands of students across the state—are integral to the DOE’s mission to provide meaningful and holistic educational experiences. A champion would stand against the regressive budgetary mandates imposed by leaders who have chosen to prioritize the wealthiest over investing in our public school students.

To approve this proposal would send a clear signal: that Hawaii’s commitment to its students’ comprehensive, diverse, and equitable education is negotiable. But make no mistake—statewide support for programs like the CTAA, MHS SLC, and LALC ensures that all students, regardless of their school’s financial capabilities, have access to rich educational experiences. These are not “extras”; they are necessary pathways to preparing students for real-world challenges and careers. Without this centralized support, many schools—especially those serving low-income communities—will be unable to offer these critical programs.

I urge the Board of Education to reject this budget proposal. Stand with our students, educators, and communities by safeguarding funding for the Learning Centers. Together, we can ensure that educational opportunities remain a fundamental investment in Hawaii’s future rather than becoming another casualty of shortsighted and damaging fiscal policies.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Perruso". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Perruso  
State Representative, District 46

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Jordan Nakamura

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, my name is Jordan Kapon Nakamura and I strongly oppose the request to amend the DoE budget that will effectively eliminate the funding and operation of crucial programs for Waianae students and other young people who greatly benefit on programs like the Waianae MSLC and other Learning Centers. I have seen the direct and ongoing impact of these programs and they fulfill a deep need for youth to have a reliable outlet for their creative space, and spend their time in a community designed to shape their energy into healing and edifying directions. Programs like this are working and are a backbone of a healthy ecosystem that signals a bright future for young people and the community members who see the benefits of constructive spaces where their youth are thriving. It's unconscionable that the remove these vital programs is even being considered, as these Learning Centers exemplify the very purpose the Board of Education is supposed to help implement and protect. Please kokua the community we are tasked to serve and nurture by preserving the funding for these essential programs that our students need and love. Mahalo nui.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:27 PM

### **Name**

Kelsie Kuniyoshi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Although I am not from Wai'anae, I visited the Wai'anae MSC during a huaka'i with the Me'e Lab to learn about the 'Ane Holo. It impressed me to see so many young individuals, literally high school students, to be so knowledgeable about aquaculture. Place-based education is so important, and the Wai'anae MSC allows our younger generations to learn about 'anae, 'ama'ama, manauea, etc. in a time where we don't actually see the 'anae holo and our manauea is depleting. Please reconsider - these students will be our future kia'i loko i'a and Kahu 'Āina.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:51 PM

### **Name**

Dylan Miyata

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to you with concerns about the proposed budget cuts that, to my understanding, will end funding to learning centers. As an alumni of STEM learning centers and high school robotics, I strongly oppose the proposed funding cuts. The loss of these funds will remove a critical way for students to find what they truly want to do for a career. This would also affect valuable programs like the FIRST Robotics Program which was vital in helping me form skills outside of STEM such as teamwork and leadership. As a mentor to a robotics team, I strongly encourage the board to visit and spend a day at a robotics competition like FRC to see what these students have accomplished.

Our schools should be a place for students to explore, create, and pursue what they wish to do in life. Don't take that away from them.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Cristine Natividad

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Opposing proposed budget cuts to the Performing Arts Learning Centers in Hawaii.

Arts and Humanities programs are vital to the creativity to the current and future generations to come. Performing Arts Programs offer students with positive structure, and an outlet to help them thrive as bright and creative individuals. These students will grow up to be our future professionals, actors, singers, musicians, and artists. Some of these families cannot afford private schools, or outside performing arts clubs and rely solely on the Public Education system to support them with these endeavors. Please do not cut these funds. Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Thiessen Pagaduan

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Thiessen Pagaduan, and I'm a 9th grade student attending Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Something that First Robotics has provided me with is opportunities to pursue a more diverse career. I don't want to go for the basic jobs that aren't any fun. The First Robotics program has allowed me to explore and see what I like the most. I have learned that building and actually having HANDS ON with the parts is what I enjoy. It makes me happy to know that this is something I can continue to pursue in the future. It allowed me to have something to do after school. It taught me the basics of what I should need to know when moving on into my chosen career. First Robotics has also allowed me to connect with friends. I never had the ability to hang out with friends, but with this program, it has allowed me to interact with friends and even make new ones. Shutting down a program is also shutting down a lifeline. The people in it will have to find something new that they won't enjoy. Think of the chain of events that could occur for us. We could go down the wrong path in the future desperately looking for something we like but never enjoy. Think of all the possibilities for the future. This is what I consider every day when I go to First Robotics and I hope you can too.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

11/01/2024

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thiessen Pagaduan

Contact Information: [th3553n@gmail.com](mailto:th3553n@gmail.com)

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:28 PM

### **Name**

Hunter Ryman

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

These cuts to public school art programs also reduce the job opportunities of the future youth which will only hinder the future of Hawai'i.

Please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:40 PM

### Name

Anna Lawson

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Anna Lawson

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:40 PM

### Name

Tiana Kamiko

### Organization

Dancer's Delite - Farrington HS

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I absolutely oppose the request to remove funding from the performing arts learning centers, classes, performance spaces, etc within the DOE. The extra curricular activities and the arts are TANTAMOUNT for students to be successful in school and in life, and it would be an absolute detriment to the schools, the students, and the communities to remove funding for these programs. So many students seek homes and safe spaces in the arts, and if the DOE continues to remove funding from these types of spaces, we'll lose more of our keiki to gangs, gun violence, drugs, and other street activities. Many of these learning centers and spaces are actually at Title I schools, and the students who look forward to using these spaces NEED access to spaces like these, especially coming from low income backgrounds. Our job as teachers is to provide exposure and access to opportunities and possibilities, and the DOE should support those teachers' efforts with funding and resources. It sounds like DOE is planning to do the opposite of their actual job. Please stop paying these DOE "higher ups" so much and give the money to the students - where it belongs.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:28 PM

### **Name**

Misty Cruden

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Misty Cruden, a 2023 graduate of Waiākea High School on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Waiākea High School is known for being an accredited career academy school, giving students opportunities to learn about future career goals, industry knowledge, as well as develop as well-rounded and prepared student. Many students have expressed that this opportunity gave them the chance to learn about future careers, but more importantly participate in curricular that adhere to their interests. Waiākea High School is known for their advancements in technology and robotics, sending students to competitions where they have not only represented Hawai'i, but have successfully placed and won. These opportunities fuel and drive student passion for achievement and success. It is vital that students EVERYWHERE have a chance to participate in these types of activities whether it be in the fields of STEM, healthcare, business, or performing arts.

In Hawai'i, performing arts is already underfunded even though so many students express their passion for the arts. I myself am a dancer and have a deep appreciation for the performing arts and am a constant advocate for providing this service to public school students. It's unfair that students must seek opportunities outside of the classroom to participate in something that brings them so much joy and creates a safe community for them to freely express themselves. By passing the proposed budget for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and defunding learning centers, you are taking away opportunities for students. You are taking away any chance a student may have at expressing themselves and preparing them for success. By passing this proposed budget, you are telling students that you don't care about them and are only focused on creating a learning environment full of standardized testing. You are showing students that all you care about are test scores.

Please consider amending this budget to allow students the opportunity to have learning centers which will ultimately set students up for success.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:04 PM

### **Name**

Aadyn Mounthongdy

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Aadyn and I am a freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided.

Robotics has been a major part of my life ever since I first tried it out in fourth grade. It has provided me with experiences that I will forever cherish. Like creating an innovative project with my teammates. The friendships and connections I've forged within this community have given me a sense of belonging that is rare and precious. Through robotics, I have not only experienced joy and excitement but also gained life skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and innovation.

But this change doesn't only impact me; it affects many others who share similar goals like myself. Everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue their dreams, and robotics is a significant stepping stone for anyone who dreams to work as an engineer. Robotics teaches people about creativity, innovation, and critical thinking.

I highly urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

"There is nothing crueler than letting a dream end midway." -Aizawa Shouta

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mounthongdy, Aadyn

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:05 PM

### **Name**

Kristen Labiano

### **Organization**

Hawai'i Conservatory for Performing Arts WCC

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly OPPOSE cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

I was one of those students.

I grew up very sheltered when I was younger and as a result was quite reserved and a bit shy. This not only affected me socially but potentially would have affected me professionally as well had I not entered the sphere of creativity through the art of live performance. Joining theatre helped to bring me out of my shell within the classroom and beyond. The arts have helped me to build my professional skills as well. Through theatre's encouragement of harnessing skills such as public speaking, group work, adapting to quick changes, etc, I've been able to become the well rounded person that I am today as these skills have stuck with me and have continued to be applicable in many different situations of my day to day life.

Please consider the future generations who will benefit from such programs just as I have and many before me and continue to fund them. This will promote overall growth within our communities and innovation for the better for years to come.

Sincerely,  
Kristen Labiano

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:31 PM

### **Name**

Steven Colbert

### **Organization**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

Please restore funding to the Learning Centers. Currently, on the FB 2025-2027 there is a request titled Reduce Funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) Related to Realigning Resources (Row 77). The Learning Center provides amazing opportunities to students that contribute to their success outside the classroom and after graduation.

The Technology Learning Center at Waiakea High School provides students with project-based instruction integrated with academics and technology. I'm most familiar with their FIRST robotics program, which first the Strategic Plan Goal 1.1, that all students experience rigorous, high-quality learning that results in equitable outcomes for all learners. What impresses me is that any student, regardless their passion, can fit at the TLC. The success of their robotics team isn't just in building and programming a robot. It's planning and creating a newsletter, designing merchandise, working with budgets, doing fundraising, and community service. It's not just a club focused on one thing- It's all the pieces that have to work together to form a successful company. I don't know of any other organization at the high school that draws on the strengths of students with so many different skills. And, the mentors are essential to supporting the students in this student-led activity. By being student led, students with low and high SBA test scores are working together on a project, drawing on each others strengths to achieve success.

The Learning Center supports the Hawaii DOE Strategic Plan Goal 1.3, preparing students for college and career success and community and civic engagement. The technical, creative, and leadership opportunities provided by the Learning Center becomes some of the first substantial content on a students resume. Their resumes are filling up with applications they can use like CAD, programming skills. Those in creative fields are expanding their portfolios, and those interested in business are learning how to be an entrepreneur. These skills and experiences set these students apart, helping them to get into competitive university programs, earn academic scholarships that make success in college more likely, and leading to high chance of career success. And, they are not just building a robot to compete, they are also doing service projects and helping the community to learn the importance of giving back to the community that is supporting them.

The reduced funds for the Learning Center would not be in line with the DOE strategic goals, and would take away an incredible opportunity for students that help them succeed in all careers.

Sincerely,  
Steven Colbert

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:51 PM

### **Name**

Ryan Tanouye

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha esteemed decision-makers,

I am here to strongly oppose the proposed funding cuts for our island's learning centers to include robotics programs. These programs are more than educational resources; they are pathways that empower our keiki (children) with a vision for their futures that includes meaningful opportunities right here in the islands.

Through access to hands-on learning in STEM fields, robotics, and other innovative areas, our keiki develop critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that are essential in today's workforce. These experiences give them a sense of what's possible in terms of careers and higher education here at home. By understanding the range of opportunities available in the islands, our young people can envision successful futures without feeling they need to leave Hawai'i to find fulfilling careers.

Our learning centers and robotics programs don't just teach technical skills; they build confidence, inspire creativity, and help students realize their potential within their own communities. I have seen firsthand how these programs foster a sense of pride and belonging. Students who might not feel at home in traditional classroom settings find new purpose and discover passions that can lead to real jobs and futures here in Hawai'i.

By discontinuing funding for these programs, we risk not only limiting our keiki's education but also the future of our islands. Please consider the far-reaching impact these programs have in preparing our children to be skilled, connected, and invested in the place they call home.

Mahalo for your consideration and for listening to the voices of those who believe in these vital programs for Hawai'i's youth.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:04 PM

### **Name**

Lance Uyeda

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

English professor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

Please maintain state funding for Hawai'i high schools' performing arts centers. I've taught at Windward Community College since 2005, and many of my most motivated and disciplined students have been proud alums of Castle, Mililani, and other performing arts centers. Students' hard work and talents are showcased at these centers in a way that can be shared in and celebrated by their families and community. We need points of pride that aren't sports.

On their own, cuts to performing arts and STEM center budgets seem questionable. Put side-by-side with huge increases in security funding, they seem foolish. Everyone reading this can think of multiple schools on the mainland where extensive security spending did nothing.

In Hawai'i, we do lots of emergency planning. We plan as we do to warn about tsunamis and to deal with their aftermath in part because we have no ability to affect how they're formed. Our schools are more safe if they're full of meaningful, engaging programming.

An increase in arts center budgets would be welcome. Do not cut them.

Mahalo,

Lance Uyeda

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:51 PM

### Name

Joseph Simpliciano

### Organization

Kingdom pathways

### Position/Title

President

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha, Chair and Members of the Board,

As a strong community leader and Native Hawaiian dedicated to the stewardship of our land and ocean, I stand in firm opposition to any defunding of marine science programs in Hawai'i. In light of ongoing social and environmental challenges, especially with the intensifying impacts of climate change, these programs are essential to building our future leaders and scientists.

Currently, the water quality lab at Wai'anae High School is a prime example of the impact these programs have. The lab tests for contaminants, including fecal matter, in crucial areas like Pōka'i Bay—work that supplements the Department of Health's efforts by providing vital, lifesaving data to the community. Through this program, our students are actively protecting public health and learning valuable skills, preparing for careers in environmental science and beyond. These efforts are made possible through partnerships with organizations such as Kingdom Pathways (a Native Hawaiian and veteran-owned nonprofit).

As a Wai'anae High School graduate, I can attest to the life-changing opportunities marine science programs provide, fostering pathways to careers for students in environmental stewardship and science. Defunding these programs would not only harm our students and teachers but also weaken our community's resilience and connection to the land and sea.

For the sake of our community, our environment, and our future, I urge you to maintain full support for marine science programs across Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.



## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:53 PM

### Name

Heather Colbert

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposal to cut all learning center funding as I believe they have a significant impact on students both socially and academically and can greatly improve their desire to fully engage in learning and thus increase opportunities to continue education post high school. The DOE learning Centers were designed to support educational opportunities for students with special talents and abilities. These students that the programs house / mentor / advise are often the ones that are isolated or disengaged from their peers. As a parent, I have watched my son grow from a socially awkward and isolating middle schooler to a peer mentor, community volunteer, role model and leader (VP SY 23-24, President 24-25) of his Learning Center focused on Robotics and STEM education. While it possible that schools could have a minimally functioning robotics program without proper funding, the reality is there will always be a discrepancy between what schools are provide depending on where they are located. Why should students on Oahu have Robotics programs fully funded, while those on the other Islands have to accept any money they can get? When the DOE talks about equity and excellence but then removes funding for programs that would provide at least some ability to support these programs, is that truly equitable?

The learning center at my child's school provides a place for STEM focused high school students to truly feel like they fit in. More importantly, it also developed active members of the society with their commitment to give back to the community by bringing joy and fun in STEM learning to younger students. My child's learning center offers a summer STEM camp to students in Grade 3-6. They attend multiple elementary school community events, bringing in Robots, Drones and 3d printers. They focus their time on increase STEM education in the younger generations. Through these programs, there has been an increase in interest in STEM fields and a consistent participation of students that join the program. Increasing joy and learning of STEM fields, especially at a young age can, directly impact both math and science scores as they continue to pursue these interests throughout their education. What better way to do this, then by using high school learning center members as peer mentors and role models.

The DOE consistently talks about how students should be the voice of their education. Turn and talk, learn from others, connect learning to current experiences. It is interesting because these are not directly listed in the strategic plan, but it is a consist message being given to educators. These learning centers are models of what learning should be. They teach students how to see a problem, how to work with others and then come up with a solution. Then, get hands on, try it out. When it doesn't work, fix it, try again. Through First Robotics taught at my son's learning center, he has hand multiple successes and multiple failures and every time, he and his team has gotten stronger through talking, learning, trying and refining. When this exemplifies what school should teach, why are they the programs that are removed?

I truly hope that the committee reconsiders removing funding and continues to invest in the Learning Center Programs.

# KINGDOM PATHWAYS



Re: Testimony in **Strong Opposition to agenda item VIII**  
(Department of Education's operating budget request request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027).

Aloha Members of the Department of Education,

On behalf of Kingdom Pathways, I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition** to the Department of Education's proposed plan to defund all learning centers by 2026, including the Wai'anae Marine Science Learning Center (MSLC). This decision, if implemented, would significantly disrupt critical programs that directly contribute to both our community's environmental health and our youth's educational and career pathways.

The Wai'anae MSLC, in partnership with Kingdom Pathways, offers a unique hands-on opportunity for students to engage in environmental science, notably through water quality data collection. This is not merely an academic exercise; these students are key contributors in monitoring Enterococcus levels at Pōkaī Bay, a popular recreational beach heavily utilized by our community. Their findings inform efforts to identify and mitigate sources of contamination, addressing a public health priority for our region.

Through their involvement at the Wai'anae Water Testing Lab, students are more than just participants—they become stewards of our environment, taking on kuleana, or responsibility, for the health of our waters. This vital work fosters a sense of pride, empowerment, and a profound understanding of how science impacts real-life issues. These experiences are not only invaluable for the community but also lay a foundation for future career opportunities in environmental science and other essential trades. Without MSLC's programs, many of our students would lose these foundational experiences, skills, and mentorship that direct them towards meaningful, sustainable careers.

For the sake of our youth's futures and the well-being of our environment, **we strongly urge the Department of Education to reconsider this proposal and maintain full funding for learning centers, ensuring they can continue their essential role in education and community service.**

Respectfully,

*Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano*  
Director of Kingdom Pathways

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:40 PM

### **Name**

Chad Masuda

### **Organization**

Autism Comprehensive Education Services

### **Position/Title**

Board Certified Behavioral Analyst

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing regarding the decision to strip funding to the arts programs at castle high school, nanakuli, and kapolei. As I was a student going to Highschool, castle performing arts center acted as an extra curricular activity that served as an alternative to sports for students who had trouble fitting in with the popular crowd. Through my experiences in theater I met so many diverse students of different backgrounds. Theater served as a melting pot of cliques and ideas.

As a behavioral analyst I see how theater can help clients to build confidence in themselves and provides a safe space to explore the depths of emotion. If the arts are to be cut I fear we will see a further diminishing of the social paradigm. With no funding to the arts, many students not in the center of the social cliques may get lost in the academic hustle.

Sincerely,

Chad Masuda



## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to our students' specific needs and interests. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High School students and would greatly decrease the advantages that the Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry-standard equipment and software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry-recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" in their futures, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such tools and opportunities.

I urge you to reconsider your decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and support.

Sincerely,

Jason Higgins

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:04 PM

### Name

Ifit Hoppe-Cruz

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I oppose the proposed Operating Budget on the grounds that it will effectively cut funding to Learning Centers.

My experience as a student with learning centers was a completely positive one. Learning Centers often offer necessary services, filling niches other institutions fail to reach.

Going to school in the historically underserved community of Wai'anae, my participation in Nānākuli Performing Arts Center— a learning center— provided me and my peers an opportunity to develop a myriad of critical and sought after skills. In NPAC, through collective creative processes I learned negotiation and compromise; through rehearsal and performance of \*art\* I gained a deep confidence, eloquence, and appreciation for culture, music, and language.

There are countless other skills I developed through NPAC that— unsupplemented— a Public education in Wai'anae would not have provided me with. Those technical skills I developed through NPAC do not begin to speak to the value of the community NPAC offered me as a young queer person.

NPAC is not the only LC providing students unique opportunities in Wai'anae. The Marine Science Learning Center, for instance, at my alma Matter, Wai'anae High School, offers students a unique opportunity to study aquaculture, marine biology, and introduces concepts and disciplines such as ecosystem management and conservation. They accomplish this while bringing students into conversation with organizations and professionals in the various fields and applications of Marine Biology.

The idea of cutting funding to both of these very different services— and all other Learning Centers, all doing equally valuable things— is unthinkable to me.

Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:51 PM

### **Name**

Annette Jackson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Annette Jackson and I am a parent of an 11th grade student and 9th grade student at Mililani High School.

I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have had a tremendous impact on our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program has been in constant operation since 1995! It provided opportunities to students that are rare to find in the classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. To lose this program that have become integral to the fabric of Mililani High School would be detrimental to the learning experience of the students.

Learning center programs at Mililani HS such as FIRST Robotics has given my child the opportunity to explore their interests in STEM and would help prepare my child for a post high school education in the field.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to RECONSIDER these proposed cuts.

The Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please reconsider.

Sincerely,  
Annette Jackson  
Parent

To the members of the Board of Education

I hope you guys are doing well. I am Kaizer Martinez, sophomore at Mililani High School. Today I stand before you to voice an urgent concern to the proposed budget cuts to our state's "Learning Center Programs". I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who is currently benefiting from our Learning Center. I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The learning Centers have served as a beacon of hope and opportunity in our communities. For years, it has offered a wide range of services, including tutoring, mentorship, and job training programs. These programs had made a big difference on many of us, empowering us to achieve our academic and career goals. Learning Center Programs is more than just an educational program, it is also a family or a community hub where students come together to learn, share experiences, and support one another. The relationship here fosters a sense of belonging and community cohesion that is invaluable. I myself have learned so much skills and knowledge from my school's FIRST Robotics team (team 2853). I had only been part of our FIRST Robotics Club for 1 ½ years, but I can proudly say that I had learned about so many skills that I need to learn in order to achieve my lifetime career goals. I also engaged so many elementary and middle school students through our club's outreach programs, especially our annual STEM Camp. I have learned how to have creative, critical thinking, time management, independence, technical skills, communication skills, and research skills. I am also part of a non-school based VEX Robotics (team 316W) so I know what troubles having none to too little funds can affect not only the program but also for the students. Having no funds basically lessens our chances for our goal, because funds make up most of the parts that we need, the registrations for the tournament, and the travel expenses when having a tournament outside the island or on the mainland. Learning Centers are "***For STUDENTS to gain skills and knowledge about their passion***", so cutting the funds for the Learning Centers means crushing out the opportunity for the students to grow on their passion. ***For the future of us Students!***

Cutting funds for Learning Centers would have significant consequences for both students and the broader community. Without adequate financial support, these centers would struggle to provide essential resources and programs that foster critical skills like collaboration, creativity, and independent learning. This reduction in funding could lead to increased educational disparities, leaving vulnerable students without access to vital support systems that promote academic success. Furthermore, the loss of these centers could diminish opportunities for community engagement and enrichment, ultimately impacting the overall quality of education and hindering the development of well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges of the future.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. Your reconsideration of cutting funds for Learning Centers reflects an important acknowledgment of their essential role in student development. By reversing the decision, the Board can help ensure that these centers continue to provide vital resources and support that foster critical skills like creativity, collaboration, and independent learning. Such a move would not only mitigate the negative impact on educational equity but also reinforce the community's commitment to nurturing all students. This reconsideration signals a dedication to creating an inclusive educational environment where every learner has access to the tools and opportunities necessary for success.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely

Kaizer Martinez

[kaizermartinez02182009@gmail.com](mailto:kaizermartinez02182009@gmail.com)

(808)-546-0740



Hawai'i State Board of Education  
Attn: Roy Takumi, Chairperson

**Testimony: Oppose Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027**

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

Aloha Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Arakaki and Board Members,

My name is Rosie 'Anolani Alegado and I stand in OPPOSITION to the current DOE operating budget request for 2025-2027. I am a proud product of the Hawai'i elementary public school system and a parent to children who attended Hawai'i public schools. I am submitting testimony on two points with regard to the cutting of all funding from Learning Centers.

First, a key piece of my education growing up was access to performing arts programming. I grew up in a working class to middle class family with both my parents going to graduate school and teaching at UH Mānoa at the same time. We were not rich so being able to attend plays, musicals and other events at learning centers such as the Castle Performing Arts Center was a primary way that I was exposed to art. As an 'Āhuimanu Elementary School parent, my children also benefitted from being able to attend these events. These monies that you are proposing to cut help pay for teachers, supplies and funds for productions every year and without this financial support, Learning Centers do not have the funds in reserve to continue to create these valuable events. Performing art is so important in our children's education and activates a level of creative expression that can be inaccessible by other conventional means of education. It seems so cruel to our school children to deprive them of these monies.

The second reason I oppose the funding cuts to Learning Centers relates to my current profession as an Associate Professor of Oceanography at UH Mānoa and my association with the Wai'anae High School Marine Science Learning Center. I study the resilience of loko i'a (Hawaiian fishponds) under different regimes of change such as biocultural restoration as well as climate change. Loko i'a have the potential to increase Hawai'i's food security and the Wai'anae MSLC has the potential to play a critical role in these efforts. Their on-campus aquaculture facility is part of a native fish hatchery program that will supply loko i'a with juvenile fish while training local kids about this enterprise. That is why cutting funding to the Wai'anae MSLC is incredibly short-sighted. The MSLC is invaluable both for the fish stock that it can provide, but for the hands-on experience that is training a future workforce that could directly help diversify our economy. Building capacity in our youth, having a means to feed our communities – especially our kupuna is something that we cannot afford to lose.

I've provided only 2 examples of how indispensable Learning Centers are. I'm sure there are many more stories of how important, how vital these programs and places are to Hawai'i and most importantly, Hawai'i's keiki. These venues provide educational

opportunities outside the classroom in intangible but significant ways. I urge the BOE to restore funding to the Learning Centers because investing in the Learning Centers is investing in the future of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style, that reads "Rosanna Alegado". The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Rosanna 'Anolani Alegado

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:40 PM

### **Name**

Kamanao Nero

### **Organization**

Kauai Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am currently a backstage set mover and assistant for Kauai Performing Arts Center's fall production of 'And Then There Were None'. I have been a participant in the Kauai Performing Arts Center program for almost a year and a half. Throughout the time I've spent in this class I have changed greatly, I have learned to accept failures with an open mind, to rely on my fellow classmates, how to emotionally support others, as well as becoming more accustomed to the burden of responsibility. I oppose this decision because I know that even though my time in the class is drawing to a close there will be others like me, who yern for that opportunity to become more open and to be welcomed into such an accepting environment. I know for a fact that without this class I and many of my classmates would not be where they are today, I am still somewhat reclusive but I now know that I always have the choice to change that. And those days I spent on stage will honestly always be some of the best moments of my life, and I hope that others not only in my school but across the island will continue to celebrate this experience. These almost two years I spent in this class have been my most happy, healthy, and to be honest, challenging years I've ever had in my near 12 years of schooling, and I'd want it to be the same for all of the students who have just joined, all of those who came before and those who will come after me.

October 30, 2024

To the State of Hawai'i Board of Education,

Today, we received notice that our Learning Center Funding, which funds our Music and Health Learning Centers, is currently on the docket to be eliminated over the next 2 years by the Hawaii Department of Education, as part of an overall reduction in the DOE budget. This is terrible news and something that should be reconsidered. There are many ways to cut and trim budgets. Taking away the arts for our students is not one of them. Taking away funds for health learning centers is not one of them. The Board of Education has a responsibility to provide for the development of our youth. Our music program at Kahuku High and Intermediate school has been a game changer for my three students, and their peers. Music helps our youth learn in different ways, it helps expand our thinking, our brains, our ability to work together to create something much bigger than one could do on its own. It feeds the brain, helps students in their academics, and addresses their social and emotional learning. These experiences create more than a grade and academic preparedness, it creates a place for youth to learn from each other, become leaders within their class and within the ranks of band and choir. It helps students become confident in playing and speaking in front of the public and allows them to push themselves to excellence.

If the budget passes in its current state, our school will lose the special distinction and extra funding that has been used to enhance our students' education and experiences for decades. Why take away something that has led to boosted confidence, abilities, and enhanced school life for so many students? Why must the arts be targeted when it does so much for students? Please reconsider the budget and do not cut a program that makes such a difference for our students. I have witnessed my own children thrive through the music program. It has created a network of close friends who learn from each other, and support one another in a way that spills over into their academic, required course work. I have seen confidence in students who lead their sections, who lead practice sessions, and go above and beyond typical student expectations. It brings out their natural leadership and helps them to work together as a team. Not only does it do this, but it brings joy to students. It lifts their confidence and their ability to present themselves to others. It helps with their academics and uses different parts of their brain that stimulates creativity and progress. Please, do not cut our arts and health programs.

Sincerely,

Meredith Speicher

[Meredith.speicher@gmail.com](mailto:Meredith.speicher@gmail.com), 808-428-7044

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:18 PM

### **Name**

Justin Kong

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

ROBOTICS student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I am a member of the Mililani High School Robotics team and was shocked to hear about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. Robotics gives students like myself the opportunity to gain hands-on, technical and practical engineering knowledge and experience. It allows us to apply what we learn in our normal day-to-day classes such as engineering, architecture, etc. Working on a team made up of different ages, backgrounds, levels of experience and aptitudes is also very helpful for our future. We witness firsthand the power of synergy.

Programs like these prepare students in Hawai'i for the world of higher learning, internships and hopefully, employment. To get there we need to show prospective scholarship providers that we went above and beyond the normal curriculum. Robotics is above the normal curriculum. With scholarships, we can then afford to attend college. The experience I mentioned earlier and knowledge we gained from Robotics will help us in college and possibly lead to an internship. The college degree and possible internship could give us an advantage for employment opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Justin Kong

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:57 PM

### **Name**

Maya McKeown

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the members of the Board of Education,

I hope you are doing well. My name is Maya McKeown, and I am a Senior at Mililani High School. I am reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of the Central Theatre of Arts Academy (CTAA) Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the funding cuts that will impact our programs in the worst way. I am in strong opposition of the proposed funding cuts for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770 related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has seen the direct benefits of these Learning Centers on my peers, friends, and family, I cannot stress enough how important the funding to these Learning Centers are. With my cousins being involved in their high school years in the robotics team, to my best friend being involved in CTAA, I have seen the importance of these programs. Without funding, these programs would be in jeopardy-- not just at my school, but at every other public school on the island. I have attended CTAA events and the productions never fail to amaze me. The students have so much passion and have made so many life changing memories through this program. These opportunities must not just end here. These opportunities should be offered to the future generations-- our future Hollywood and Broadway stars and dreamers. As I am in Student Government, I often see the FIRST Robotics club and Science club working in their room until late hours. Their drive and dedication to the sciences is remarkable and they will be our future innovators of society. These Learning Centers need to stay open not just for them, but for everyone who comes next. Our STEM Learning Center recently just held their Fall STEM Camp, which consists of elementary schoolers eager to learn more about robotics and the sciences. Without the funding to the STEM Learning Center, this may not have been possible. Getting rid of their funding does not just affect the current students at our high school, but our aspiring scientists and robotics members in our community.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing valuable resources that have empowered countless of students to reach their goals and find their passions. The loss of the Learning Centers would be a tragedy to the next generations education experience.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student. Therefore, please ensure that funding to Learning Centers does not get cut.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Maya McKeown

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:51 PM

### Name

andy mounthongdy

### Organization

Parent of Mililani elementary and high school students

### Position/Title

None

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Subject: Opposing Budget Cuts to the state Learning Center

Dear BOE members,

As a parent with three children getting their education through the Mililani public schools, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to the Learning Center. My eldest son is currently studying engineering at the University of Hawai'i. My middle son is in the Mililani High school robotics program. And my youngest also in a robotics program at Mililani Ike. This program plays a crucial role in inspiring my kids to pursue STEM and preparing our future generation for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

STEM education, including robotics, is essential for fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills. These skills are not only valuable for academic success but also for future careers in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. By investing in robotics programs, we are equipping our students with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive in a world driven by innovation.

Cutting funding for robotics programs would have detrimental consequences for our students:

- \* Reduced Educational Opportunities: Students would miss out on hands-on learning experiences that spark their curiosity and ignite a passion for STEM subjects.
- \* Limited Career Pathways: A strong foundation in robotics and STEM opens doors to a wide range of exciting and well-paying careers in fields like engineering, computer science, and artificial intelligence.
- \* Weakened Global Competitiveness: Investing in STEM education is essential for maintaining our country's competitiveness in the global economy.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and prioritize funding for the Learning Center. By doing so, we can ensure that our students have the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to a brighter future for all.

Sincerely,

Andy Mounthongdy



To the members of the board of education,

I'm Devin Ryan, and I'm a freshman here at MHS. I'm here to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

For me personally, robotics has been a very fun experience that has already taught me a few valuable life lessons. It's helped me realize that the amount of time and commitment you put towards something relates to your end result's quality. In a nutshell, the harder you work, the better whatever you're working towards will be. It's also taught me that commitment isn't supposed to be an easy thing, and that at the end of the day, it's really your decision on if you really want to be committed or not, no matter how many excuses you can make. Robotics has brought me closer to my friends and has even allowed me to make new friends. I only joined this program this year and I've already learned so much through it. Some of these realizations I've made through robotics will be concepts I'll never forget. I'd probably be in a worse state in school right now if it weren't for those lessons.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Devin Ryan  
[dmryan237@gmail.com](mailto:dmryan237@gmail.com)

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 9:45 PM

### Name

Jackie Freitas

### Organization

Learning Centers

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Good morning,

My name is Jackie Freitas and I am the 2024 Hawaii State Teacher of the year as well as a proud Learning Center Teacher at Leilehua High School. I have been teaching at Leilehua for the past 15 years as a Learning Center. Many people don't understand the true purpose of what a learning center is. The Department's Learning Centers Program provides students and their parents with greater academic choice by creating distinctive, specialized and excellent programs within public education. Learning Centers are established within our schools with each Learning Center organized around a single theme or focus area. As a learning center we are held up to a higher standard. We are required to open our classroom doors to anyone in the state that wants to be a part of our program, we give our students opportunities that some may not get such as a variety of resources that pertain to our content. At my Leilehua Agriculture Learning Center I am able to have elementary, middle and high school students come to our program where my students create standard based lessons for each grade level. My students are able to become the teachers and teach other students around the island about agriculture at our very own land lab. Throughout the school year we give about 25 school tours. This allows my students the opportunity to work on their public speaking they are able to adapt and create rotations that are grade and standard appropriate for that specific grade level.

Please understand that for educational programs to be successful they first need a teacher. These programs are built off of what the teacher is able to offer. With the .05 position being taken away I am unable to have the time to schedule and work with school to run these school tours, I am unable to have the time to work with community members to see what ideas or resources they are able to bring into the classroom. As educators we do all of these things for our students but if we are having to teach full lines, run our land lab which mine is 3.5 acres, create partnerships, find certifications for our students to complete to prepare them for after high school, compete in CTSO's your teacher will burn out very quickly.

If you ask anyone who do you think has one of the best robotics programs you will hear Wailua High which is a learning center, who has one of the best marine science programs, you will hear Waianae High (Learning center) and I don't mean to toot my own horn but if you ask who has the best agriculture program you will hear Leilehua High School (learning center)

I am asking to please rethink this decision. Many schools cannot afford to maintain their learning centers. If this is taken away all these amazing opportunities that these programs offer will no longer be. We always talk about how important education is so why are we taking away something that only helps our students and reaches across our entire state?

11/01/2024

Please reconsider cutting the funding for our learning centers

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:25 PM

### **Name**

Kamalei Sterling

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The budget for the arts should NOT be cut at all! More money needs to be given to these programs because it is highly beneficial to everyone involved! It helps with self confidence and creativity, for instance.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 9:57 PM

### **Name**

Alexis Jinbo-Doran

### **Organization**

Kalani High School Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources program and Kalani High School FFA

### **Position/Title**

teacher/advisor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am deeply concerned about the potential reduction in funding for programs, learning centers, and other resources essential to the success of agriculture and STEM education across the state. These cuts could limit opportunities for students, affect the development of future leaders, and undermine our mission to support Hawaii's agricultural future.

My name is Bransen Hatakenaka, former Chairperson and Secretary of the Hawaii State Student Council. I am testifying in strong opposition to agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027. Under the DOE's current proposal, all Learning Center programs are slated to be fully defunded by 2026-27, programs that span more than HALF our public schools, and the fields of STEAM, Performing Arts, Engineering, Agriculture, Media, Health, Music, and Business.

As someone who has advocated tirelessly over four years for our students as a part of the Hawaii State Student Council and worked with the DOE and BOE, I am shocked and disappointed that this proposition is on the table. For years student leaders like myself have been told by the DOE and BOE that career readiness through extracurriculars was a priority, and vital to the success of our students. We've advocated for improvements through our legislative cycle every year through our Secondary Student Conference and told that our voices matter.

And yet here we are, proposing to cut programs across the state that prepare our students for their careers, college, and their personal well-being. Programs essential to the BOE's vision of locally committed, globally competitive students. Quite frankly, I am outraged that for all the work generations of student leaders have put into improving these programs, we are now essentially being told that the DOE was never truly committed and that our work to improve our education system for other students was in vain.

Our education system isn't perfect by any standards. Yet what has always made me proud of Hawaii's public schools is that I felt that we had a voice and that our DOE, BOE, and legislature valued our voices, and were working to improve it for the sake of the students, and for the future of our islands. I still have hope that is the case, and that is why I urge the Board of Education to reject agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, until we are assured that our Learning Centers will be supported for generations to come.

Thank you for considering my testimony, and I hope that you truly hear the voices of our students.

Sincerely,

Bransen Hatakenaka

Former 2023-24' Hawaii State Student Council Chairperson, 2022-23' Secretary

% 2024 Hilo High School Valdicatorian

% 2028 University of Southern California Astronautical Engineering

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:25 PM

### **Name**

Cassandra Antonell

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha - I urge you to vote no on this budget proposal. The Waiakea HS Technology Learning Center is such a valuable resource in our community and should continue to be well funded for the sake of our keiki. Mahalo, Cassandra Antonell

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:25 PM

### **Name**

Yasmin Galvis

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Yasmin Galvis, as a young local actor I understand first hand the importance and vitalness of theatre education in this community, especially for young artists. Theatre is a form of expression and allows for creatives to change minds and hearts. It helps not only the community, but creates an outlet for young people to improve their confidence, socialization, and sense of self. Students deserve a good education and access to the arts. It would be a true devastation to cut funding to already thriving and operating programs at local schools. Not only that, but cutting funding to these programs would lead to job loss and a decrease in proper education and learning. This is extremely hurtful to are already struggling educational community. I vote to oppose this agenda, support education. Support our keiki.



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:18 PM

### Name

Cheri Souza

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to eliminating Learning Centers at public high schools across the state. Our Hawai'i public high school students need these centers to expand career readiness, understand postsecondary options, and build their social capital. Currently, only about 51% of Hawai'i high school graduates attend college - this number is too low. Cutting the Learning Centers will keep this number stagnant at best. If we want our high school students to be able to compete with young people attending public schools on the continent, they need to be exposed to a variety of experiences.

This proposal seems to disproportionately impact and eliminate performing arts programs across the state. How can we say that we want our graduates to be well rounded if we are cutting a program that gives students so many soft skills necessary for the job market. Performing arts is so much more than becoming an actor, it provides students confidence, communication skills, a safe space, and allows for expression.

As mental health issues arise amongst young people, it is increasingly important that we have programs that appeal to a diverse student body. When students feel like they belong, it improves their mental health as well as engagement in school. Cutting Learning Centers would take away a safe space for students who may thrive in the career technical education spaces that encourage learning through project based and often hands on modalities.

I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget. Losing the Learning Centers would significantly hurt our keiki and decrease their opportunities for success. If we want our keiki to be able to stay in Hawai'i and become the leaders of tomorrow - not just low-paid workers serving the ultra wealth who retire here - we need to invest in them. We need spaces like Learning Centers for them to be able to explore their passions, gain confidence, express themselves, and learn important life skills.

Sincerely,

Cheri Souza

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:18 PM

### Name

David Souza

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to eliminating Learning Centers at public high schools across the state. Our Hawai'i public high school students need these centers to expand career readiness, understand postsecondary options, and build their social capital. Currently, only about 51% of Hawai'i high school graduates attend college - this number is too low. Cutting the Learning Centers will keep this number stagnant at best. If we want our high school students to be able to compete with young people attending public schools on the continent, they need to be exposed to a variety of experiences.

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As mental health issues arise amongst young people, it is increasingly important that we have programs that appeal to a diverse student body. When students feel like they belong, it improves their mental health as well as engagement in school. Cutting Learning Centers would take away a safe space for students who may thrive in the career technical education spaces that encourage learning through project based and often hands on modalities.

I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget. Losing the Learning Centers would significantly hurt our keiki and decrease their opportunities for success.

Sincerely,

David Souza

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:04 PM

### **Name**

Ryan M

### **Organization**

Waiakea High TLC alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The learning center programs provide excellent spaces for students to explore their interests and be genuinely interested in what they're learning, cultivating a love for learning, and helping them to discover and pursue their passions. The spaces for this in typical classroom curriculum are few and far between, and the opportunities for this outside of the learning center programs are limited.

I'm an alumni of the Waiakea High School robotics program, aka the Technology Learning Center. In addition to the great learning environment, the program gave me a space where I could be comfortable. I felt valued and respected, and I made valuable friendships. As a bit of an awkward kid, that meant a lot.

I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had through the robotics program, and hope for other students to continue to have access to similar programs, not just in technology, but in theater, agriculture, and whatever else may interest them. Please reconsider the value of these programs.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:04 PM

### Name

Michelle Brooke

### Organization

CPAC CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

### Position/Title

Mom of Scouted talent

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am a mother of a student that was scouted from an LA agent at Castle high school in Miss Myer's class within CPAC. She went on to be on 11 episodes of High School Musical on ABC prime time, and also on the big screen in movies such as Midway, SoulSurfer, Ragamuffin, and television on Hawaii Five-0 on several episodes as a guest star and advertisements such as L'Oréal and more. She's an accomplished Actress and musician and a triple threat in her field. Miss Meyer and CPAC brought my daughter to the forefront with much support and encouragement that brought my daughter to where she is today.. Her IMDb speaks for itself as to the quality of CPAC and what she gained from an incredible high school program. As a mother and for this future generation, I am begging you to keep CPAC in place on these islands, as we have extremely talented children here that need their voices to be heard and their talents to be displayed without prejudice as to the genre so to speak, regardless of the form that it presents itself, e.g. sports, dance, theatre, drawing, math, science and the like. I believe that these children are highly educated and this program creates an environment to express and create all that they are unashamedly and with boldness, which I truly believe helps and assists them to become greater influencers in their world. My daughter went on with honors as a graduate, and I truly believe this program kept her steady in balancing all of her studies. I implore you to reconsider the WHY as to your budget cut. This program is education at it's finest. My daughter went on to study in New York, and is still studying her craft due to a very impressive, highly trained, teaching, program, and class that if I would compare to anything else would be second to none. My daughter has also been extremely involved in and educated hundreds of students with unprecedented holiday shows from Kaneohe Elementary to Castle High School itself. Mahalo for allowing me the opportunity to speak and please consider this program as a viable block building program within the Hawaii educational system. Mahalo from a very grateful mom.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:18 PM

### **Name**

Samantha Preis

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear BOE members,

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE FUNDING FOR THE LEARNING CENTERS!**

The Castle Performing Arts Center has significantly impacted both my children's lives. To see their confidence grow from the ability to speak in front of an audience, memorize lines, become a performer, act, dance, sing, and commit to the demanding schedule of theater rehearsals. There is no other program that delivers the same magical combination of benefits. And they make it fun! Did you see Ragtime performed in 2019? It was compared to a Broadway quality musical! What these directors can pull out of the kids is miraculous! These productions create lifelong proud memories of crowning achievements for these kids. Don't take that away from them.

Music, arts and performance are incredibly valuable aspects of education. It is disturbing to hear that the leaders of our education system are even considering defunding the arts. Obviously no one on the board has benefitted from the theater experience. Perhaps learning about what you propose to cut would be a good idea. Our public education system is accused of short changing the kids in so many ways. Let's keep the quality in the education system by keeping the arts within reach of our children.

Thank you,  
Samantha Preis

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:32 PM

### **Name**

Erica Santos

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Erica Santos, and I am an employee at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Erica Santos

ejsantos@hawaii.edu

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:59 PM

### **Name**

Mason Selley

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Reducing funding for learning centers will negatively impact the students by reducing their opportunities to see and participate in disciplines they want to pursue in the future. Another option should be available. Think of the students.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:37 PM

### **Name**

Morgan Brailo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Morgan Brailo and I am currently a Director of Aquatics for a local nonprofit. I am submitting my testimony in favor of providing funding to learning centers in public schools, because without the agriculture program at Leilehua High School I wouldn't be where I am today.

Learning centers are vital, especially for underprivileged youth to gain exposure and education around a multitude of career opportunities post-high school. These are safe spaces where tomorrow's leaders are learning to fail forward, to take responsibility and accountability of their decisions, and that their life can be whatever they choose to make out of it. This loss of funding will disproportionately affect our students in lower income neighborhoods who are already struggling to be in the classroom to begin with. This decision doesn't just cut programs for the next school year, it is robbing our keiki of the opportunity to expand their view on the world.

Because of the agriculture program at Leilehua I was exposed to an entire array of careers that I didn't even know existed. I first pursued natural resource management, and learned quickly that my cup gets filled through creating generational impact and change. This motivator led me to my career at a local nonprofit, and it drives me to fight for the board to try and find another fiscal solution than cutting funding for learning centers. This budget decision will leave a generational gap of students not pursuing careers in trade work and the arts, both valuable career pathways that keep our economy flowing healthily.

As someone who understands the pressure of budget season all too well, I can only imagine the stress behind making this decision. I hope you reconsider your ventures, and look into other avenues of reducing expenses.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:59 PM

### **Name**

Carmela Resuma

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please keep the funding for MSLCs they provide critical skills and knowledge for our students.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:59 PM

### **Name**

Gabe Preis

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear BOE members,

I oppose the defunding of the CPAC learning center.

I'm a proud parent of a Castle valedictorian. My child enjoyed and participated in many aspects of the CPAC learning center from acting and singing in musicals to running sound and lighting for other productions. Participation in theater did not impede her academics but propelled it.

The Ron Bright theater is a vital asset to the Kaneohe community. We have enjoyed many of the incredible productions there. It's hard to believe these are only high school kids.

I have another child who will attend Castle next year. She also shares excitement about the theater and arts and would be crushed to find that CPAC is no longer offered.

Please find a way to fund the learning center.

Respectfully,  
Gabe Preis

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 10:37 PM

### Name

Joslyn Sato

### Organization

Blue Zones Project Hawaii

### Position/Title

Statewide Program Manager

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

This testimony share about the importance of funding and supporting Learning Center's such as Leilehua High School's Agriculture Program. The funding provided to support programs provide not only the student's an opportunity to learn, experience, and grow but also inspires and engages the community as a whole both through economic development and community well-being. The program provides so much opportunity beyond traditional classroom learning. Jackie and the LHS Agriculture Program has helped the school and community achieve Blue Zones Project designations by supporting and transforming food environments at school and among the community, and collaborating on food policy projects and initiatives. Not only do students have an opportunity for diverse learning but they gain life skills, career readiness skills, and community connections. Jackie and her students are able to showcase the learning center to educate and inspire younger students in their Complex and other teachers throughout the State. Without the continued funding and investment of Learning Center's you don't just take away from the students and the school but you also take away a resource that benefits the community. When a community like Wahiawa is rooted in agriculture and continues to grow with agriculture at its forefront, it's a Learning Center and a passionate teacher like Jackie that makes the difference. Thus, giving students the best learning opportunity, contributing to the community and making the most out of the resources the learning center can offer because of the continued funding and support invested.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:10 PM

### **Name**

Norma Kimokeo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please continue to support and fund the children's performing arts programs (CPAC). I know how amazing and important these programs are in helping our children develop confidence and emotional & social growth. My children, and now my grandchildren have participated in these amazing programs and they are definitely a worthwhile bonus to schools, families, and communities. Please continue to fund these important programs.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:21 PM

### **Name**

Naia Langijota

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi, my name is Naia Langijota from Mililani High School.

I see so many of my fellow students and peers benefiting from the current STEM and other programs put in place by this budget. If we take this away, then we risk our children's education and livelihood. Why take away the things that help foster a healthy learning environment?

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:59 PM

### **Name**

Phylcia M

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a former Castle performing arts center participant, it would be such a disservice for this program to be discontinued. Through the arts, whether it be plays, or dance recitals, this outlet has helped me grow into the person and athlete I am today. The arts teach everyone confidence, discipline, empathy, & strength. Without a variety of outlets for our youth to develop, you're limiting their creativity and opportunities to showcase their talent and inspire the next generation to believe they can achieve anything. Recently, Hawaii has been on the map internationally and that has to do with programs like CPAC, ( as well as performing arts centers at other schools/districts).

It was such a blessing to be a student of the late Ronald E. Bright and I would hate for this to be a thing in the past for others to experience from other directors, etc.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:18 PM

### **Name**

Irene Leger

### **Organization**

Kahuku High School

### **Position/Title**

C3 Journey Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I am writing to Oppose the reduction of Learning Centers. The Music Learning Center @ Kahuku High School has been a long-time positive influence on students, the KHIS Feeder schools, and the North Shore community! I know of hundreds of students who have benefitted from our school's Learning Center Programs. They have gone on to use the skills and talents they have developed in these programs to pursue higher learning, get jobs in related fields, and some have even returned to the Education system, where they are now teaching at our school and other schools around the state and continuing in the legacy.

Please do not reduce the funding for Learning Centers. Please invest time & money into our students. Lack of funding will result in canceled programs & even teachers digging into their own pockets to keep these programs afloat.

Before you agree on the reductions, please explain why you are reducing funds, which specific positions you are reducing (the specifics were not stated in the budget request) , and where the funding will be relocated to.

Mahalo, Irene Leger

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:52 PM

### **Name**

Drew Bright

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This is my testimony against the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium. As a member of the Castle Performing Arts Center, the program has only benefited me in the best ways possible. When I started out in 5th grade in CPAC's kidstart production of "Suessical" I was merely a shy and quiet kid. I loved to perform but I never spoke my ideas or thoughts. Now being a senior who has been in many shows with CPAC, I can confidently say the program has changed me. My performance and ideas in the theater arts has developed greatly. I have learned and improved on many skills such as acting singing and dance. Another skill I have been taught through my high school years is theater craft. The class has given me the ability to use power tools effectively, problem solve and improvise, and creatively construct set pieces. All the sets that are used in the high school shows have been completely built by the students. Impressive. I would also like to add the community and the love that is shared through the program. For me I always looked forward to having a rehearsal because of the environment is created. There is always a place for everyone in the theater arts and being apart of the community means being apart of a family. Taking away the chance for the students and future students to learn about the theater arts and experience the comradery is what will happen if you decide to decrease and eventually cut budgets for learning centers. These learning did not only teach us skills that will benefit students later in life. These programs raised us. Do not decide to go through with this proposal. Thank you.



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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:15 PM

### Name

Alyson Law

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Alyson Law, and I'm a senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I had done Science Olympiad at James Campbell High School before I had transferred to Mililani High School. I'd say the Science Olympiad was a great experience like I won first place for one event. I love math and science which made me go towards this club. Now currently, I was also looking forward to competing in the Science Olympiad and Robotics team this school year. But now, I hope that the funding won't be cut off and I will have an amazing senior year. Also, these experiences will help me later when I study to become an engineer right after high school. It will help me with problem solving skills and teamwork when I compete in these competitions. Now, I'm also taking an agriculture class since I love learning about the plants and environment. Though, it may not be apart of the programs that may be cut off at Mililani, it still applies to the other schools as well. Being in the agriculture class is fun and way for us to help give back to Earth.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please

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ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alyson Law  
(808)650-1999  
alysonlaw80@gmail.com

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

Maryam Siddiqui

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I urge you to use your power to support at least keeping the funding for crucial school programs the same. You should raise it in fact. Please don't let our children down they need education recourses to have a good life.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:15 PM

### Name

Michelle Umipeg

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

I took drama and audio visual classes at Campbell high school, which led me to taking drama at Leeward Community College in fall 1999. I've acted in plays, and through my experience, I learned how to do makeup, hair, and style wigs for the productions I was in. That led me to taking Cosmetology classes at Honolulu Community College. I designed hair, wigs, and makeup for the cast of several plays for the Hawai'i Shakespeare Festival and Kumu Kahua Theatre, and won awards from the Hawai'i State Theatre Council for my work. I also did hair and makeup for independent and student films. I was also a DJ and promotions director for KTUH, the radio station at UH Manoa. I returned to school in 2018 to study television production at Leeward Community College where it rekindled my love of writing and sparked an interest in production work. I worked on Magnum P.I. and was the assistant the the producers of NCIS: Hawai'i. I was a fellow for the 'Ohina Filmmakers Lab last year. Also, last year, my short film, Severance Package, won Best Romantic Comedy at the Houston Comedy Film Festival. I won a grant from the Hawai'i Filmmakers Collective in February 2024 and wrote, produced, and directed my short film, Alma's Second Act, which is currently in post-production. I will be the assistant to the producers of an upcoming feature film called Headhunters starring Kevin Costner. I am also a fellow for this year's 'Ohina Filmmakers Lab, where in November, we will have mentoring from local film industry magnates. We will also have a special guest, Stephen Broussard, who is a producer that produced Marvel films and television series.

My exposure to the arts has greatly helped me grow as a creative person and with my career. Learning about different skills with theatre, college radio, and audio visual classes made me wear many hats and I was able to do my job easily as the assistant to the producers. I've also been able to apply my skills to filmmaking, which is something I want to ultimately do as a profession.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

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<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)  
[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>  
<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)  
<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>  
<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>  
<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>  
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>  
[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Umipeg

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

Jenna I.

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I believe that defunding the Technology Learning Centers will affect students future opportunities in their desired career fields. Many schools Performing Arts, Media, STEAM, and various other activities will be at risk for shutting down due to the lack of money.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:36 PM

### Name

Kainui Lyman

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

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<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjoDEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjoDEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

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Aloha,

As President of the Waiakea Technology Learning Center, which also supports our school's FIRST Robotics team, I'm concerned about the proposed budget cuts to Learning Centers statewide, which would lead to the closure of our program. From personal experience, I can say this would be a significant loss for our students, school, and community.

- Our FIRST Robotics team, represents the state well, placing 10th out of 62 teams at our competition in Orlando, where we competed against teams led by engineers from NASA and Lockheed Martin.
- Over the past year, we have interacted with approximately 2,500 students across the island and contributed 2,000 service hours to our community. Our initiatives include participation in Girls Engineering Day and a Naalehu STEM camp.
- We utilize students with diverse skills in various career pathways, including Engineering, Construction, Programming, Business, and Teaching, to achieve common goals. This collaboration fosters communication among students with different perspectives, providing them insight into real-world ventures. This is the only program at our school that has effectively done this with a high level of success for decades.
- Our program enables students to learn concepts they might not otherwise encounter. Our engineers study advanced Computer-Aided Design and Computer Numerical Control Machining; our programmers apply calculus concepts essential for self-driving cars to their projects; and our business students gain hands-on experience with marketing before entering the real world.
- We also connect our students with successful STEM professionals within the state, giving them a foot in the door and encouraging them to stay in Hawaii after graduation or university.

As a student, I wouldn't have considered becoming an engineer or returning to Hawaii after graduation if it weren't for the Waiakea Technology Learning Center. I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunities it has provided me in growing my engineering and entrepreneurial mind and in developing myself personally through interactions with my peers. As I navigate the college application process, the skills I've gained are what have enabled me to apply in confidence to the many top schools that students aspire to attend.

In my outreach to middle schoolers across the east side of Hawaii Island, I've been struck by the current 6-8th graders incredible brightness and talent. They have a strong desire to learn and a passion for robotics. It would be a shame if they didn't have the same opportunities I had to develop into the bright STEM minds of our future.

Mahalo

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:36 PM

### **Name**

Alakai Cunningham

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

VILIAMI AHONIMA

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

During my 4 years at Leilehua High School, attending agriculture gave me a sense of responsibility and duty. Agriculture has taught me a life long skill on growing and maintaining the growth of fruits and vegetables. This program isn't only a course, but also a family that cares about the community and students. I was grateful to be a part of this program because I got to work with Mrs. Freitas and Mr. Akuna. Over the years, I saw their passion for agriculture and because of them, I believe in the saying "if you love what you do, you'll never get tired of it". Seeing that passion that they have, made me do something I love and I hope I'll never get tired of it. I learned a lot in agriculture and I just want that same opportunity to be given to the next generation of kids and students that want to be a part of the agriculture program. Thank you.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

Ericka Vento

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the removal of the learning center funds. My experience with my high schools learning center provided me with valuable experiences and growth as a student. Without funding, I believe many students would miss out on recourses and opportunities that could help them in and outside the classroom.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

Savannah Bolos

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose the removal of funds from the learning center. As a member of the Waiakea Technology Learning Center Robotics team from 2021 to 2023, I developed valuable skills, gained numerous opportunities, and made important connections that helped shape my interest in STEM and informed my career path. Without this funding, future students may miss out on the same incredible opportunities.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### **Name**

Hulita Ahonima

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I support leilehua high schools agricultural program! The teacher there, mama jackie is truly amazing! she has introduced me to agriculture and taught me many life skills. Being in agriculture has taught me many things, how to be patient, caring, responsible etc. It's a very hands on program which is awesome. Everything you learn, you can use those skills everyday in life. Agriculture is a great opportunity for kids to be able to experience. Four years later and i still use basic skills everyday that i've taken from being in leilehua high schools agricultural program.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:26 PM

### Name

Aurora Lin Pualalea Slover

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha kākou, my name is Pualalea and I am very proud to be born and raised in Wai'anae. I'm fortunate to have participated in two funded Learning Center programs in high school. The Nānākuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center (NPAC) and the Wai'anae High School Marine Sciences Learning Center (MSLC). These programs, along with many others around Hawai'i, are under threat of survival due to the BOE's proposed budget cuts for the upcoming years. Cutting funding would be unfair, unethical, and against your better judgement. Let me tell you how these programs have affected my own life.

These programs have positively impacted my character and I see the way it has done the same for past students in these programs, whether they've pursued those career paths or not.

For myself being a little over 5 years post-programs, I have pursued a career in the film and acting industry right after graduating NPAC. I also have a better connection to my 'āina and community thanks to the pilina I've built in MSLC.

I've seen the way westside keiki have flourished in the performing arts at NPAC. As well as the appreciation for 'āina and sustainability MSLC ignites in their students through harvesting ogo at school and eventually selling to local food vendors or through their various 'āina education huaka'i. I've seen the legacy these two programs have left in my community and that's just two of the many programs which the proposed budget cuts would negatively affect.

It would be unfair, unethical, and against your good judgement to implement budget cuts and eventually cut funding for these community programs. These programs and its funding seem essential in times of extreme violence spiking in our community.

Investing in your community in such a positive way is not something that should be stripped away.

It is especially upsetting to see that Lāhaināluna's Agricultural program would be affected by these budget cuts as well. After the tragedy that was the Lāhainā fires in 2023, Agricultural education is needed in that community even more so than before. What happened to Lāhainā would have never happened if the ahupua'an and the sustainable food sources that were once there were still there. Another name for Lāhainā is "Ka Malu 'Ulu o Lele", shaded by the breadfruit trees. This was a food source that was once plentiful in Lāhainā. When the fires happened in 2023, it was due to all the heavily invasive dry species that chokes Lāhainā's landscape. It is up to the keiki to be able to rebuild and restore Lāhainā to its glory of a rich and sustainable community. It is our job to make sure keiki have the right resources, such as the agriculture program at Lāhaināluna, to make that future a reality. Why take the foundation away?

I plead with you to rethink the proposed budget cuts and hear out community and past students of these programs whom are opposing the budget cuts.

11/01/2024

Mahalo,  
Pualalea



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 8:52 PM

### Name

Fenix McMillan

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Support

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha, my name is Fenix McMillan and I am an alumni of Kapolei High School who just recently graduated in May of 2024.

I graduated from the "Arts & Communications" Academy where I participated in Band all 4 years, marching band from sophomore to senior year (for a total of 3 years), briefly tried out Hurricane Singers, and played the drums for the live band of my school's musical at the end of the 2023-2024 school year "Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief."

And although (from what I know), Kapolei itself is not having an arts program cut, I cannot help but empathize for the other high schools.

Being in the marching band community, seeing one less band perform because they didn't have the budget to repair their instruments, money for bus transportation, or any other necessary use of budget would be deeply saddening to hear about.

Same goes for band, where instrument upkeep is very much NOT taken for granted.

Accidents do happen.

If we were talking about budgeting, I would actually request that an increased budget would benefit these areas of the school immensely.

Instruments along with their upkeep can get very expensive.

But...

The joy of expression through performing pieces, going on bus rides to band festivals together, working together to form shapes on a field while putting your best out there to constantly improve with one another...

There's not much quite like it in this world.

Alike to performing on field, musicals share much similarities from what I've experienced.

There is the many rehearsals, the hours upon hours of hard labor and work to bring up on many emotions including intrigue, joy, some sadness, yet a heartwarming ending I have also never really seen anywhere else.

To connect this all...

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These programs, especially those in the performing scene, are much more than just programs.

They are entire experiences. Not just to those in the programs, but to the hundreds of people that get to witness the hard work of these laboring students to bring about many emotions, memories, and smiles to the faces of many you may know.

These experiences allow the thousands of students across the Department of Education in these programs to progress, grow, and richen their talents. Providing many opportunities to combine their mental processes in teachability, performance, and mental fortitude to solidify mental prowess.

Bettering all of those who participate with the intention to learn and better themselves.

My testimony's intention is to attempt to provide insight on what these budget cuts mean. Only skimming the surface of the ice berg that is the Arts. This doesn't even account for the rest of the many programs receiving cuts.

Mahalos for your time. I really do appreciate you all for listening to my testimony.

I wish everyone present an amazing day.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:00 AM

### **Name**

Mia Matson

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Defunding the TLC takes away important educational resources from students! Technology only grows more advanced, and the field of STEM is only getting bigger. Not only is it a necessity in an increasingly advanced world, it is also a topic of great student interest. Furthermore, the defunding of the TLC program would put in jeopardy the resources of FRC 1066 Hot Rocks. Not only is FRC a great inspirational and educational program for students interested in STEM and/or business initiatives, the team also travels to compete against other teams, both in the US and from out-of-country. This means that any organizations backing the team, including the school and school board they are from, are being repped by them. By competing, they are putting the name of your organization out there and showing them what you have to offer and what bright minds your education is fostering. An FRC team should be a great pride to any school board. As someone blessed to have met this team (I still carry around the keychain I got from the Orlando Regional two years ago!), I would not have been able to if they were not properly funded. Competition is expensive just to register for, and the travel involved is only even more costs on top. The defunding of the TLC would therefore harm not only any students with a passion for STEM and their future job prospects, but an already existing community of innovators based at Waiakea High School.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:25 PM

### **Name**

Vanessa Benavente

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to Learning Centers that support vital programs in theatre arts, STEM, agriculture, health, and business. As a private voice teacher working closely with students deeply involved in musical theatre, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact these programs have on many young lives. The confidence they gain, their enhanced social skills, and their overall personal growth are invaluable outcomes that extend far beyond the stage. Cutting funding for these enriching educational opportunities would not only diminish their artistic and academic pursuits but also deprive them of experiences that foster teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking.

In addition, many who went through our public school theatre programs have gone on to make a difference in the professional performance world. Notably, Kaimuki High School's Ruthie Ann Miles serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through robust arts education, having won a Tony in 2015 and received a nomination in 2023. Many students have gone on to represent Hawaii with pride both on stage and screen, and it would be a grave mistake to silence their voices and diminish their opportunities. I urge you to please reconsider keeping the funding that shape and inspire our public students and add to Hawaii's representation in the performance world, as well as recognize the essential role that these programs play in cultivating well rounded, capable individuals for the future.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Benavente

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:48 PM

### **Name**

Clarissa Diaz

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Education of our children is the best investment for the future of our society.

I oppose cutting funds for education. Our public schools needs all the support necessary to keep this generation mentally healthy .

Arts is fundamental to help children develop creativity and express themselves. So, please keep our children with options to thrive in society !!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:10 AM

### **Name**

Tiffany Wong

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Reduction of funds allocated towards learning centers will have insurmountable consequences on the learning and development of hundreds of adolescent youth. Not only do these programs provide opportunities for students to foster skills both creatively and academically, but also allows active participation in collaborative settings that builds upon character and community values. I have personally witnessed the importance of such programs and recognize the many teachers and young leaders who have dedicated years of their lives to expanding learning beyond the ordinary classroom, for the greater benefit of all students in Hawai'i.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:00 AM

### **Name**

Jaden Manibog

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Students should be given the opportunity to freely express themselves confidently without judgement and through any means of their passion. I think it's disrespectful and disheartening to those that have curated the programs and especially the individuals who are full of passion in their respective program to essentially dissipate. As someone who is new and slowly finding himself in theatre, I find the defunding really heartbreaking considering how much it has helped NOT only me, but countless others. This creative outlet does so much for me and it is such a blessing. I want the arts to have the same effect on others as it did for me. Please reconsider what you are potentially taking away from the current and upcoming generations of the arts and the other programs. Their passion, their love, their time, their confidence, and most importantly, their freedom.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:10 AM

### **Name**

Jake Rayon

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The arts contribute significantly to emotional and social development. It is crucial for children to be given an open space to express themselves! Students can explore, build self-esteem, and develop empathy by understanding different perspectives through artistic expression. The arts are not just an extracurricular activity, but a fundamental component of a well-rounded education. Why take such an important outlet away from these children?



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:20 AM

### **Name**

Marisa Igarashi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This is HORRIBLE for our keiki. We CANNOT cut out the budget for learning centers, especially for performing arts. Learning centers is where ALL of our artist learn their craft. Do you like to watch movies or TV? Think of your favorite band or artist? Where do you think they come from and learn their craft. For a state that is so very proud whenever we have someone representing Hawaii on shows, like The Voice, or on movies, it really seems backwards to do something like this.

Even the learning centers not the for arts is very well needed. It helps our keiki to succeed. Sometimes you learn a lot more participating in learning center programs than in school. Cutting the budget for ALL learning centets is NOT, I repeat, NOT a good look for Hawaii. Hawaii doesn't like bad press... This will not sit well with our community and will give Hawaii a bad look.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:15 PM

### **Name**

Paul Ezekiel Pineda

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Paul Ezekiel Pineda, and I'm a freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. The FIRST Robotics program, which is a part of the Mililani Science Learning Center, has changed the way I see STEM. From this, I learned that it wasn't just about getting a certain task down using a series of steps, but it is also about coordinating what you do with your peers, being open-minded to other ideas, and making connections with others. My role in the team is graphics and documentation, which involves designing various graphics and documenting what the team is doing. In this role, I could hear my peers' unique and creative ideas of what they wanted to see for things like logos and team names, which was quite enjoyable. I was also able to see the teams' robots take shape for competition. Seeing how my peers would work really hard on the robot and seeing that it works makes me proud of their accomplishments. Robotics also allowed me to connect with the community and the younger generation, during STEM camp over Fall Break. It was great seeing curious and inspired youth working together to accomplish their goal. Without this funding, the Mililani Science Learning Center would not be able to survive, consequently leading to lots of lost opportunities with STEM and robotics, as well as the connections that could be made with peers and the community. Robotics has helped me gain tons of experience in the field and at the same time make new friends, and I'm sure it has for many that came before me and that will in the future. I urge you to reconsider these cuts. All of these learning centers have played a vital role in many of my peers' lives, and I hope this will continue to be the case for future generations to come.

Sincerely,

Paul Ezekiel Pineda

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 6:03 PM

### **Name**

Lacey Yamashiro

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My name is Lacey Yamashiro. I am an alumni of Mililani High School here to testify against the current budget cuts to the learning centers of Hawai'i. Through the programs funded by learning centers, many students have found their love and passion for the arts, me being one of them. Arts education has played a crucial role in my life, teaching me leadership skills and life lessons I couldn't learn simply by sitting at a desk in a classroom. Devoting the entirety of my life to the arts I would not be the person I am today if it weren't for these programs that helped foster my love for performing. I am currently receiving my Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting at Pace University, one of the top acting programs in New York City and I would not be here if it weren't for the opportunities given to me through the performing arts programs funded by learning centers.

In 2022 I was introduced to the world of theater thanks to Cari Chung (former director of Central Theater Arts Academy) I was then brought into the most welcoming, talented, hard-working community of people who I have the privilege to call my second family. As someone who has seen firsthand the benefits these programs reap, I can attest to the individual growth, academic success, and sense of belonging. They've provided students with outlets for self-expression helping them navigate and find their place in this world, connecting them with people who share the same interest. Let us not overlook the positive impact these learning centers have made on Keiki's lives by ensuring that all students have access to quality programs. As we look toward the future we have to realize the role learning centers play in the next generation. Let us commit to empowering the leaders, artists, and change-makers of tomorrow through the robust education provided to them by learning centers.

Mahalo for your time,

Lacey Yamashiro

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this testimony finds you well. My name is Preston Garcia, I am a data scientist employed at the Maui High Performance Computing Center (MHPCC), and proud Mililani High School (MHS) FIRST robotics alum. I am writing this testimony to express my strong opposition to the elimination of funding for the Learning Center program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770).

The Learning Center has been incredibly beneficial to me – not only in these programs - but even to this day. While professional and academic knowledge was attained throughout my experiences with FIRST robotics, the clear highlight was how it built me as a person.

At work I often reflect on what I am doing, and how I was able to get here in the first place. College may have given me many academic lessons, but nothing - and I mean nothing - has prepared me more than robotics. Robotics had been one of the only things I was truly passionate about working on at MHS, it taught me how to apply my passions to making a difference, and how to stay motivated despite long hours and grueling tasks. Any other school or work task would feel too rushed for me to give it my all. Seeing our hard work pay off watching our robots was always worth it, it's no different than a milestone or demo going well. As FIRST always put it - they use these robots to build people - and that's something that could never be replicated in a normal classroom setting for me.

Funding cuts for these programs would only deprive these students of these amazing opportunities to give it their all into something they can truly care about. Students can really make a breakthrough and a difference using these learning centers.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts, not only to ensure that students are able to achieve professional development, but also learn how to be passionate about their work. The Learning Centers have proven for many students to be a wonderful avenue for this.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity to provide testimony.

Yours Truly,

Preston Garcia

Email: [prestontgarcia@gmail.com](mailto:prestontgarcia@gmail.com)

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:10 AM

### **Name**

Todd Matsushita

### **Organization**

Kaimuki PAC

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

KHSPAC have been providing quality drama, dance, singing, technical theater classes, and great theatre performances since 1987. The Covid pandemic nearly killed the performing arts, but we survived and are just starting to thriving now, so it is very disappointing to hear that the Board of Education thinks so little of the performing arts that they plan to end all support for it within the next two years. I believe theatre serves as a fantastic molding and life experience for all the kids who have the opportunity to participate, and the same for all who come to enjoy their performances. Please reconsider the devastating funding cuts being proposed.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:56 AM

### **Name**

T. Robert matsushita

### **Organization**

Kaimuki PAC

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

KHSPAC have been providing quality drama, dance, singing, technical theater classes, and great theatre performances since 1987. The Covid pandemic nearly killed the performing arts, but we survived and are just starting to thriving now, so it is very disappointing to hear that the Board of Education thinks so little of the performing arts that they plan to end all support for it within the next two years. I believe theatre serves as a fantastic molding and life experience for all the kids who have the opportunity to participate, and the same for all who come to enjoy their performances. Please reconsider the devastating funding cuts being proposed.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:56 AM

### **Name**

Janine Myers

### **Organization**

Theatrical Lighting Designer

### **Position/Title**

Designer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I'm writing to voice my support for the Learning Centers across Oahu, which support public school theatre programs. These programs offer a unique opportunity for Hawaii's public school keiki to get hands on experience in a discipline which is invaluable in so many others. The theatre arts teaches collaboration, discipline, problem solving, self confidence, public speaking, and so much more.

Please do not cut funding to these vital programs. The arts are what make us human and how we share our experiences with others. Do not take these opportunities away from our children.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:56 AM

### Name

Thomalin Sirivattha

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.



11/01/2024

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Wanda Hasegawa, and I am the parent of a 12th grade student at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Over the past 3.5 years at Mililani High School, my daughter has actively participated in FIRST Robotics and Science Fair, which are outstanding programs under the Mililani Science Learning Center (SLC). As a freshman, it quickly became her second home and gave her a sense of belonging at a high school with over 2,000 students. At first I questioned all the extra hours she was spending after school on campus and wondered how in the world this could be beneficial. However before the year ended, I realized how special the SLC was to both students and staff. Without a doubt, the Mililani SLC has provided a wealth of opportunities and experiences for so many students like my daughter. What I find most impressive is how each of these experiences went well beyond the 4 walls of the classroom and gave her exceptional skills to become a successful College and Career ready graduate. She received mentoring through several STEM summer internships, networked with professionals working in the industry, organized outreach opportunities, became a mentor for elementary and middle school students, organized and taught STEM workshops during school breaks, used industry standard equipment, and collaborated on many complex robotics projects which developed her communication, leadership and problem solving skills. It truly amazes me how all of these opportunities and experiences were provided outside of the regular school day and proves just how invaluable Mililani's Science Learning Center is!

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Wanda Hasegawa

whasegawa20@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:58 AM

### **Name**

Talia Rios

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Performing arts programs at high schools in Hawai'i should be funded to promote opportunities for students to participate in performing arts and other creative fields. These programs should not be defunded

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 2:09 AM

### Name

Kealaula Faifili

### Organization

Hawai'i Conservatory of Performing Arts

### Position/Title

Actor/Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Committee of Honor,

I'm writing to express my adamant opposition to public school arts program cuts. Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to perfection and the ability to deal with high stress situations. There is no question that students who have access to performing arts programs do better on all metrics (graduation, confidence, social skills, and concentration). Students learn how to memorize information, be accountable, be empathetic, adjust to changing situations, and even comprehend what they read through theater. The performing arts have a tremendously good impact on schooling, as evidenced by several research. Here are a few examples:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_Ol1BmOsneeWYAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_Ol1BmOsneeWYAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

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Please, please, don't deny these important and transformative chances to future kids.

Sincerely,

Kealaula Faifili

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 2:09 AM

### Name

Stephanie Kong

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRbHdRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRbHdRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

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Sincerely,  
Stephanie Keiko Kong

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:32 AM

### **Name**

Julie Matsumoto

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Julie Matsumoto, and I am a junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed budget cuts to Learning Center programs, which I believe are incredibly fallacious. I am writing to you on behalf of the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) concerning the realignment of resources in the state budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how valuable they are to the educational achievement of both myself and others. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools across the State of Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless opportunities in STEM, Performing Arts, Agriculture, Business, and STEAM for students to enrich their experiences. These learning centers provide not only academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, personal growth, and international competition.

My involvement with the STEM Learning Center at Mililani High School allowed me to participate in Science Fair in my sophomore year. Through my research of possible topics and conversing with my peers, I developed an interest in studying veterinary medicine, which I intend to pursue in college. Prior to this, I had no interest in STEM-related fields whatsoever, so I can attest that the STEM Learning Center has in fact changed my life trajectory.

We cannot continue to fund other programs while making significant budget cuts to the Learning Centers. It is important to have a balance because of the growing need for scientific and technological innovations. The State of Hawaii has ranked 45th out of 50 states for educational achievement in 2024, scoring below average in progressive education and innovative education.

If these budget cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to achieve their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students statewide. It would also create disinterest in fields related to performing arts and STEM, which will harm our academic performance further.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student. Budgeting cuts would not allow these programs to continue operating at the same level they have been for decades. It is



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important that these Learning Centers can continue to provide opportunities and support to students for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Julie Matsumoto

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:29 AM

### **Name**

Kyle Patrick Janer

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School TLC

### **Position/Title**

Past Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

By cutting funding in Hawai'i, we are not just limiting resources—we are limiting our students' potential and jeopardizing their future opportunities. Living on a rural island already means our students have fewer resources and pathways to explore fields like robotics, technology, and the arts. How can they compete and thrive without access to the same educational tools available to their peers on the mainland? Such cuts only widen existing socioeconomic disparities, preventing low-income students from accessing the programs and skills they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving world. This self-imposed setback threatens not only individual futures but also the strength and progress of our community as a whole. Investing in our students' education and skills is not optional—it is essential for building a prosperous and resilient Hawai'i.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:06 AM

### **Name**

Holly Hardin

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

The Nanakuli high and intermediate schools Performing Arts Center has been a safe place for hundreds of children, including myself, over the last few decades. Mr. Kitsu and team have run a program that has helped kids with not only their love and interest in the performing arts but allowing them a safe place to stay after school, a community to be a part of and, most importantly, a family. The budget cuts to the learning centers may not close NPACs doors but it would severely limit the kids it could welcome, help and the productions it could do. NPAC for years has sent the same message, everyone is welcome. I am blonde hair blue eyed military brat, and despite the stories of Nanakuli shared with me, this learning center opened their arms and welcomed me like no one did before. They taught me what siblings are, what a family should be. While I understand cuts must be made, please do not cut the budget so much that the current and future kids suffer.

Thank you for your time.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:18 AM

### **Name**

Domingo Layugan

### **Organization**

Self

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education,

I am in support of funding Learning Centers. My son attends Leilehua High School and has taken the Agriculture Class taught by Teacher of the Year, Ms. Jackie Freitas. Not only did my son learn about agriculture, he learned other aspects such as business. He also learned character building qualities like team work, discipline, and patience. All qualities for a better future. Again, I am in support of funding Learning Centers.

Thank you,

Domingo Layugan, Jr.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:05 AM

### **Name**

Melissa Tomlinson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

A budget that cuts such necessary programs for the youth as this is harmful and destructive in nature. How anyone could be supportive of this suggested budget is definitely something to question. If anything the programs that would loose funding need more support not less.

10/31/24

Lauren Bright Rish  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

Dear Esteemed Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed budget cuts for the Learning Centers in Hawaii. While I understand the need for fiscal responsibility, I believe that reducing support for the Learning Centers could have significant long-term repercussions for our community.

You may have noticed that my address is not a local one, but Hawaii is and always will be my home. I grew up in Kailua and Waipahu, and have spent the past 7 years serving as a Hawaii public school teacher. Just two weeks ago, I moved with my husband to Virginia because of his job. It is my deepest hope and prayer that I will be able to return to Hawaii and teach again. I am writing from Virginia to save programs that are deeply personal for me. While there are many other programs that benefit from these funds, my personal connection comes through my grandfather Ronald E. Bright, who started the Castle Performing Arts Center in 1963.

Though its beginnings were humble in school cafeterias and gymnasiums, it has grown to be a source of pride for the Windward side. In the course of his time as a teacher, my grandpa produced and directed over 100 musicals and plays that exceeded the expectations for typical school productions. But beyond creating magnificent productions, my grandpa's goal was to develop good humans. Good people who are respectful, brave, kind, empathetic, and creative. People's lives have been changed because of this one program. Local high school students have gone on to successful careers on Broadway and touring companies, and many, many others, like myself, have become educators, who give back to the community that raised us.

We return as teachers because of the dedicated teachers who believed in us. Because of our teachers, we understand the impact that we can have. If we want to have more local Hawaii teachers, we need to ensure that there is financial and administrative support to continue these types of programs.

And this is just one story, one testimony of the power and legacy of the Learning Centers. I understand that the new academy model has opened new ways for all students to discover their passions and explore possible career paths. I was amazed during a recent visit to Waipahu High School, where I got to see the trajectories that Hawaii schools are offering their students. I am so impressed and proud of these initiatives, but Learning Centers still have a place because they are the specific product of dedicated teachers and passionate students who created their own community to support their dreams. While the academies provide an equitable exploration of career paths, Learning Centers provide an additional enrichment and way to support students as they learn and grow as students and as people.

I write to you as a community member, a Hawaii public school teacher, and as a proud granddaughter. I urge the board to reconsider these budget cuts and explore alternative solutions that would allow us to maintain our commitment to Hawaii's teachers and students.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Bright Rish

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:43 AM

### **Name**

Andrew Paresa

### **Organization**

College Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Hawai'i State Board and Department of Education,

I am writing in strong opposition towards the proposed budget for 2025-2027, which seeks to reallocate funds in Hawai'i schools because in doing so, it leaves certain programs to lay to waste and die off. It is essentially like letting somebody starve to death. Nobody would ever do that. But now, that's what happening to schools. Hawai'i students are already at a disadvantage compared to the majority of other states in the nation when it comes to education. So, to take away the little that they have? It is absurd. We cannot possibly take pride in our public school system if this is how we treat students. They are the future of our community, the future of Hawai'i, the future of the world. This change in funding is only going to make their journeys more difficult. By allowing this change in budget, a dangerous precedent will be set that allows the Department to pick and choose what programs live and die in schools; a power that should be vested in schools and pupils themselves. Students need to see what they can accomplish in this life. We need to seek to inspire and uplift them, not take away from them.

I personally have been enriched in a multitude of these programs at risk, especially health. I graduated last year, so I am a freshman in college. The health program at my school helped me realize the future I want to pursue: medicine. I plan to return to Hawai'i and practice medicine, helping to combat the dramatic physician shortage in our state. I have many friends with the same dream, in many other fields. Engineering, mechanics, nursing, law, teaching. To take away these programs is to take away the dreams of our students. I cannot sit here and watch it happen.

So please. For the love of our students, for the love of our community, and for the sake of the future, please reconsider the budget for FY 2025-2027.

Mahalo.



To the Department of Education

It has come to my attention that the department plans to cut all funds from the Learning Center going into next year. Among the programs is the Kaimuki High School Performing Arts Center being affected by the cuts. The KHSPAC is not only the program that I've enjoyed, but it is also has helped me in my youth where socializing was my greatest difficulties growing up. Being diagnosed with several learning disabilities, Asperger's Syndrome; ADHD, and Social Communication Disorder, the program has given me confidence and helped me to deal with my disabilities. I have made friends that encouraged me to reach my long-life goals. To end this program would be devastation to all who do not have athletic abilities. This would be highly unfair. Please reconsider your decision and I have hope that those without athletic abilities will be served just as those with athletic abilities have been in the future and in the past.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 5:32 AM

### Name

Michael May

### Organization

Hawaii DOE

### Position/Title

Music Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Committee Chair,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of funds for EDN100/BQ (16770) within Hawaii's Department of Education budget. As a dedicated music educator and advocate for student enrichment, I am deeply concerned about the potential impact this cut will have on music programs that play a crucial role in fostering a well-rounded education for students across our state.

Recently, I was encouraged to see the federal government increase support for the arts through the House Appropriations Committee, with additional funds allocated to promote arts education under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This support demonstrates a national recognition of the importance of arts in education. However, despite this federal investment, it remains unclear how these increased funds are being utilized within the Department of Education. A reduction in state funding for music education raises questions about where these federal resources are being directed and why they are not reaching essential music programs.

Under ESSA, music is recognized as a core subject, integral to every student's well-rounded education. Music education has been proven to support cognitive development, enhance social skills, and foster emotional resilience. These benefits are especially crucial for middle and high school students, as music provides an outlet for self-expression, helps to build community, and encourages a lifelong appreciation for the arts. By cutting funding to these programs, we risk denying students access to these vital educational benefits and weakening their overall academic experience.

The potential impacts of this reduction include:

1. **Decreased Student Participation:** Music programs often require specialized instruments, equipment, and materials. Reducing funds will limit the number of students who can participate, particularly those from lower-income families who rely on school-provided resources.
2. **Reduced Quality of Instruction:** Without adequate funding, schools will struggle to attract and retain qualified music teachers, leading to larger class sizes and less individualized attention for students.
3. **Loss of Academic and Social-Emotional Benefits:** Music education supports skills such as creativity, critical thinking, discipline, and teamwork. These skills are transferable across disciplines and are essential for preparing students to

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become well-rounded, successful adults.

I urge the committee to reconsider this decision and maintain the funding for EDN100/BQ (16770). This commitment will ensure that Hawaii's schools can continue to provide high-quality music education, empowering our keiki with skills that extend far beyond the classroom. By supporting music programs, we invest in Hawaii's future leaders, innovators, and cultural bearers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:32 AM

### **Name**

Adelaide Scarbo

### **Organization**

Kauai Performance Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

As someone who has loved being in plays since they were little, KPAC is an important place for me. It teaches kids to be more expressive and open. I really do hope that the DOE recognizes their actions. After all, they almost did the same thing in 2011-2012.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:48 AM

### **Name**

Sebastian Oliveros

### **Organization**

WHS Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center supported me tremendously during my time in high school. It provides so many students with access to STEM. It provides all of our high school students access to FRC competitions, allowing us to direct experience in mechanical engineering, public relations, and coding. It also allows us to run multiple STEM camps every year for intermediate students teaching youth critical STEM skills. The WHS Technology Learning Center is the most impactful club at Waiakea High School thanks to the funding we receive from the Learning Center, without it, you would be removing countless STEM opportunities from WHS students and from all the youth in our community.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:59 AM

### **Name**

Suzie Leong

### **Organization**

Pearl City HS Marching Band

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose DOE'S operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. I'm disappointed to see that once again programs like performing arts,STEM and agriculture will be defunded. These programs are essential and need the funding. Leaving the funding up to the Principal of each school is unfair.

Please do not pass this initiative.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:34 AM

### **Name**

Jonathan Inman

### **Organization**

Kauai Performing Arts Center (KPAC) Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Board Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern:

As a member of the board for Kauai Performing Arts Center (KPAC), I hear month after month at our meetings the excitement and engagement the learning center generates for its student participants and for the community.

I think especially now, coming out of a pandemic that has socially affected the way our society interacts, there is never a more vital time to keep learning centers as KPAC intact with the funding they need to function with the most potential resources and outreach. The pandemic only accelerated the digital direction our world was going, and with that, studies have shown an incredible increase in mental health crises especially affecting the upcoming generation. The digital age fosters habits of social disconnection and loneliness. What I hear about in the KPAC board meetings is a community created around theatre and the arts. Children collaborate and engage with each other to build a process-oriented product together. It is an outlet and a home for them that they do not find elsewhere.

On top of the social skills they are learning, the community they are building, and the memories they are making, they learn about life and society through the productions they create. Humans are storytellers. No matter what path of life someone leads, they are interested in hearing the story of something. It is how we engage and how we process information, histories, societies, and so much more. It is crucial to the development of children involved in learning centers to have access to the stories theatre and other arts share with them--stories that not only do they witness, but that they get to delve into, replicate, and experience for themselves.

As a professional working in the arts, I hope that you see the need to keep quality funding of learning centers. It is programs like them that gave me the springboard to my career in the arts. Even then, those of my peers who did not take a professional direction but participated in theatre, cherish the time they were able to do so. They came out of their shy shells, making lifelong friends and learning social skills that have assisted them in the professions they have now.

Maintaining healthy funding for learning centers is vital to the growth and development of students and communities. Please reconsider.

Thank you,

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Jonathan Inman  
Actor/Screenwriter



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:14 AM

### **Name**

Zeyda Bantolina

### **Organization**

Moanalua High School

### **Position/Title**

WLLC Historian

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Before Moanalua High School established our World Language Learning Center, I was intrigued by a substantial story I had heard in a meeting. A student from another country had enrolled at the school--who did not speak English. From what I heard, it was hard for the student to fit in. The student would constantly get taunted for their vast lifestyle compared to the majority living in Hawaii. Our learning center helps all students learn from one another through their practices and culture. Before becoming an officer, I had wondered why we had this center. However, I realized that our club had influenced many people without their knowledge. We give everyone memories through our enjoyable services dedicated to each of our seven languages.

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Douglas Chan, and I'm a Freshman at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As a participant of FIRST Robotics I have come to appreciate the importance of these clubs that I have been involved with. It has appeared that these clubs have shaped the person whom I have become and will further influence the characteristics of my future self.

I think back to the great times I had working with FIRST as it has touched my heart in many ways. Making friends with fellow mates sharing the same interests as me helps me open up to more options in my life. FIRST has changed my life in many ways as it gives me time to laugh and enjoy my time after school.

I enjoy working with my mentors as they take their undivided time to help us through with all of this work. As removing the funds to these extracurriculars will diminish the connections between others throughout all of STEM. FIRST helps me practice Gracious Professionalism and it helps me as a whole person including my emotions and the actions I take. Which is why I write this testimony so we can have future years to also have others like me experience the same thing I have gone through.

Removing these fundings not only will affect the people that benefit from these funds but also the people coming to these clubs/activities/extracurriculars. Generations beyond these will all need a place to practice Gracious Professionalism as well as learning STEM in the process.

FIRST will remain as a place in my heart along with the people I have met. I hope generations beyond have this type of option in their lives as some may be bullied and even harassed. It may

seem as if these clubs are only for competition and learning but It is beyond learning. This is another home for all of these generous caring members.

Removing these funding will not only decrease volunteers and participants but It will also break a chance for others in life. These places give a chance for people to express who they really are. Some people may not be great in school but may have an amazing talent for designing and engineering.

In summary, the Board of Education has helped many clubs in schools and places meaning it needs continuous funds so incoming students and growing teenagers have a chance to express who they really are. Removing these fundings may completely remove the opportunities for students in Hawaii.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Douglas Chan  
Email: [Douglasdchan@gmail.com](mailto:Douglasdchan@gmail.com)  
Phone: 808-312-2368

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:45 AM

### **Name**

Heather Kihara

### **Organization**

Hawaii Veterinary Medicine Association, Leilehua High School James Some Chapter FFA

### **Position/Title**

President Elect

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As former Hawaii State FFA president, I'm very concerned by the federal cut in funding for high school programs such as agriculture education. Being part of an ag class in high school, learning leadership principles as state Future Farmers of America (FFA) president, and participating in FFA competitions such as public speaking and Roberts rules of order immensely helped launch my veterinary career and has continued to help me now as the Hawaii Veterinary Medicine Associations President Elect. Being part of an ag program in high school also gave me a solid large animal foundation as well as a knowledge about where my food comes from and practical life skills in general (in 1998-2002, students grew and harvested food to fundraise for scholarships, had the potential to learn to drive heavy equipment if they were hired to work, helped slaughter and process meat, and visited local farms to understand how else agriculture could flourish to name just a few things we did). I would not be a veterinarian today if it were not for this program. Jackie Freitas, the current Leilehua High School ag teacher & 2024 teacher of the year, continues the legacy that our mentor and teacher Mr Wong started. We cannot let programs like the Leilehua FFA dry up. Please allocate budgeting for it.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:52 PM

### **Name**

Vy Tran

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student Science Club President

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Vy Tran, and I'm a 11th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I have participated in 2 SLC programs in Mililani High School, Science Olympiad and Science Fair. These programs have changed me as a person and have educated me to no bounds in experience and real life applications. I am in the Science Club and I am the current president. This program means a lot to me, and not because of the future opportunities it holds, even though it does open a pathway towards many, I continue to love and adore this program due to the impact it has given me.

When I was in 6th grade the COVID-19 pandemic had taken the world by storm and as a growing teenager I developed much anxiety and fears of public speaking, even though I am known for being a loud, outgoing person. This pandemic took this part of my personality and what people know me for. It got worse as I had to move school away from all my friends beginning high school. Despite this I joined the Science Olympiad, a branch of the MHS SLC program. Freshman year was my worst year so far, I felt alone, fearful, and anxious. However I had one reason to enjoy and continue to be motivated at school, the Science Olympiad. Moving schools separated me from my friends, and this program brought me into a new light of people and lifelong friendship, which I am absolutely sure will last forever. The Science Olympiad pushed me to partner and meet new people I would never talk to, but we ended up doing amazing in our competitions and achieving so much. We made lasting memories, such as the time we picked oranges and

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pretended they were sweet, they in fact weren't, and the time me and my teammates (best friends) won 3rd place for the first time. Without this community of people who shared the same interests as me and sought the same passions and goals as me I felt at home. Having to interact and apply myself into the world using science and competitions, even though stressful, has brought me to become that person I once was. It was truly the only place I could feel like myself. Every year I feel my outgoingness increase and improve and I know for a fact this program has played the biggest part in it.

This program means so much to me from the bottom of my heart, without it I would not be the same. I'd continue to be fearful of my peers, and teachers stunting my growth as a human and never finding my true passions and enjoyments in life. Science Olympiad and SLC has pushed me to become greater as a person without me even noticing it and if I hadn't joined I wouldn't have achieved this much in my life, and made my parents as proud as they are now, all because of our MHS SLC.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Vy Tran  
(808)679-8078  
26tra.vy@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:44 AM

### **Name**

Ronaldo Pineda

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Greetings! My name is Ronaldo Pineda and my child is a student of Mililani High School. I writing to voice my concern about the proposed cuts to the Learning Center Program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS Program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF # 8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the Department's base budget.

The learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

FIRST robotics gave my child to explore new things that he never encountered before, My child loves this experiences and learnings plus a having new friends from Robotics helps develop his self esteem and self awareness . He may used this experiences in his future endeavors.

Eliminating funding from this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create daps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these propose cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention and kind consideration to this important issue.

RONALDO PINEDA  
CP # 808-343-8897

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 5:49 AM

### Name

Alexine Niro

### Organization

Kapolei High School & Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard

### Position/Title

Mentor & Mechanical Engineer

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board,

My name is Alexine Niro and I am a mentor at Kapolei High School and a mechanical engineer at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. I strongly oppose to the defunding of Learning Centers. Just last week, I was nominated to be recognized for my volunteer efforts at the Joint Venture Education Forum. A forum that the late Daniel K. Inouye was so heavily involved with. A forum that Keith Hayashi himself, presented the award to me. A forum that my volunteer efforts stemmed from a Learning Center of which is proposed to be cut.

It has been an on-going problem for students who are not able to pursue their dreams whether it's becoming an engineer for space exploration, an environmentalist who studies and protects the land we live on, or an artist to spread happiness around the world. Learning Centers provide an opportunity for students of all ages to have a chance at bettering the world for future generations. Cutting these programs go AGAINST "pressing needs" such as:

- Public Health: Many students who go through Learning Centers around the state have become nurses and doctors, increasing the workforce for better public health
- Education: Many students have also become teachers, mentors, and educators for future generations of leaders
- Infrastructure: Many students have also become part of officials within the Department of Education to improve the quality of providing what's best to our keiki.
- Educational Equity: How can students be provided with equal access to resources regardless of background or circumstance if the sole mission for Learning Centers is to do just that?
- Improving government responsiveness: Where will we get our future troops and workforce if they were not given the opportunity to learn?
- Increase housing opportunities: It is still very hard for students who graduate high school and go through college, to find affordable housing.
- Access to health care: Most jobs that provide access to great health care, require a degree. A degree of which students need to go through college or trades, to obtain. Learning centers provide early learning to obtain these skills to allow students to have access to health care.
- Protecting our Environment and natural resources: Students who were involved with Learning Centers learn these very skills to study about our aina and work on projects around the islands to decrease our carbon footprint.



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For 16 years, I have been involved with STEM. That's over half my life. From FIRST Lego League at Kapolei Middle School to being captain of the Kapolei Robotics Team 2445. Since graduating from Kapolei High School in 2015, I have been mentoring students from Kapolei High School's Learning Center for Applied Technology (LCAT) Academy and Kapolei Robotics Team 2445. I am now a mechanical engineer at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard maintaining the fleet and making sure we are keeping our boats fit to fight. I am one of many success stories from a Learning Center. Many students who have gone through these programs, continued their career and have made a positive impact.

In LCAT, there are many classes offered to cater to your specific career path. Some classes include electronics, woodshop, mechanical drafting, and computer aided drawing (CAD). Many of these skills are important in industries in the trades (welding, electrician, plumbing, etc) or engineering (research and development and design). LCAT became a second family because there were many students who shared the same passions as me. I felt like I belonged. I was proud and thankful to be given that opportunity to be part of a Learning Center which accelerated my learning past my peers who did not have that opportunity. And now, because of it, I became a mechanical engineer, maintaining boats and submarines for the Navy in one of the best shipyards around the world.

Teachers of the Learning Centers are the true heroes when it comes to guiding students and inspiring them to do things we were not able to do. Because of them, I became a successful engineer and the best version of myself. I was so inspired that every year, I go back to mentor students in hopes to inspire them to do great things. I then became a member of the Engineering, Design, and Energy Advisory Board at Kapolei High School to ensure that we "sustain operations and support teaching and learning".

There are thousands of students who went through these programs. Defunding these programs, would hinder Hawaii's education system and stop our societal progress.

Members of the Board, I request for you to reconsider the defunding of Learning Centers in Hawaii. Your mission is to develop the academic achievement, character, and social-emotional well-being of your students to the fullest potential. Defunding these programs is hypocritical as it goes against that mission. I would love to continue to mentor and to inspire students around Hawaii to pursue their dreams given these opportunities through Learning Centers and to become better leaders and community members for their future.

Thank you for your time. I hope that you will do what's morally right for Hawaii's future and for the future of Hawaii's keiki.

Alexine Niro  
Mentor at Kapolei High School  
Mechanical Engineer at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & IMF

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:06 AM

### **Name**

Elizabeth Katz

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I stumbled upon CTAA in my freshman year of high school as a scared kid with only 3 friends at my new school. Reflecting on this now, a senior with a strong community and support group at my school, I owe much of my joy throughout high school to this program. A wide majority of friends I have, I met through this program, and it is a support system and community like none I have ever experienced before. I cannot even express in words how important this has been to me, and it really helped me pull myself through difficult parts of my life through people who cared for and supported me wholeheartedly.

These people are now a family to me, and future generations at Mililani High School deserve the same promise that I had of a safe place where they can pursue their passions and dreams. Mililani's future keiki do not deserve to feel silenced and alone by being unable to experience this understanding, passionate community of young artists. #stopdefundingthearts!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:00 AM

### **Name**

Aisha Richards

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut funding for Learning Center programs across the state. Learning Centers provide awesome hands-on specialized experiences for students. Students thrive in Learning Centers. Some Learning Centers provide students with a creative outlet that they cannot access in regular classes or at their home district school. Other Learning Centers provide students with valuable life skills that will benefit them far beyond high school. For some students, their Learning Center programs simply provide them with a place that they can feel safe and valued, and a place that they can simply belong. Without Learning Centers, some programs will be cut from their schools entirely. There is no way some programs can be funded by the schools' budgets alone. Please put the students first and find a way to make this work. Please remember that students are our future, but they cannot become what they can be without the necessary tools and foundational skills that they might learn at their Learning Center programs.

The teachers put their heart and souls into these Learning Centers so that they can provide students with a curriculum that is focused on specialized skills and knowledge. Cutting funds to Learning Centers would also mean having to cut teaching positions. We need the teachers to remain in their positions so that students can continue to benefit from these programs. Losing teaching positions would cause a ripple effect that would lead to the displacement of other teachers, which could possibly lead to unskilled/unqualified/uncertified teachers having to teach things that they do not know about or feel comfortable with simply to keep a job... that would lead to parents and students being unhappy with the school, and you can imagine the rest... (I'll let you imagine it, because I trust you will not let things get to that point... let's keep it something that we can only imagine and don't have to see in reality).

Please do not cut Learning Center funds. I hope to see these programs continue into the future so that students can come out on top!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:00 AM

### **Name**

Leanne Teves

### **Organization**

Self

### **Position/Title**

Supporter of performing arts programs for all students and keeper of my "Day Job" with the HIDOE, w. some employment as an actor w. various productions in HI.

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut funding to any school's performing arts centers. Cutting or decreasing funding will have an impact on the future of these programs. These programs provide for students, education, skills, positive self-esteem, and development towards having a viable career in the area of performing arts.

Cutting funding will also flow towards having an impact on establishing any kind of alternative economic foundation including a job market in Hawaii with film and television productions. We need to develop another source of financial infrastructure in Hawaii; Tourism cannot be the single source of all things for Hawaii to function as a state.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my written testimony.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:06 AM

### **Name**

Yu Erh Lin Chen

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Request fiscal biennium 2025-2027 for Waiākea high school Technology Learning Center.

It's hard to find good education resources in big island. They provide great community events for our big island students in STEM concepts.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:11 AM

### **Name**

Kahana Ho

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

10/31/2024

Aloha, Esteemed members of the State of Hawai'i Board of Education.

I am deeply opposed to any budget cuts that would decrease, or worse, eliminate any funding of the Arts, and more specifically, Performing Arts education in Hawai'i.

As a survivor of sexual, physical, and mental abuse as a young child, music was one of my few refuges that kept me alive through years of profound depression and suicidality, offering me a physical, mental, social, and spiritual space to feel safe. Later in life, I discovered community theatre, and realized that Theatre, even more so than music, is a social art - and in the theatre community i have found a safe place filled with support, confidence, and purpose. These are experiences and treasures that should be available to every child, especially for those who are struggling with less than stereotypically ideal life. Indeed, Performing Arts education offer far more than enrichment and career preparation - it can save lives of our most vulnerable young people.

Please do not cut any funding for performing arts. If anything, they should be funded at greater levels.

With respect and hope

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:16 AM

### **Name**

Fretchie Saramosing

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose as budget cuts to these program will adversely impact students. These are programs with growing interests for students. It encourages creativity, critical thinking skills, self-expression, and gives students great exposure to these areas.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:11 AM

### **Name**

Lisa Amador

### **Organization**

--None--

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To those for whom the education and well-being of Hawaii's students are given the vitally important stewardship, I am a mother of a "theatre kid". This kid was very fortunate to attend a local private school where theatre, music and the arts are seen as integral to a child's education. Indeed, as a mental health practitioner, I am also acutely aware of the importance of the arts to a child's social and emotional health. My theatre kid went on to Harvard University where he excelled and continued to perform, including at the historic Hasty Pudding Theatricals. He is now a thriving law student, who still finds time to perform in various ways as a part of his self-care. Why am I telling the story of a child who did not attend a Hawaii public school? I am telling his story, because the public schools, of which I myself attended, are host to many more students, just like my son. They find their tribe in the safety and acceptance of the theatre. They can be their authentic selves. They can explore their emotions and develop their art, which inevitably propels them academically. It teaches teamwork. It insists on discipline. It heightens achievement in academics. The arts, including the performing arts are a part of what makes us an evolved and thinking culture. Public schools already do not have arts programs commensurate with the preeminent private schools. This should not be. As a taxpayer, as a parent, and as "auntie" to many of my son's friends who attended public school, and as a thrilled audience member at Castle High School, Kaimuki High School and others, I implore you to do right by our brilliant, sensitive, artistic children, who need the arts for their well-being, and in some cases, for their very survival. Please do not cut this from the DOE budget.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:26 AM

### **Name**

Marielle Magdirila

### **Organization**

Waipahu Business

### **Position/Title**

Waipahu Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Waipahu's business program has given all alumni & current students access to life changing information. As one myself, I had feild experience & networking opportunities that furthered my career aspirations to be a business owner. My skills root from the in-person lessons of Waipahu's business program. They have led me to many job offers, allowing me to start my career in Hawaii's wedding industry at 19.

Please do not defund the next generation's leaders! Invest in our school's programs!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:26 AM

### **Name**

Jayna Rae Coloma

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:11 AM

### **Name**

Richard C

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Good Morning everyone,

I was just made aware that the State of Hawaii is looking to defund the Learning Centers statewide.

I, as a parent, oppose the state doing this. The learning center create opportunities for the various schools. At Pearl City High School, it offers the student the opportunity to learn music and also help the with attending various band competitions around the state. They also get to meet and make connections with other students from other schools who are in band or learning music.

These learning centers offer specialized industry focus such as agriculture, science, business, music and technology. The schools and teachers are already struggling to help fund a lot of the projects and State of Hawaii wants to take away another opportunity in our education system from our students. Teachers already have to use their money in addition to the funds from our learning center, to give the kids opportunities.

You push the kids to learn and grow, but then you're taking away. I find the Board's lack of focus on what is good for our students.

The way the world works today, with technology (such as A.I., Virtual Realty, Augmented Realty) and also how all of this integrates into almost every aspect of everything we do, we need to keep giving the opportunities for the kids to learn and grow.

The Pearl City High School band, now past the pandemic and COVID, has been ramping up with a lot more kids coming in to learn music, work with each other, learn teamwork and also make connections not just through the music but with other kids around the state.

So I oppose having the State of Hawaii close our school Learning Centers.

Thank you for your time,  
Richard C.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:36 AM

### **Name**

ava coughlin

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:36 AM

### **Name**

Juan Carlos Gill Amador

### **Organization**

Radord High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:36 AM

### **Name**

Ingrid Dufford

### **Organization**

North Shore EVP

### **Position/Title**

Food Safety Specialist

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the budget cut for the learning centers. Leilehua High School Ag program goes above and BEYOND for these students. Educator Jackie Frietas gives these students an education that they would not receive anywhere else. Her agriculture program is better than most the farms I work with. Her and her students have worked hard to become Harmonized GAP certified by the USDA which is an amazing accomplishment! A budget cut to this program is devastating to the students whom we ultimately are trying to serve a better education. I oppose this budget cut !

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:40 AM

### **Name**

Allayna Quiocho

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Performing arts centers made up a huge part— if not the entirety of— my adolescence. During those, fundamental years I dedicated hours, days, weeks, and months of my time towards the shows I was cast in. Those years taught me the value of diligence, time management, teamwork, and so many more life values that are still relevant to my life today. But even more than that, these learning programs provided a community for me to be apart of. Unforgettable connections with classmates and teachers whom I could learn from and grow with, which would not have been possible had the programs not existed in the first place. Much of my social identity would have been gone had I not been given the opportunity to continue to explore the world of the arts— and having that chance to explore those interests and cultivate the talents there is SO important for students. In their youth, it is essential that they are given the chance to do so, as in the future they may not have the leisure to do so. Many of my previous cast members who I have grown up with in these programs have gone on to continue in this field professionally, and it would have never been possible without the guidance of these learning programs. They hold so much importance to so many students and they deserve to continue to focus on their growth and thrive in these environments without the fear that it may be taken away from them.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:34 AM

### **Name**

Robert Leong

### **Organization**

Headquarters Pacific Air Forces

### **Position/Title**

Civil Engineer (retired)

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am opposed to the proposed reduction in the Performing Arts Learning Centers, specifically the Pearl City High School Performing Arts \*Music(. The music programs are must then just learning to plan and instrument and music. The music programs teach math, physical education, history, art, life, science and reading. Students learn how to work together in their musical instruments section, and how the sections combine to make up the larger band as a whole. But they also learn how to work with the other bands in the school program as well as other organizations in the school like the football team and cheerleaders. They learn work work with people which is a valuable learning tool that will help them is their adult life. Putting funding to this Performing Arts program will potentially put hundreds of students at each school at risk of nothing to do and getting into trouble if the schools and parents don't find a way to raise funds to replace the funding you cut. Request you reconsider this issue and continue to fund the Performing Arts Learning Centers. It is interesting that you are cutting these programs but leaving athletics intact. If you cut programs it should be a percentage across the board to all programs. Again, please reconsider this issue.

If you want to discuss with me, you can contact me initially through my email.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:36 AM

### **Name**

Brandon Hagio

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

Lecturer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The program that you are looking to cut, is the same program that not only saved my life, but gave me purpose and a community i can call family.

Theatre is important. After suffering a stroke at the age of 12, i lost many things. Sense of self and confidence were top of the list. Upon taking theatre in my junior year, i found it again.

Since then, i have not only spent the better half of my life in theatre, as a hobby and as employment. By taking this program away, you will be removing an outlet for our youth to truly discover themselves. Confidence, autonomy, and a joy for life. Very few standardized classes can teach these things. You'll be cutting the life line for these opportunities that legitimately save lives. Think hard about your wants for the next generation. This is wrong, and you'll only be making life less beautiful.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 7:11 AM

### Name

RyAnne Raffipiy

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha mai kakou,

I respectfully oppose the proposed budget cuts to the state schools in Hawai'i for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027. In the proposed budget cuts, not only will teachers be affected by low wages, but the livelihood of keiki in school will be greatly affected through the lack of funding for extracurricular activities. As a student who has been through the Hawai'i school system and as a daughter of a teacher, I have firsthand experience of how your decisions as a board affect the livelihood of both students and teachers.

I am in opposition of the budget cuts to the Learning Centers in the schools. In defunding Learning Centers, not only are you depriving job opportunities of people who could facilitate these Learning Centers, but you are also being insensitive to the mental health needs of students. That is ironic because a chunk of the proposed budget plan allocate funds to other student support services like funds for Hawaiian immersion programs, but none can go to Learning Centers? Learning Centers are formative places for Hawai'i students to acquire experience and excel.

There is a lot of psychology research that proves to how essential Learning Centers and extracurricular programs are to the well-being and formation of a student. For example, according to a study done on the impact of extracurriculars on students, "students participating in extracurricular activities experience higher levels of academic achievement...[and] students who participate frequently in extracurricular activities tend to have higher grades, better test scores, and more positive experiences in general" (Christison, 2013). Not only are students in extracurriculars more likely to excel academically, but they also excel in social settings and are more likely to be more involved in community outreach efforts. There is so much literature encouraging students to be involved in extracurricular activities because, god forbid, kids have friends and socialize with each other.

Cutting funds to the Learning Center is detrimental to students as they will have limited access to outlets for them to destress or even express who they are. School-age is a crucial time in the development of students and taking away outlets of communicating with peers and outlets of expression.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:48 AM

### **Name**

Lisa Rhoden

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of agenda item 8. Cutting and subsequently eliminating funding for Learning Centers will negatively impact students across the State of Hawaii. Learning Centers provide in depth instruction in various subject matter from agricultural training to STEAM and performing arts. Learning Centers give students access to career opportunities, skills development, and hands on experience. Combined, these opportunities help students in Hawaii become more competitive and gain knowledge and skills that help them succeed whether they remain in Hawaii or go abroad to the continent or beyond. Removing these crucial programs is detrimental to our students' futures and undermines the efforts of the DOE to assist students in achieving academic and career success. I strongly oppose this effort to reduce funding for and eliminate funding for Learning Center in the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 budget. This effort is short sighted and has negative consequences that will reverberate through our State.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:44 AM

### **Name**

Kapuni Patcho

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:45 AM

### **Name**

Meredith Bechirian

### **Organization**

Public School Parent

### **Position/Title**

Mother of 2

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom  
it may concern

I am writing on behalf of KHPAC. I am a mother of a 16yr old and 12 yr old that both have had the privilege to perform in this performance space.

The Kaimuki Performance space has been such a blessing for them to grow as compassionate self confident risk takers and it would be a crime for this facility to be discontinued.

This space has not only allowed them to meet other students from different public schools but they have both made friends for life. It builds their confidence and lets these kid be heard as kids and artists. Being a teen in this day and age is not easy. This space allows them to find who they are without being judged and doing what they LOVE.

Not only does Kaimuki Performance Space allow them to be actors this program includes building sets, learning sound and lighting. If you have been to any of their shows all of the sets are built by the students. Simply incredible. Better than some of our community theaters sets if you ask me.

Doing away with these programs would truly leave this community empty and be Criminal.

Please Please we are begging keep Performing Arts in our schools.

Theatre Momma 73

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:55 AM

### **Name**

Grace Funai

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

If this bill will defund programs like the Waiakea High School Robotics in the Technology Resource Center, then this bill will only hurt opportunities for our children in being able to gain important hands-on skills and education in key areas of STEM that are of incredible importance to our community, our nation and our world. Educating young minds in these areas are critical, as we move forward in a technologically advanced society which is quickly changing every aspect of our lives. It is imperative that we continue to fund opportunities for students to gain exposure, knowledge and opportunity to participate in these types of programs. This program in particular has been incredibly successful, and over generations has impacted our community. As a high school student over 30 years ago, I participated in activities through this center that were incredibly impactful to me as a student, a young girl being introduced to STEM concepts and careers. Now as a mother, my sons have both benefited from programs offered through this center. The impacts are immeasurable and the lives touched are numerous. Defunding programs that provide endless opportunities for our students is not only detrimental to their growth but also limits their potential to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. These programs are essential in fostering skills, creativity, and critical thinking that prepare students for a complex world. When we defund them, we're not just cutting a budget line—we're cutting off a lifeline to future success, innovation, and personal development. Let's ensure our students have access to the resources they need to excel. Please do not support this bill.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:58 AM

### **Name**

Abigail Wallis

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Abigail Wallis, I am a full-time student at Mililani High School and I oppose the Department of Education's bill VIII. Learning centers are a crucial part of all education, and mine specifically. As I switched schools from an online program during my sophomore year, I needed a stable support system quickly. A Learning Center, specifically Central Theatre Arts Academy, presented that opportunity for me. It is not an exaggeration to say this program changed my life and continues to this day. The skills I have developed from these have set me on a path towards a future I'm passionate about, and has done the same for many in the past. It will do the same for future generations. It is entirely crucial that these centers remain funded and supported by the Department of Education.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:10 AM

### **Name**

Lindsey Wong

### **Organization**

JB Castle High School/Castle complex

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose cutting budgets for performing arts programs at DOE schools specifically JB Castle High School. Mr. Ronald Bright worked so closely with students and guided them in a direction of creativity and learning that no other could. Teachers and staff specifically in the Castle Complex carry on his legacy providing encouragement, teaching, and experience for students who may not get the same at home. Students who do have support at home present with something to be proud of an accomplishment after the hours of dedication and time that gets put into these programs. You pay a teacher a salary to work a given amount of time. Teachers and staff, parents and students continue to VOLUNTEER their time and commitment to produce quality products without complaint. In a world that is failing children by the day whether one wants to see it or not, do the little you can to adjust the budget and support positive programs as such to continue to be positive lights, guides, and models not only to the present students but the generations of community who still enjoy, participate, and support such programs. When will the future generation truly be cared for and built up to be someone when they enter the real world if programs as such continue to be cut out of budget? I ask you to appropriate funds for positive hands on programs as such.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Sebastian Tsutsui

### **Organization**

Mililani Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Sebastian Tsutsui, and I'm in the 11th grade at Mililani Highschool. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

As a student at Mililani High School, the Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of my educational journey. Participating in the Central Theater Arts Academy has not only honed my acting skills but also boosted my confidence and teamwork abilities. I remember a time when I struggled with stage fright. The supportive environment and expert guidance at the Learning Center helped me overcome this challenge, allowing me to perform confidently in front of large audiences. This experience has been transformative, shaping my personal and academic growth in ways I never imagined.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Sebastian Tsutsui  
2341400466@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:48 AM

### **Name**

Kylie n

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

By shifting the protection and funding of programs from state to individual schools you would be effectively shutting down so many great programs that are some students lifeline in intermediate and high school. Not only do these programs at risk foster incredible learning experiences and expand student's capabilities, but they also become a safe place for students to go to after the school day and a way for students to create bonds with others who share their interests. As a 2020 grad I can speak from recent experience when I say that the performing arts and music programs at my school became a huge part of my world and has made a continuous impact on my life that I am still reaping the benefits of post college. The programs you intend to cut all funding for allowed me to explore my interests and eventually lead me to a career I had previously never known was a possibility. Hearing that my favorite parts of intermediate and high school were at risk of no longer existing because someone deemed them no longer worth the money absolutely broke my heart. STEM, business, and the arts are huge assists to a great learning environment- they are worth the investment for future generations of students.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### Name

Yuma Kamuro

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Yuma Kamuro and I'm a junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I have many friends who are in the Robotics program that are competing for the FIRST Robotics competition. They require a lot of funds to participate in the tournaments including fees for air flights, transportation, materials, mentoring.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Yuma

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Zong-Lin Tsou

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Zong-Lin Tsou, and I'm a 11th grader at Mililani high school. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Personally, I have been in science club for all 3 years of my high school so far and I know that the club benefits tremendously from the Mililani STEM learning center funds. Removing these funds would be detrimental to clubs like science club that our school loves so much. I also have many friends in other clubs that use these funds to supply their members with supplies and things they need to keep their club going. Cutting these funds would immensely negatively affect Mililani high school and many other school.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Zong-Lin Tsou

2861400159@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Charly Sowers

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Charly Sowers, and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

While I myself have not had many experiences with the Learning Centers I do have friends that have spent all four years now in them. My friends in robotics spend hours working on something that they are passionate about and constantly improving their understanding of programming, and my friends in play production have been able to greatly express themselves and their creativity in the past four years. Both programs in the Learning Center have helped my friends express themselves and allow them to become passionate about something that is not offered at many schools.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Charly Sowers

11/01/2024



11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### Name

Tiffany Cruz

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Tiffany Cruz, and I'm a Junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has and currently is benefitting immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Throughout the past year I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in the Science Fair which greatly helped and impacted me in so many positive ways. This was due to the great experience that I had at this year's past science fair. I was able to compete and make it to the state science fair where I won 2nd in my category along with a special award. If it wasn't for this opportunity that was provided from my school's learning center, I would have never been able to have the opportunity to achieve this.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Tiffany Cruz  
2121400199@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:28 AM

### **Name**

Davyn Ogawa

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Davyn Ogawa, and I'm a 12th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I myself have participated in the theater and STEM at MHS. I have learned so many different skills and learned so much from all of these experiences. I learned practical life skills and learned things like how to build a set for theater and how electronics work and so much more.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Davyn Ogawa

My school email is: 2401301178@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:23 AM

### **Name**

Stephanie Camba

### **Organization**

TeAda Productions

### **Position/Title**

Operations & Diaspora Programs Manager

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I would like to support this program and the arts. Removing this budget will be detrimental to the community, the economy, and well-being of the state. We need more funding for arts as it relates directly to well-being.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:10 AM

### **Name**

K H

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Students need to be given the opportunity to learn and thrive at school. Each student deserves a chance to succeed and find something they're passionate about. If you are truly for the students you would help them discover their passions. Cutting learning centers from our public schools takes away those opportunities from students. Through performing arts, STEM, and digital media, our students have had the chance to express who they are and find the thing they want to do as a career. The programs you are trying to defund are ones that have brought the most success and happiness to many generations of students. School is not just core subjects. It is also the electives that our students choose and care about. Our learning centers shape our students to become role models and human beings. Taking that away from our students will prevent them from reaching their full potential.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:28 AM

### **Name**

Denise Park

### **Organization**

Pearl City High School Music Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a parent whose child is directly benefiting from the Pearl City High School Music Learning Center, I strongly urge you to oppose the request to cut funding for our Learning Centers and help maintain these much-needed and valuable programs.

I am proud to say I have seen firsthand what this program can do. This program has provided a community that supports my daughter in her overall academic growth. The confidence the Pearl City High School Music Learning Center has given her has helped in every aspect of her high school education.

If funding for the Pearl City High School Music Learning Center is eliminated, we risk losing important elements of this program that nurtures creativity and personal development for our youth.

I am also just one of the many parent volunteers who have worked tirelessly, trying to fill the void for the areas that DOE funding still does not cover. Our team of parent volunteers are always willing and ready to do whatever is needed, because we believe in this program. But we can only do so much. Please don't take much-needed resources away from our children.

I strongly urge you to oppose these proposed budget cuts and continue to invest in the talents, creativity, education, and overall well-being of every student of these Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:07 AM

### **Name**

Krislyn Miyamoto

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Alumni student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Decreasing and cutting funding for Learning Centers, including Mililani High School's Central Theatre Arts Academy, would be a massive mistake. These Learning Centers are far from obsolete and give so many students incredibly valuable experiences and skills that they can use in life and future careers. My experience in Central Theatre Arts Academy was invaluable and changed my life completely. Before joining the program, I was not skilled at all at public speaking as I had no self-confidence. I was quiet and could not be heard by an audience. When I joined Central Theatre Arts Academy, I was surrounded by a community of teachers and peers that supported me and a program that, being focused on theatre, fosters public speaking and self-confidence. Because of this, I gained such an invaluable skill in public speaking that I continue to use in my life now as a college student and very well plan on continuing to use well into my future. Additionally, theatre is a passion of mine, so being in Central Theatre Arts Academy was a fun experience for me through which I made so many friends. Theatre is a passion for so many other students as well, and so are the activities fostered by other Learning Centers. Cutting funding from programs like Central Theatre Arts Academy, putting them in grave danger of being shut down, would be taking away so much from all of these students.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### Name

Dayton Oshiro-Nemoto

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Dayton Oshiro-Nemoto, and I'm a 11th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who knows someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

My friends Andrew and Franklin have benefited from the Science fair as it helped them develop various skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, time management, and communication by applying the principles of the scientific method. Cutting funding will only disallow people like my friends from advancing their skill and cut the opportunity from advancing their skill set.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



11/01/2024

Dayton Oshiro-Nemoto  
S216-Dayton Oshiro-Nemoto

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:07 AM

### **Name**

Alex Durrant

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

Lecturer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to absolutely oppose the proposed cuts to the high school learning centers.

I have worked with several learning centers around Oahu in my capacity as an early college lecturer and I have first hand experience of the support and opportunity the learning centers provide.

Right now, more than ever we need programs that keep students engaged and encourage communication, creativity and a sense of community. As educators is not one of our key purposes to provide the students with opportunities to further their education and life skills in a safe environment? It is confusing that those opportunities would be removed when the pursuit of educational exploration and excellence should be being encouraged.

It takes the briefest of internet searches to find countless accounts of the positive impacts the learning centers have. Students are often held to a higher standard if they belong to a learning center, I have seen students go from D grades to straight A's because they want to be in a particular show or other learning center activity.

I cannot overstate the damage that removing funding for these programs will do to the youth on the island. I implore you to reconsider this unfortunate action.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:28 AM

### **Name**

Henry Christley-

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Henry Christley, and I'm a Junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who knows people that have benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to their education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I have many examples of how the learning centers have truly blessed the lives of my friends. One example is my friend Jace Ramiscal, who through Science Fair was able to receive a grant of \$1000 dollars which will be a tremendous help in him paying for his college. Another example is my friend Tony who struggled to make friends in high school. However, he joined the science club and was able to meet some of his best friends today.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Henry Christley  
(808) 352-3330

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:07 AM

### **Name**

Nicholas Amador

### **Organization**

unaffiliated

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Nicholas Amador. I am currently a student at one of the nation's top law schools, and I plan to come back home and serve my home state in a public service capacity - I was born and raised in Hawaii, and was fortunate to grow up in the incredibly nurturing environment that is the Hawaii community theatre Ohana. I'm writing to express my genuine worry concerning the proposed budget decreases/cuts and the severe and damaging impact they are likely to have on this important facet of Hawaii's community, especially on the children who will shape its future.

The art of theatre is a celebration of collaboration and free expression, and a performing arts education is an incredibly valuable way for a young person to learn how to cooperate, empathize, and express important ideas. I know because I was fortunate enough to receive one. For many of Hawaii's public school students, the relevant learning programs are their only opportunity to do so as well.

To view these arts programs as "supplemental" or "extracurricular" is to treat them as a revocable privilege. This is a misguided approach that does a disservice to Hawaii's children, particularly those who find a safe haven in the performing arts. It is important to note that these children are often already marginalized. For many, after-school theatre programs are the one rare place where they can feel safe to express themselves without fear. I am concerned that a cancellation of these programs will leave many children without such an outlet. I worry for the consequences that will follow, and the precedent such a decision will set. I am disheartened to see that the State Board of Education has officially advocated for such an unfortunate outcome, and I strongly and respectfully urge you to reconsider.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Marisa Kim

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha and good morning,

I am writing with a deep sense of urgency and concern as a parent opposing the proposed cuts to funding for all learning centers in the State of Hawaii.

My child has just started middle school and recently participated in a fall break STEM program at Mililani High School. This program has been instrumental in nurturing his interest in the sciences, encouraging him to pursue his passion further. The STEM classes are among his favorites, and the potential loss of funding for these learning centers threatens to strip away opportunities not just for him, but for hundreds of children across the state.

The impact of losing this funding would be devastating. It is not sufficient to merely include science as part of the standard curriculum. These learning centers provide a unique environment where children can connect with peers who share their interests and receive mentorship from dedicated professionals. These experiences are crucial for fostering a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

Public schools in Hawaii already face significant challenges, and removing this vital support would be catastrophic. My heartfelt plea to the Board of Education is to consider the long-term consequences of this decision and to prioritize the future of our children by maintaining the funding for these essential learning centers.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Parent

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:20 AM

### Name

Leesa Takara

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Leesa Takara, and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. As a fourth year participant in FIRST robotics, science olympiad, and science fair, all funded by the Mililani Science Learning Center, I was incredibly saddened to hear of the proposed budget cuts, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As a senior, I can't begin to imagine what my high school experience would have been like without the opportunities provided by the Mililani Science Learning Center. The Mililani SLC has helped me to grow more than words can say, and shaped me into the person I am today.

Right out of middle school, robotics and science club have given me a place to belong, my 2nd home. When I was having a rough time, I knew I could always look forward to these extracurriculars, giving me a sense of purpose. Eliminating funding for these programs would strip students like me of the purpose and direction that these extracurriculars provide. It is because of the SLC that I have learned that I want to study aerospace engineering when I graduate.

Yes, I could continue to take more advanced classes like APs, but classes can only go so far in teaching. The SLC has allowed me to learn more than I ever could from my classes, and has given me the opportunities to truly apply the knowledge I've learned in class to real world problems such as creating an app to improve the organ donation system in Hawaii.

The SLC has challenged me to accomplish more than I ever thought I could, from presenting astronomy research conducted in a lab to building two competition ready robots. I have experienced first hand the rewards that come with collaboration and problem solving, and seeing the robot all come together at competition never fails to amaze me.

More than technical skills, science olympiad and robotics have given me a strong community of people that share and

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encourage me to embrace my drive and passion for STEM. I can't imagine taking on the challenges of high school without them. The SLC has allowed me to share my passion with the community as well by mentoring younger STEM students at my elementary and middle schools.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others and I to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Leesa Takara  
lctakara@gmail.com



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Reid Tamanaha

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

Hi, my name is Reid Tamanaha, and I'm currently in the 11th grade at Mililani High School. I'm writing today to address the proposed budget cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are deeply erroneous. I am writing on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs, and am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

In my sophomore year, I participated in the MHS Science Fair and was able to participate in the Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair (HSSEF), thanks to funding in the MHS Science Learning Center which supported myself and other students in researching and conducting our projects. During HSSEF, I was able to meet students across the island with similar interests, and it helped motivate me to become better in the future. At the science fair, I saw brilliant projects that taught me to try harder to match other students' skill levels. I saw cancer research and antibiotics being made from centipede venom, truly extraordinary research work. The science fair and science learning centers across the state foster important research like these, and the genuinely amazing innovation that occurs furthers our understanding of the world around us and could be the next breakthrough in science. The science fair is just one of the few removals that budget cuts to the MHS Science Learning Center would impact. Beyond specific events, the removal of funding for these learning centers is the weakening of the state of Hawaii's education system. How can students in Hawaii compare to students in other states across the country who have the ability to work with exceptional researchers and learning centers? As a Hawaii high school student, this particularly scares me because of the implications for college. How will my resume compare to others in the country? I, and many others, have passions that are not encompassed in athletics alone, and without these learning centers, our futures will be directly impacted. Although the proposal is to take effect beyond my high school years, I would hate to be a freshman

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now and have all funding cut to the main aspects of my life that could get me into college or set me up well for the future.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Reid Tamanaha

Email: 2411400095@k12.hi.us

Phone Number: (808) 308-8543

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:07 AM

### **Name**

Sunissa Domingo

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello I'm Sunissa Domingo and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. I joined the performing arts program at Mililani High School late but I can confidently say that I care a lot about the people and the production. Which is why I am saddened with the idea that not only the CTAA is at risk of losing their legacy but also our Stem/science clubs. Each and everyone of the students commit their energy and time in these clubs, it should not be taken away from them now. I oppose this bill and I hope that the younger students will be able to enjoy the same opportunities that I was given.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### Name

Michaella Napier

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Michaella Napier, and I'm a Junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has seen my friends benefit immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to our education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Last school year, several of my friends were able to participate in the Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair (HSSEF), thanks to funding in the MHS Science Learning Center that helped support students in researching and conducting projects. This ended up being a great opportunity for them as they were able to meet students from other schools and make connections with people who shared the same interests. It also benefited them academically because they all learned so much through the process of creating their projects and seeing other students work at the science fair. Lastly, it would be detrimental to the future of Hawaii to cut said funding because this would set students behind as others around the nation and intentionally continue to advance and grow.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

11/01/2024

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michaela Napier  
2421400515@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Ruth Sailusi

### **Organization**

Mililani Science Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Ruth Sailusi, and I'm an 11th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who is currently being impacted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. As a student who is striving for excellence as well as new opportunities to learn and grow and make personal connections with others, I think that the absence of these programs would deteriorate social skills and learning environments that so many students rely on to function during and after the duration of the clubs' operation. I personally haven't been able to join the Science Olympiad in the past years that I have attended Mililani High School, but finally this year, I was able to join. I entered with anticipation and excitement as the thought of it turned into reality. But the shock of this program that may not be here in a few years is devastating. Despite only going to a few meetings, I can see and feel the passion for science, for learning, for development, and for excellence in the community that is created with the Science Olympiad program. And I think that these kinds of environments can't be created anywhere else. In the environment, there is this cheerful spirit that empowers all members to have more passion to excel.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Ruth Sailusi  
3191400216@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### Name

Miya Britos

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Miya Britos, and I'm a 11th at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Miya Britos

2411200823@k12.hi.us



October 31, 2024

Testimony in Opposition to Agenda Item VIII: DOE's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal biennium 2025-2027

Board of Education members,

Aloha, our names are Danielle Castro and Leilani Riehle and we are the Student Activities Coordinators at Mililani High School. We do not support the proposed operating budget for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 in its current state. We have had the privilege of seeing first hand our two learning centers in action at Mililani High School. Our Performing Arts Center, Central Theatre Arts Academy, puts on two plays a year, open mic nights, allows students to create their own productions, allows students from other schools to participate, just to name a few opportunities. CTAA has helped acting courses flourish at our school, helping to round out the Department of Education's mission to develop the academic achievement, character, and social-emotional well-being of our students to the fullest potential. Our Science Learning Center supports not just a strong STEM program at our school, but our Science Olympiad team, Rocketry Club, FIRST Robotics, and Science Club, also developing the academic achievement, character, and social-emotional well-being of our students to the fullest potential. Just over fall break they ran a fall science camp for 75 elementary school students to provide them the opportunity to grow in their love of science, which would hopefully sustain and have them return as participants of the Science Learning Center at MHS five years later. However, all these opportunities are in jeopardy if the current proposed operating budget for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 passes as stated.

Our Learning Centers (LCs) support thousands of students annually. They provide unique opportunities by allowing their advisors and students to focus acutely through a particular lens. To learn of the Department pulling all funding and "shifting responsibilities" to the school level is a disappointment. Weighted student formula monies are already being allocated to other programs and positions that currently exist in schools. Schools have already told their Learning Centers that if this passes, they will not be able to support their LCs in the capacity they seek, if at all.

Another concern of having schools handle the funding of LCs is what's to stop other programs from wanting funding for their work at the school level? There are plenty of co-curricular programs that do not operate as an LC, so for LCs to then be able to receive funding and positions at the school level allows other programs to ask for the same. Right now LCs have to prove their work annually and document their services and opportunities to continue to receive LC support. Are they going to continue to be monitored at the same level in schools to earn their funding? Or will that still be the responsibility of a statewide coordinator for programs that are now the fiscal responsibility of the school level? And if not, then LC's are being put in a pot where everyone is fighting for access to a set pot of money. There are many extra and co-curricular organizations on our campus, and we are concerned that they may also ask for monies to support their programs if LCs are funded from school monies. Our club advisors do not get compensation for their activities and time, and this might open a door to allow them to ask to be compensated for their time if advisors for LCs are getting paid from the school.

We think it's a copout for the department to say that this is simply a "shifting of responsibility." Schools are still agents of the Department. The Department is still failing our students if these programs dwindle and fail due to a lack of funding and support.

"Under this plan, subsidies previously provided centrally by the Department's state office for nearly four decades would be phased out, and schools would have the authority to prioritize program offerings using Weighted Student Formula school-level funds." Where would the monies now be going if the department is defunding programs that have supported the Department's mission for decades? Why are we taking away from and jeopardizing programs that develop the academic achievement, character, and social-emotional well-being of our students to their fullest potential?

As Student Activities Coordinators, we do not support the current proposed operating budget for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 in its current state if learning centers are to lose all their Department funding.

Danielle Castro & Leilani Riehle  
Mililani High School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### **Name**

Keira Mulligan

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The learning centers of our school are very important to the creativity and education of our students. The theater program lets students express themselves freely and it is very important to them as well as students across the communities to be exposed to the arts. This allows students to be more well rounded. In addition, the STEM program should not have funding cut as well because it provides students with opportunities for the future as well as creating paths for them. The agriculture program helps to educate kids on the environment, and the environment is a very useful thing to learn about since it's basically the basis for our society that we have today. Overall all of these programs are essential to my school and others across the state because it increases interactive learning and is very important to the people in these groups.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### **Name**

Trinity Huynh

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

At Mililani High School, we prioritize our learning and the learning centers we currently have are beneficial to a student's success and future endeavors. We cannot have a budget cut for the learning centers that are essential to our students' lives. Learning centers that are at risks at Mililani High School are our Performing Arts and STEM programs. These programs have been influential in giving the kids at our school opportunities to succeed-- both programs allow our students to express and discover themselves, finding solidarity and sense of community among their peers, as well giving them a framework for their future. These programs are essential to the future adults of America.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:44 AM

### **Name**

Misty Lucas

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The performing arts and theater programs at Castle High and surrounding schools is a crucial program necessary to foster development and creative thought processes within our community. These kids deserve the chance to participate in activities that enrich thier education while feeding thier bodies and mental wellness. Please do not cut the performing arts programs. The next generation is depending on us.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### Name

Aislinn Powell

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Opposition to Learning Center budget cuts

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Aislinn, and I'm a junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

In my personal experience, the CTAA has left me with good memories from their plays because of the students' amazing acting and hand made props. The talent and skills that are being grown by students in the CTAA and other learning centers and incredibly vital, and having the funding to support them helps Learning Centers provide the materials needed to hone their abilities.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

11/01/2024

Aislinn Powell  
2121400214@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### **Name**

Ayce Wakano

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am an alumni who has shared many memories with multiple different members. With the enactment of the DOE's operating budget request for fiscal biennium, the Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center will lose funding from the school. Losing this funding prevents the robotics team who is a part of the organization from traveling around the world to compete and spreading the aloha spirit we embody.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Sherrie Tiitii

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha! I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions enriching their lives and understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Debbie Watson-Correa

### **Organization**

Japanese Chamber Of Commerce and Industry Hawaii

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the bill due to the lack of funding for Technology Learning Center. Our students need programs that support their learning and growth provided in STEAM camps and programs. Being able to travel and share ideas nationally will help the students to broaden their minds. Supporting these interests will help Hawaii to build opportunities for them in the future and help Hawaii to build industry in these sectors. Encouraging our students, supporting the programs and keeping Hawaii in STEAM programs will lift all of us.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Carol Sahara

### **Organization**

Department of Education - Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Technology Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:34 AM

### **Name**

Yvonne Yoro

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha BOE Members,

I am writing to oppose and provide comments on agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. I am particularly concerned with the department's request to reduce funds for learning centers and urge you to reject the request.

As a former part-time teacher who once worked with the agriculture learning center at Leilehua High School, I am deeply concerned with how the reduction of funds will impact the programs operating at the center. Jackie Freitas has created a robust learning center that serves the students and extends into the greater community of Wahiawā with engagement opportunities that invite community members to learn more about and interact with the center itself. Her learning center also provides the necessary tools and technology that give her students a competitive advantage to address the wicked problems faced by our community. These students address problems such as food insecurity and biosecurity issues, are exposed to advanced ag-tech, and are encouraged to continue research beyond what is learned in the classroom. Much of these opportunities stem from the consistent and critical funding from the DOE and a reduction of funds would not only harm the success of the students but also extend beyond and adversely impact our community.

I ask that you deeply consider this and all opposing testimonies for this agenda item and urge you to reject the DOE's request.

Mahalo,  
Yvonne

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:56 AM

### **Name**

Terence Honda

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

This is one of the best programs at the school. Taking this away from the kids and teachers is just wrong!!!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:07 AM

### **Name**

Zaden Jay Brub

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the cutting of learning center funds. Cutting funding to all learning centers would be doing a disservice to all the students who use after school programs, like Performing Arts and STEM, to make friends with similar interests, explore what they want to do in life, and to escape from reality to do something they enjoy. As a student who was in Central Theatre Arts Academy for all four years of my high school life, I can personally say with firsthand experience that the program not only helped me figure out my love for performing but also improved me as both a student and a person. The community that I made while in the program left a mark on me that still is prevalent even out of high school. I have made friends that I still talk to even when we are miles away from each other. I met students from all walks of life and of all ages that I might never have talked to if it were not for CTAA.

My class was Class of 2024, meaning during my freshman year I had to do virtual schooling. Once I finally got on campus my sophomore year, I had no friends because all my middle school friends either went to a different school or chose a different friend group to hang out with, so I was all alone. I joined CTAA on a whim during freshman year and I decided to keep in the program the next year, just to see how the program was like in person. It was the best decision I ever made. Although at first I was scared because I never knew anyone, that feeling never lasted long. Everyone in CTAA was very welcoming and kind and after my first show, I never felt lonely again. If it weren't for CTAA, I never would have found the people who understood me and loved me for who I am. The program really became a family for me, and every year I felt more loved than the last. I never would have discovered my passion for acting either. Before high school, I never had a passion for anything, and I didn't have any idea what I wanted to do with my life. I was lazy and at times apathetic towards everything I did. But after I acted in my first show at CTAA, everything changed. I found a purpose in my life. I actually did something that I loved, and I wanted to work harder to improve the work that I did. CTAA made it possible for an indifferent kid to find a reason to actually work hard at something. If all learning centers get shut down, then that would be robbing many other students from an experience that could shape their view on the world and ultimately shape their lives.

If it were not for Central Theatre Arts Academy, I would not be in the Hawai'i Conservatory of Performing Arts pursuing a career that I genuinely love, and respect. Learning Centers create not only a community, but a family that lasts for a lifetime. Many people, including me, have made many lifelong friendships while in CTAA and those friendships not only support students who are still in school, but they also support those who are out in the real world. And even if students do not go into the field of study of their learning center, they still teach skills that can transfer into other occupations. Learning Centers are integral for students and absolutely should not have their funding cut.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Roy Kimura

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern...re the budget cuts affecting Hawaii school Learning Centers. I have had a close relationship with the Nanakuli Performing Arts Center (NPAC) since directing a documentary on their performance at the Fringe Festival in Scotland. During this trip, we all sat in an audience filled with students from around America to witness the performance of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Around us, young people were laughing at the uniforms of the Scottish performers, talking loudly, basically being disrespectful to the performance and to those around them. The members of NPAC...many of whom called Nanakuli High and Intermediate their home...a school that has been unfairly rated as "the worst school in Hawaii" by Honolulu Magazine...these students focused their attention on the performance. Not one of them joined in with the unruly students around them. I could not have been more proud of this group.

This was back in 2011. Since then, many of the students who participated in NPAC have gone on to become teachers, productive members of our communities, and leaders in their own right. Many of these students came from families that had problems of their own, leading these young people to seek a community where they could be supported, where they were believed in, where they were given the tools to become responsible adults. How to be a team member. The importance of being on time, being accountable,

Eliminating the funding for these programs...laying the fiscal responsibility for the future of these children and future community leaders...will jeopardize the futures of our communities. The Learning Centers give students a home outside of their normal classrooms, outside of homes that may be going through their own socioeconomic challenges. Please reconsider. Please continue funding these important programs. The effects of your decision will be felt not just today, but through generations of Hawaii's people. Thank you.

To The State of Hawai'i Board of Education Members,

My name is Kevin Murata, Assistant Professor and Department Chair for the Cosmetology Department at Honolulu Community College. I am writing this testimony in opposition to agenda item VIII regarding the operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. This request will directly affect funding for the Learning Center Programs in various schools across the state. As an educator myself I find this disheartening and frustrating that the Board of Education will eventually remove all funding for Learning Center Programs that enrich children's lives beyond what is taught in the normal classroom. Defunding these programs will yet again show that the Board of Education does not hold true to their vision: *The State of Hawai'i Board of Education envisions an exemplary statewide system of public schools where students are engaged in an inspiring, personalized, and culturally responsive education that fosters creative and critical thinkers prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement.*

My connection to the Learning Center Programs is through my involvement with the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) at Mililani High School and the Kaimuki Performing Arts Center (KHSPAC) at Kaimuki High School. At CTAA I am the wig/hair and makeup instructor. My primary job is to teach the theatre students how to apply stage makeup and style their hair or put on wigs for their characters/roles they are performing as. And with KHSPAC, my involvement is through the Cosmetology program at Honolulu Community College. Working with both programs in the last couple of years have been extremely rewarding and a joy. These students are eager to learn, enthusiastic about their craft, and dedicated young people. Both programs are a positive outlet for students and allows the opportunity for them to express themselves in an exploratory and creative atmosphere. Through my experience I have found that many students find these programs as "safe" spaces to be themselves with no judgements, social expectations, and no creative boundaries. I have witnessed firsthand the positive outcomes of both CTAA and KHS PAC students. It is a reflection of the dedicated educators that tirelessly give up a lot of their personal and free time to impart wisdom, skills, passion, and heart of the arts to these students. These educators inspire, motivate, and foster creative and critical thinking in their students.

In high school I was a part of a performing arts program. If it were not for my involvement in that program, I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today. It taught me true dedication, perseverance, hard work, leadership, and social skills that I have taken with me and applied to my adult life and career. These are all characteristics that are still being taught by these Learning Center Programs. Taking away the funding for these Learning Center Programs will drastically affect the lives and education of the young people in Hawai'i. I ask that the Board reconsider defunding all Learning Center Programs across the state and find an alternative to the budget issue.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kevin Murata



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Tani Almont-Done

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

Date: 10.31.24

Submitted by: Jennifer Suzuki

Position: Oppose Reduction of EDN100/BQ (16770) Funding

Dear Committee Chair,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed reduction of EDN100/BQ (16770) funds within Hawaii's Department of Education budget. These cuts would directly impact essential programs, including both music education and STEM labs, that are critical for our students' development and for fostering a well-rounded educational experience.

As educators and community members, we have witnessed firsthand the unique and profound impact that both music and STEM education have on students' lives. Studies have shown that involvement in music contributes to enhanced cognitive abilities, improved language skills, and increased academic success across all areas of study. Meanwhile, STEM education provides students with the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in today's technology-driven world, preparing them for high-demand careers and future academic pursuits. Music and STEM are not mere electives; they are powerful tools for intellectual and emotional growth, acknowledged under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as core components of a comprehensive education.

The recent increase in federal funding for the arts and sciences through the House Appropriations Committee reflects a national commitment to supporting and expanding arts and STEM education. This makes it even more troubling to see reductions at the state level that would negate these federal investments and leave Hawaii's students underserved. Where is this increased funding going if not to the programs that so directly benefit our youth?

Key reasons why maintaining full funding for both music and STEM education is essential include:

**Development of Lifelong Skills:** Both music and STEM education foster skills that are beneficial not only in academics but also in students' personal and professional lives. Through music, students learn teamwork, discipline, and time management. STEM education teaches students analytical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation. These are skills that employers and colleges seek, and they are cultivated in every music and STEM classroom.

**Preparation for Future Careers:** STEM programs introduce students to fields like engineering, coding, and the sciences, equipping them with the foundational skills for high-demand jobs in our increasingly technology-driven economy. Limiting funding for STEM will reduce students' exposure to these fields, creating an opportunity gap and diminishing the career prospects of Hawaii's future workforce.

**Support for Mental Health and Well-Being:** In a time of rising mental health concerns among youth, music offers an invaluable outlet for self-expression and emotional processing, while STEM activities engage students' curiosity and provide a sense of accomplishment through hands-on learning. Both areas have been shown to reduce anxiety, build resilience, and foster a sense of belonging and achievement.

**Promotion of Cultural Understanding and Community Connection:** Music education exposes students to diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives. In Hawaii, with our rich cultural heritage, music education can help students connect with their own backgrounds while appreciating the cultures of others, fostering inclusivity and respect. STEM education, similarly, encourages collaboration, community-based problem solving, and an appreciation for how science and technology can solve real-world issues. By investing in both music and STEM education, we are investing in community cohesion, cultural awareness, and our future problem-solvers.

Reducing funding for these programs would limit our students' access to these critical benefits, disproportionately affecting those from lower-income backgrounds who may not have other avenues for musical engagement or access to advanced STEM labs and resources. Schools are often the only places where many students have access to musical instruments, instruction, laboratory equipment, and cutting-edge technology, which would become out of reach if funding is diminished.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to protect EDN100/BQ (16770) funding for both music and STEM education. This funding ensures that Hawaii's students can receive a well-rounded, meaningful education that prepares them not only for academic success but also for life. Let us not deprive our keiki of the chance to discover their potential, build essential life skills, and contribute positively to our communities.

Thank you for considering the far-reaching impacts of music and STEM education and for supporting the programs that uplift our students.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Suzuki

Media teacher

After School Coordinator

Maui Waena Intermediate School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Tiffany Maze

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### Name

Arvin Niro

### Organization

Kapolei High School FIRST Robotics

### Position/Title

Mechanical Engineer / FIRST Robotics Engineering Mentor

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Arvin Niro and I am writing to you in regards to agenda item VIII, the Department of Educations operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the proposed removal of funding for state Learning Centers.

I am a Mechanical Engineer at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, a proud alumni and lead mentor of the Kapolei High School FIRST Robotics team. I know firsthand just how valuable learning centers contribute to the ongoing success of the students who partake in them and the proposed defunding of learning centers would have a significant impact on the education quality and success of our students.

The Kapolei robotics program began in 2008 with just a handful of students, many of whom were part of the Learning Center for Applied Technology (LCAT) academy. As the only sophomore on the team at the time, and it being our rookie year, we had no idea where to begin. I was never good at sports, but I was always interested in technology and how things worked and robotics was the perfect fit for me. Throughout the season, we learned how to design and build a robot to compete in the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) where we quickly learned new skills in fabrication, mechanical design and testing, as well as problem solving, communication and team building skills. I didn't have any idea on what I wanted to do after high school, but by my senior year, and 3 years of competing in FIRST, I decided to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

During my college career, I remained active with the Kapolei robotics team, returning each year to mentor new students that enrolled into the team, passing on knowledge and skills I've acquired over the years. With each passing year, I've witnessed students grow and go on to become successful in multiple STEM related fields, many of whom are now in leadership and mentorship positions at their respective companies. Kapolei has had a growing increase in alumni mentors returning, with as much as 25 active mentors volunteering during the robotics season, 90% of whom are engineers and trades personnel at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. Their ongoing commitment, dedication and volunteering efforts to ensure these students receive the best education is deeply rooted in the programs goal of "offering all students the chance to develop essential skills for careers in Engineering, STEM fields, trades, or the military by creating an engaging and safe learning environment that fosters hands-on experience and collaboration."

As a previous student of a learning center, I strongly urge you to reconsider and revise your proposed budget request.

11/01/2024

Removal and defunding of learning centers across the state would have a detrimental impact on the education quality of students, undermining the strategic plan of “preparing our students to be globally competitive and locally committed” and disregarding Governor Green’s focus on “improving opportunities for educational equity [and] improving government responsiveness and transparency”.

Thank you for your time in regards to this issue and I encourage you to do the right thing to ensure Hawaii’s keiki receive the proper education they deserve.

Aloha,  
Arvin Niro

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Jennifer Sugahara

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Matthew Fisher

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

As an AP Environmental Science teacher, I must express my strong opposition to the proposed budget reallocation that would cut funding to all Learning Centers. This decision threatens not only our curriculum but also the exceptional opportunities for hands-on learning, environmental stewardship, and real-world impact that the Learning Center provides.

The Agriculture Learning Center at Campbell High School, for example, is not just a supplementary resource; it is an essential classroom for my students. Within its spaces, students engage in experiments they cannot replicate in a traditional classroom, applying ecological principles to living systems and directly observing the impacts of sustainable practices. This level of experiential learning deepens their understanding, encouraging critical thinking and inspiring future environmental leaders.

In addition to supporting academic growth, the Learning Center is an invaluable community resource, bridging the gap between school and community service. My students regularly engage in projects that benefit our local environment—planting native species, restoring habitats, and learning sustainable agricultural techniques. Through these efforts, they witness the tangible effects of their work on our ecosystem, instilling a profound sense of responsibility and agency to address environmental challenges.

The islands that we love face growing challenges due to global pressures and climate change. I can think of no better way to spend funds than to prepare our students for this eventuality. Eliminating funding to this vital program would be a disservice not only to our students but to our community. I strongly urge you to reconsider this proposal and recognize the value that the Learning Centers brings to education, community health, and the environment we all share.

Thank you for your careful consideration,  
Matthew Fisher  
Campbell High School



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:56 AM

### **Name**

Ava Mistry

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Art and STEM programs are vital for the development of well rounded children. I graduated from Kalaheo High School in 2023, and I witnessed first hand how students from my school and surrounding schools benefited from the opportunities these programs offered. These same programs are at risk of being shut down entirely if this bill passes. This budget plan proposed by the Hawaii Department of Education will fail the very people it was designed to serve. The programs that will have funding cut off by the DOE if this passes are the very same programs that make kids feel safe and at home while at school. They build community and broaden the educational experiences for students every single day. Many of these programs motivate students to do well in school. These programs also serve as tools to separate the kids in them from the rest of the crowd. Colleges look for students with backgrounds in STEAM, because it shows that those students applied themselves in their communities beyond the traditional classes. Cutting off funding for these programs endangers the futures of students.

I hope that the Hawaii Department of Education shows compassion, and does not move forward with this budget plan. As a former student with friends and family who are still attending Hawaii public schools, I am so disappointed in the lack of support from the DOE. Self expression within STEAM programs is more than an extra curricular. These programs are a blessing filled with love from students and staff. Protecting STEAM programs is protecting students.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### Name

Elijah Lara

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Elijah Lara, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The learning centers have helped me solve an issue, like Robotics because my friend is in robotics and he helped me when I had an issue similar to what he had in robotics. The learning centers are very useful to our school and students, I think we should continue to do this.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elijah Lara

+ 1 (808-978-2144)

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:08 AM

### **Name**

Kaila Kutaka

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a student at MHS I am not apart of the learning centers. However I have been to plays held by CTAA and know many people in the learning centers at my school. These people found their home and their second family from these centers. I've seen people bloom and grow from being in a place where they could connect with others and feel safe doing so. It is so important to value the learning centers and all they've done for students at participating schools. I don't think it right to cut funding on their centers, they are too important and too valuable for that.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Laurie Tanoura

### Organization

TAG - The Actors' Group

### Position/Title

Production/Managing Director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

11/01/2024

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Mahalo for your interest in TAG - the Actors' Group

Laurie Tanoura

808-741-4699

Production/Managing Director

Treasurer

TAG-The Actors' Group

The Brad Powell Theatre

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 101

Honolulu, HI 96817

Information & Reservations: [tagbradpowelltheatre@gmail.com](mailto:tagbradpowelltheatre@gmail.com)

Reservations Phone Number: 808-722-6941

Website: <https://www.taghawaii.net/>

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:56 AM

### **Name**

Leilani Freitas

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the music and health learning centers within the Hawaii Department of Education. These programs play a crucial role in fostering creativity, well-being, and overall academic success among students.

As a parent of a former high school band student, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that music education has had on my child. The band not only provided a creative outlet but also taught essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. As a direct result of her experience in high school band, my daughter received a music scholarship and is currently thriving as a member of a concert band in college. This achievement has opened doors for her, enriching her educational experience and personal growth.

Eliminating these vital programs would not only hinder the artistic and personal development of students but also diminish the diverse educational experiences that help prepare them for a successful future.

I urge you to prioritize the preservation of our music and health learning centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Joanne Friestad

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:08 AM

### **Name**

Lisa Shirom

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha esteemed decision-makers,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed funding cuts to our island's learning centers, including the robotics programs. These programs go beyond academics; they provide pathways for our keiki (children) to envision a future filled with opportunity right here in Hawai'i.

Our learning centers and robotics initiatives don't just teach technical skills. They inspire creativity, build confidence, and help students discover their potential within their communities. I have seen firsthand how these programs cultivate a sense of pride, belonging, and purpose. They help our youth find passions that can lead to meaningful careers here in Hawai'i.

Eliminating funding for these programs risks limiting not only our children's education but also the future of our islands. I urge you to consider the lasting impact these programs have on preparing our keiki to be skilled, connected, and invested in the place they call home.

Mahalo for your consideration



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Cyion Anguay

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Cyion Anguay, and I'm a Sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Cyion, Anguay

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Kapuni Patcho

### **Organization**

RADFORD HIGH SCHOOL

### **Position/Title**

TEACHER

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Andrew Alvarado

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Andrew Alvarado, and I'm a Sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Me and my friend went to a robotics fair where we saw the kids and students code and build the robots, and I also met someone else new there and I saw that they work very hard and it seems like these learning centers help and encourage these students a lot and it can bring them to great places because I saw how much skill they have

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Alvarado

11/01/2024

808-679-9268

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Zachary Yamazaki

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Zachary Yamazaki, and I'm a Sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The Learning Centers program allowed me to join clubs such as the FIRST Robotics team. This experience allowed me to enhance my skills and gain work experience. I spent many hours after school working with my teammates and coaches while being able to have fun and learn. Overall, this experience allowed me to experience my passions and meet new people with similar interests.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

11/01/2024

Zachary Yamazaki  
2401500079@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Marco Gonzales

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a student of Castle High School in the Arts pathway, I strongly oppose the decision to cut all funding from Learning Centers in the budget for next year. This is because the decision will end up with many talented people in important positions in entertainment, artistry, and media being severely harmed as their educational chances will be ended due to a lack of funding. I urge this meeting to help the students of Hawaii keep their learning centers such as KHSPAC, Castle Performing Arts Center Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center for the sake of their educations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Brandon Shimazu

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Oppose

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Brandon Shimazu, and I'm a senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I have a few friends who I know have been involved with the Central Theatre Arts Academy, and I have seen how much of a community that they have built. They were involved in backstage production, and I have seen how much time they've spent putting work in to make sure that their plays were good. I've seen a few plays, and I've seen how not just my friends, but how everyone else involved is extremely passionate about Theatre.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brandon Shimazu

2401301152@k12.hi.us



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

Masina DeCastro

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,  
I am a concerned parent, alumnus, and supporter of the Kahuku High and Intermediate music and health learning center. I am writing to oppose the DOE's choice to phase out our program's funding. The children and community of the North Shore has benefited from the great learning opportunities afforded by the choral and band programs offered through the learning center. I am a 2nd generation Kahuku band alumni and my child is now a third generation band member.  
Being in Kahuku's show choir, Vocal Motion, was a highlight of my high school career. It offered me leadership opportunities and the chance to learn hard work and skills I may not have been able to anywhere else. I can personally testify that the Music Learning Center helps students progress academically and improve their ability to succeed in future educational endeavors.

Mahalo,  
Masina DeCastro, LCSW



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Hale o nā Luna Makaʻāinana*

STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

October 30, 2024

Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

RE: Reduction of Funding to the Learning Centers

Aloha e Executive Director Poe, Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Arakaki and Board Members:

We are writing in strong opposition to the reduction of the funding to the Learning Centers, which affects Nānākuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center (NPAC).

The planning and design of a Performing Arts Center at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School has been in the works for a number of years, and funds were finally allocated to the begin the project with the Theatre Workshop finally scheduled to be built. This allows NPAC to hold performances and rehearsals in the Theatre Workshop.

The intent of the Board of Education to cut the funds for Learning Centers which includes NPAC, is a detriment not only to the school, but to the entire community. NPAC is open not only to students of Nānākuli High and Intermediate School, but also all of the schools on the Westside of Oʻahu. NPAC is opened to all students in the schools along the Westside of Oʻahu. This gives the youth in the community an outlet to express themselves creatively, occupies their free time and channels them to an activity which is beneficial to everyone.

Although the reduction in funding to the Learning Centers affects more than just the Westside schools, the Westside schools are oftentimes the ones first cut and the last ones restored.

As former and present lawmakers of the Westside of Oʻahu, we are asking you to reconsider the reduction of funding to the Learning Centers, and to allow the Learning Centers to retain their funding in full. The Learning Centers for all schools provide a vital service to all students and provides a constructive use of free time, and keeps them out of trouble. In light of the violence occurring in the communities, the Learning Centers provide a safe venue for the youth and an opportunity to keep occupied in constructive activities and away from potentially dangerous situations.

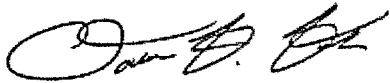
**Representative Darius K. Kila**

House District 44—Honokai Hale, Nānākuli, Maʻili  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 322 / Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-9480 / Fax: (808) 586-9485 / Email: RepKila@capitol.hawaii.gov

Board of Education  
RE: Reduction of Funding to the Learning Centers  
October 30, 2023  
Page Two

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

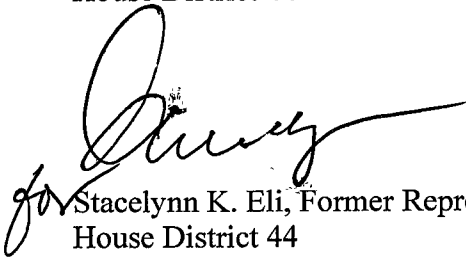
Very truly yours,



Darius K. Kila, Representative  
House District 44



Andria Tupola, Councilmember  
District 1



for Stacelynn K. Eli, Former Representative  
House District 44

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Reo Yamasaki

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Reo Yamasaki, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The Learning Center program has helped out my friend a lot, especially by getting him into a FIRST Robotics team. By getting into this robotics team, he was able to learn and gain many experiences for engineering and how to work in teams while communicating well. Overall, this program allowed him to pursue his passion.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Reo Yamasaki

11/01/2024

2411500317@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Donna Acorda

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I am in opposition of Agenda item: Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. It highly affects the Robotics (STEM) program at Waialua High & Intermediate School, which is a very beneficial program to the students who attend the school.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Braeley Elliott

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Braeley Elliott, and I'm a 10th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefited/ currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

My friend was in the robotics team for the first time and had spent many hours after school working with his teammates and coaches while being able to have fun and learn. His experience allowed him to experience his passions and meet new people with similar interests.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Braelley Elliott

11/01/2024

2211502002@k12.hi.us



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Mina Poirier

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Mina Poirier, and I'm a senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mina Poirier

2421301217@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

kris hall

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

These kids deserve band choir and art. These are what make us human . Not all kids are into athletics. They need outlets and something to keep them engaged in learning, the arts provide this for them. Cutting funding will hurt the you th and our community.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Destin Ryan

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Destin Ryan, and I'm a Junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Learning Centers have personally helped me improve in the fields I want so that's why I think they have a huge impact and are very effective.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Destin Ryan

Phone Number: 808-679-1860

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

Gloriana Flores

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Good morning,

I am writing in regards to the finding that will be cut for the Leilehua Agricultural Department. It's absurd to even think about not funding this educational department. My nephew Aaron Quitigua Flores attended that class and had gone to Stanford University and is now a to Engineer. He devoted himself to FFA class and talked highly of his teachers and staff. Why would you give them less or no funding and more stress for the future of our children. Do they take it out of their own pockets with such High cost of living here in hawaii? Come on and think of the children and the future. I oppose the funding loss.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Lokahi Cooper

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Lokahi Cooper, and I'm a 10th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

I have a friend named Ethan who rarely goes to the activities my friend group plans because he's dedicated to doing and teaching robotics. Everytime we ask him about robotics he responds with pride and joy with all the new people and new things he's learned.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lokahi Cooper

2121201173@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Jazarah Ashlyn Estoesta

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Kevin Cullen

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose/Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kevin Cullen, and I'm a Senior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who is currently benefiting immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I personally know a few friends that are in Robotics programs at Mililani High. I've seen firsthand how passionate they are about their work, there have been countless times where they would discuss with me and show me stuff relating to Robotics. Their drive to do the best in STEM programs have inspired me to possibly chase some similar programs as them. And even if I didn't want to do any STEM related programs, their drive would have still motivated me to do the best in any career path I would like to pursue.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.



11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Kevin Cullen  
2421300970@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Kylee Combs

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Kaili Watanabe

### Organization

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### Position/Title

Oppose

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kaili Watanabe, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted / currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

The Learning Center program has and will provide me and my peers with invaluable lessons and experience throughout our high school years. This program has taught me essential study skills, test taking strategies, communication within a team, and complex thinking skills that will definitely support me as a computer science major in college and in a working environment. I believe if the DOE continues to fund this program it will give me support/advantage against other competitors on the mainland.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Kaili Watanabe  
2601500273@k12.hi.us

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Peyton Okunami

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Peyton Okunami, and I'm an 11th grader at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited and currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Through funding of the Science Fair, I was able to experience a once-in-a-lifetime research opportunity. A highlight for me, during the state science fair, included making new friends, and collaborating with like-minded peers. It greatly expanded my view on research and I believe that many others that will come after me, through these learning centers, will be able to do the same. These real life experiences have greatly improved my ability to solve problems and attempt to positively impact my community. Without funding towards these learning centers, these experiences will never be the same.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Peyton Okunami

11/01/2024

Email: 2411400201@k12.hi.us

Phone: (808)517-1788

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Maria Draper

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Our schools need the support so they can help the next generation. Then our student's can be productive citizens that will contribute to Hawaii's economy. The money we put into education now will make us spend less in the future. Our schools need funding to educate the next generation.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:17 AM

### **Name**

Bowen Cassel

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As an alum of one of the learning centers, I want to emphasize how critical these centers are and why I strongly oppose this cut in funding.

These centers are lifelines for students like me who aspire to opportunities that would otherwise seem out of reach. It was through these centers that I discovered opportunities I never imagined possible, including a full-ride scholarship to my dream college that transformed my life. This achievement would have been out of reach without the guidance, support, and resources provided by the learning center.

By eliminating these centers, you are dismantling the highpoint of Hawaii's education system. These centers are the bridge between our local students and a world of opportunities. For many, they are the key to becoming both locally and globally competitive in a world that demands more skills and knowledge than ever before. I know this because I was that student, and without the learning center, I would not be where I am today.

I am deeply disappointed that this proposal is even being considered. We should be expanding opportunities for Hawaii's youth, not taking them away. I urge you to reconsider this decision and keep these vital resources available for future generations. I strongly oppose these funding cuts, and I hope you will do what is right for the students of Hawaii.

Sincerely, Bowen



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Madison Knight

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage. Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration. Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Kendon Albers

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

John Paul Bucalo

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Matt LoPresti

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I already submitted written testimony in opposition to defunding the Learning Centers, however, I need to offer my verbal testimony virtually instead of in person. Please change my oral testimony to virtual instead of in person so that I don't get anyone else sick and I am coming down with a cold. Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

Empress Asuega

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

With all the negative influences going on around our youth, to try to cut funds that support programs to help our youth stay out of trouble is insane and whoever decided to come up with this idea should be ashamed of themselves. You don't care for our keiki and it shows! Wicked minded is what you are, no Aloha is what you don't have, Haole mentality is what you have! No soul! We rebuke you all and pray you all suffer for trying to go against our keiki o ka aina. I oppose against this wicked Agenda!

Representative of the Most High

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Ezra Kent

### **Organization**

Radford Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### Name

Malia Brown

### Organization

Mililani High School

### Position/Title

College & Career Counselor

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget. This is coming from a educator and parental perspective.

As an educator ,these programs are vital to the well rounded education our students receive here at Mililani High School, beyond reading and mathematical skills. Our teachers and staff have done a phenomenal job of not only working with high schools students for the respective programs, but also building lifelong learners within our community. The commitment of afterschool hours and activities has even furthered the resilience and social emotional health of students who have made connections in these programs and gives students a safe space. These programs have incorporated participation from the middle and elementary levels where learners can build skills and get excited at a younger age to foster higher level skills in their secondary experience.

As a parent, I am grateful for experiences my son has benefitted from . He has participated in the STEM camps offered to feeder elementary schools which has promoted his enthusiasm for science, which was virtually non-existent before attending the program. As a family, we have also taken in numerous plays such as "Legally Blonde", "Little Mermaid", "Beauty and the Beast", and "Hairspray", which have fostered healthy family conversations and an interest for my kids that goes beyond video games.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Eliminating funding for this program is a completed detriment to high school programs. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

11/01/2024

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

James Manning

### **Organization**

Kahuku High and Intermediate School Music Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Father of Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining funding for the Kahuku High and Intermediate School Music Learning Center. Music has been a vital part of our family for generations, and we feel deeply connected to the opportunities it provides for our community.

Our daughter, Josie, is an 8th grader who plays the trumpet in the band. She is following a family tradition of musical involvement, as her mother, Julie, plays the clarinet, and her grandfather dedicated his career to teaching band and inspiring many students through music. Seeing Josie develop her skills and passion in such a supportive environment brings us immense pride and joy.

The Music Learning Center provides an irreplaceable space for students like Josie to explore their talents, learn discipline, and connect with others. These programs not only nurture individual students but also enrich the broader community, preserving a legacy of arts education in Hawaii.

I respectfully urge you to support the continuation of funding for the Music Learning Center. Your support will ensure that future generations of students can experience the same invaluable musical education and community enrichment that has greatly benefited our family and countless others.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,

James Manning

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:23 AM

### **Name**

Sylvia Consillio

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Account Clerk

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage. There is nowhere else in the world that can teach Hawaiian cultural traditions to future generations than here in Hawaii. Without this program's assistance & support the knowledge and skills will be lost.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

I believe that we, as an island state, should encourage students to further their knowledge of agricultural practices and venture into that workforce which is vital to our food supply as we head towards food independence.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

Thank you,  
Sylvia Consillio  
Account Clerk  
Radford High School

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Cody Kurakake

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Cody Kurakake , and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High school. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Cody Kurakake

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Theresa Schubert

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student Activities Coordinator, Student Government Advisor & Leadership Training teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,  
As a 29-year public high school teacher, and 21-years as SAC, I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage. With Radford being a unique high school in Hawai'i due to the transient nature of our demographic, this learning center is imperative to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn about our island culture, as they could become ambassadors of our state when they leave to continue their family relocations and deployments.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Satoe Guzman

### **Organization**

Waialua robotics

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose to item VIII. Please do not take away the possibility of our children's future carrier. Without the learning center, it makes it extremely hard if not impossible for the students to pursue their special interest that could lead to a major part of their future carriers which may make a difference in the world!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:23 AM

### **Name**

Gabrielle Igarta

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Decreasing funding for critical programs to support the growth and learning of our students is a shameful proposal. These performing arts, agriculture, business, STEAM, and other programs provide a space for students who may not otherwise engage with traditional academic curricula to explore options and build skills to prepare them for the workforce. Moreover, the Brookings article "New evidence of benefits of arts education" published in 2019, there is a lack of data collection by school systems that would accurately assess both access/participation in arts education and how arts education benefits outside test scores, even though national surveys show that the general public agreed that arts programs are beneficial for a well-rounded education. So, before making plans to decrease funding for these programs, it would be beneficial to pause and collect such data for Hawaii's schools before coming to conclusions.

As a student who attended the World Languages program at Moanalua High School, I personally benefitted from what I learned because I was able to travel to Japan, work with Japanese companies, and converse with my Japanese coworkers with confidence. Without these experiences, I would not have been able to take the opportunities I did to build connections on both a personal and professional level. Though a personal anecdote, my experience is but one out of thousands here in Hawaii.

I would hope our policymakers recognize the value of these programs beyond inside the classroom. Solutions to these problems are not easy, but to begin by foreclosing opportunities for our students to grow and learn only ensures that they will not lead full and enriching lives as adults in civil society.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Benjamin Jordan

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I am writing this testimony to request continued support of Learning Center Funding at Kahuku High and Intermediate School. I have had 3 children graduate from KHIS, with a 4th currently a junior. They have ALL benefitted from the Kahuku Music Learning Center. I am very grateful for this. My daughter, that is currently a student, has been able to improve her education and her musical talents in ways that she would not have been able to in any other way. Private lessons are unaffordable for many, if qualified teachers are even available - usually they are not in our area. From my perspective, the funds have been used wisely and with care. As a voter and taxpayer, I support the program, and not just for KHIS. There are so many limited learning opportunities for students across the island, that having this funding is really important for all of our students.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Kaimana Halemano

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kaimana Halemano, and I'm a Sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

Back at my elementary school (Mililani Waena Elementary School), I've had friends who participated in STEM and Robotics activities, and it seemed to be something that they really enjoyed. I still know a few people from Waena Elementary that participate in Robotics and tech related programs to this day, simply because they were given the opportunity at a young age and realized it's something they want to do. Without these learning centers being funded, I feel that the people I knew from before wouldn't be able to continue doing what they love today at Mililani High School, whether it be Robotics, the Science Fair, or other related programs. There's even a chance that kids today won't be able to pursue their passion and dreams without the opportunities that these learning centers provide.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kaimana Halemano



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Kainalu Riley

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Oppose

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kainalu Riley, and I'm a Grade 10 student at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who's friends are currently benefiting immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

A few friends of mine are currently in robotics and they always stay after school to do whatever they do in robotics. They really seem to be enjoying it and it's surprising how much they know about robotics and software. It takes up most of their day but when I see them they are always joyous and talking about it. I've also seen some acquaintances doing theater and they look like they really enjoy it and it looks like lots of fun. It even looks like these experiences will help them get into good colleges.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Kainalu Riley

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Adrian B

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Ethan Dabu

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Ethan Dabu, and I'm a 10th grade student at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited, will benefit and have several friends that have benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

I have previously been in Robotics in the past, and without this program, I would have never developed the interest for electronics. I also am currently preparing my Science Fair project, with the possibility to qualify for the STEM Capstone certificate. This certificate can stand out to colleges and future job employers, improving my future education, and even effect my success in life in general. Without STEM Capstone, others may never get the opportunity to stand out in resumes, even making it seem like that individual is "just another application". To add on, many of my friends are involved in theater, and have a deep passion for it. They spend countless hours working to practice and coordinate their plays, having fun and making life long memories. They have dressed up before school just to prepare for theater, and you can see their happiness.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please

11/01/2024

ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ethan Dabu

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:11 AM

### **Name**

Jaelynn Agraan

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Members of the Board,

I am a proud alumnus of Roosevelt High School and now attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I am writing to testify against the budget cuts being proposed for the learning centers of Hawaii because of their importance in educating and mobilizing the youth of Hawaii.

During my time in high school, I engaged with the STEAM programs that allowed me to explore technology and inspired me to pursue what I do today. The skills that I learned through my time at Roosevelt ultimately inspired what I study today, introduced me to things I hope to integrate into my future career, and brought me to MIT. Beyond the STEAM programs, the arts that are funded through these learning centers are just as valuable to the communities of the other schools affected by this budget decision. I understand, personally, how these art programs make school worth going for. The arts were an integral part of my education and taught many of us valuable skills of belonging, responsibility, pride, and hard work--skills I utilize every day.

It would be a disappointment to see the end of these programs that have allowed me to realize success in my career. I would hate to see these opportunities taken away from so many current and future students of Hawaii.

I appreciate your consideration,  
Jaelynn Agraan

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

Louis Perroy

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The Waiakea Technology Learning has an outsized impact on the local community, supporting hundreds of kids each year through our robotics team as well as our summer programs. Defunding this program would directly hurt these kids, and significantly damage stem education on this island.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Xatrik Bera

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I have been a part of the Technology Learning Center for only one year, but even I can see the impact. Before I joined TLC I had been programming for about six years, I am not very socially adept and the TLC connected me to like-minded people. This program and the community around it have helped me immeasurably. Please do not shut the TLC down.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:50 AM

### **Name**

Matthew Brandt

### **Organization**

Kahuku High and Intermediate School

### **Position/Title**

Toolmaker Planner/Estimator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The band and choir programs have been such a benefit to myself, my wife, my friends, and all 3 of my children. Band has taught my family and I many things:

Discipline: Most band directors need to be strict, set boundaries and have clear expectations. Which results in very good, well-behaved kids.

Learning to work as a group: Even if you don't like someone, you need to work together as you would in society to reach a common goal.

Camaraderie: Many relationships become lifelong friendships.

Being accountable to each other: You need to show up and put in the work. It keeps the kids accountable and teaches them personal responsibility.

Feeling of accomplishment: When the kids work hard and perform well, you can see the confidence in their faces and positivity in the air.

There are many other benefits that I can't think of at the moment. The performing arts are so important, as important as the core classes and sports. Us as parents and alumni try to help as much as we can, but losing our Learning Center funding will make it more difficult to give our kids the best experience possible. Please consider supporting the kids and keeping the special distinction. Mahalo!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### **Name**

Meri Okano

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

School-Community Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Sadie Hamamoto

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Sadie Hamamoto, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefitted immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

When I participated in FIRST Robotics, I was instantly inspired to pursue a tech career. The competition pushes students to go through tons trial and error, develop coding skills, and utilize teamwork in order to succeed. It requires critical thinking to devise specific solutions to real world problems. I had to memorize scripts and speak to professional teachers and judges about my team's ideas. The FIRST Robotics program improved my social and technological abilities immensely. I also had the chance to bond and establish long-term relationships with my peers. Today, I'm proud to strive towards working a job relating to Cybersecurity. I am currently attending programming and networking classes which I enjoy very much. If the Robotics club was not available, my life would not be the same. Not only that, but I know numerous friends that were considering participating in FIRST Robotics as well. Based on my experience, their lives could also be changed for the better.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please

11/01/2024

ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sadie Hamamoto

arriverderci.rerorero@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Jett Jarrett

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Distinguished Members of the BOE,

I am writing in regard to agenda item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 and the reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that caters to the specific needs and interests of our students. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities. The loss of funding would have a profound impact on our students and greatly decrease all the advantages an LC offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry standard equipment and/or software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry recognized certifications, compete at the national level, etc. In order to ensure our students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" for their future we need to provide them with the tools they'll need to succeed.

As a student of the Academy of Media and Design at Kalaheo, through this program, I have been able to participate in both state and national competitions.

I have learned valuable skills such as leadership and working with a team. In a recent Hawaii-based competition our group created a video about our island's spirit of Aloha and learned about creating a news broadcast that followed TV standards. These experiences have prepared me to be "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" I urge you to reconsider this decision and continue to invest in our students. The Learning Center program is an investment that deserves your full support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Thais Canfil

### **Organization**

Parent - Student at Waialua High & Intermediate School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I'm a parent of a robotics student in 9th grade at Waialua High School. The robotics program has an important impact on my son's learning experience and I'm very worried about this budget situation and the possible consequences for current and future students attending robotics classes and after school classes. The robotics program has helped my son learn STEM and has provided him skills for innovation and creation. My son and many other students has become more knowledgeable and well-adjusted, and prepare for future college opportunities and STEM work related activities. The program is also very important for the State as a whole because increases the learning process of local students and their capabilities to improve the quality of education and life for local families. Education is NEVER a waste of money. By capacitating students with learning tools, there is always a pay back to the future for the community as a whole.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### **Name**

Trina Aquino

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Counselor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:40 AM

### **Name**

Shannon Haney

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I support keeping the Learning Center Funding. My son and daughter have benefited from the Kahuku Music and Health Learning Center. My daughter gained great confidence with choir and it transformed her. She now volunteers for community activities and has a great network of peers and role models. My son plays the trombone in band and has met new friends and love sharing his gift of music with family and friends. Music education is essential to our students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Band and choir not only teach the technical skills of music but also foster creativity, discipline, teamwork, and a sense of belonging. These programs are unique in how they bring students together, helping them build confidence and perseverance—qualities that benefit them far beyond the music room. By investing in band and choir, we're investing in well-rounded students who excel in and out of the classroom. Maintaining funding for these programs ensures that our students have access to the full spectrum of education that enriches their lives and prepares them for future success. Let's continue to support and prioritize the arts as a vital part of our school community.





## STEAM Learning Center for Kalāheo High School

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding agenda item VIII, the Department of Education's operating budget request for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, and the planned reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LC).

The Kalāheo High School Academy of Media & Design LC offers unique and specialized opportunities that cater to our students' specific needs and interests. It provides them with specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry-standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college and career opportunities.

A loss of funding would have a profound and negative impact on Kalāheo High School students and would greatly decrease the advantages that the Learning Center offers them. LC funding allows students to utilize industry-standard equipment and software, visit colleges and businesses, earn industry-recognized certifications, and compete at the national level. We need more support to help and encourage our students, not less.

In order to ensure that local students are "Globally Competitive and Locally Committed" in their futures, we need to provide them with the tools they will need to succeed. This Learning Center helps to provide such tools and opportunities.

A decrease in funding for learning centers at Kalaheo High School will have a large negative effect on our schools social and emotional learning. The Learning Centers don't only help students commit to the motto of globally competitive, locally committed but it also provides students with a strong sense of belonging. I encourage you to look at the Learning Center as more of a Learning Community. The funds that go into our Learning Community help students create stronger pilina with each other, stronger connections. This has had a great impact on our SEL scores in Panorama. A loss in funding would leave us without programs that the students are strongly vested in. These students would now have a loss of community, a loss of interaction with their peers and with teachers that they trust.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your decision and continue to invest in our students. The STEAM Learning Center at Kalāheo High School is an investment that deserves your continued full support.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and support.

Sincerely,

Kanoelehua Nakata

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:40 AM

### **Name**

Jessica Newcom

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

It has come to my attention that Leilehua High School's agricultural department will be affected by budget cuts.

My classmate taught agriculture on Maui because of what he learned in high school.

Students and faculty used to enjoy the produce grown by students (future farmers).

We bought Thanksgiving turkey prepared by students (future cooks or chefs)

Instead of cutting monies at school level, cut out bonuses (if applicable) and have top 10% of DOE executives and administrators take a pay cut until our schools standards are raised.

Cutting programs are hurting our students and our future while administrators keep getting more money.

We should be teaching agriculture as well as finance to better prepare our students to be Hawai'i self-sustaining future.

Thank you for your time and please do right by our students, our future.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### **Name**

Jessica Kato

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Board of Education:

I strongly oppose the proposed budget cuts to Learning Centers. As a professional development provider supporting Project Based Learning implementation in K-12 schools, I've witnessed firsthand the invaluable impact these centers have on student learning.

Learning Centers offer unique, hands-on experiences that go beyond traditional classroom settings. They provide authentic learning opportunities, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

The Learning Center at Campbell High School exemplifies this. Its dedicated teacher not only serves high school students but also extends her expertise to support students across the state. This collaboration enriches learning experiences for students of all ages.

Cutting funding for Learning Centers would be a significant setback for our students' education. I urge you to reconsider and prioritize these vital resources as they align with the values and outcomes present in the Strategic Plan.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:40 AM

### **Name**

Linda Reece

### **Organization**

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

We have benefited greatly from the music programs offered at Kahuku High & Intermediate School. Living on the north shore of Oahu, we are very limited to what is available locally for our children to give them exposure to music. The Band and Choir programs at Kahuku High & Intermediate are essential to allow our children opportunities for growth and development. My oldest son is graduating this year and has participated in Band and Choir each year at Kahuku. These have greatly shaped his life in many ways. I have seen his confidence grow, as well as his focus, motivation, and love of music. There is a huge benefit to children being given opportunities to develop their understanding and skills in music, and Kahuku's music programs are essential. My daughter is just beginning, in 7th grade this year, to participate in choir and band. She comes home excited to tell me when she got her instrument and how she is learning to play and sing. Again, even in the short few months she has been involved in music at KHIS, I see the incredible growth she is experiencing. These experiences are necessary for growth and development of our children, and are greatly needed in our community. I strongly support any funding and focus from DOE to perpetuate the music programs at KHIS. Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Jorin Young

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Department of Education,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to after-school learning center programs, especially those involving the performing arts programs. These programs are not just extracurricular activities; they are vital components of our children's education and personal development.

Performing arts programs foster creativity, confidence, and teamwork. They provide a safe space for students to express themselves and explore their identities. For many young people, these programs are a sanctuary where they can find their voices and connect with others who share their passions. These programs create a sense of community and self worth.

Research consistently shows that involvement in the arts enhances academic performance. Students engaged in performing arts are often more successful in other subjects, as they develop critical thinking skills, discipline, and a strong work ethic. By cutting funding to these programs, we risk depriving our children of essential skills that extend far beyond the stage.

Moreover, after-school performing arts programs are particularly important for underserved communities. They offer opportunities that many students would not otherwise have access to, helping to bridge the gap in educational equity. Removing funding from these programs disproportionately impacts those who rely on them for personal and professional growth and creates a larger gap between the accessibility of learning programs between private and public schools.

The value of the arts in education cannot be overstated. I urge you to reconsider these proposed budget cuts and prioritize the continuation of after-school learning programs. Our children deserve a well-rounded education that includes the transformative power of the arts, media, STEAM, agriculture and so much more.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Reid Polly

### **Organization**

Kahuku Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose. The Music learning Center designation and its funding is vital to the success of students in its programs. All four of my children have participated in the music programs at Kahuku High School and 2 in the medical side. The program resources purchased using learning center funds helped to instill personal confidence, leadership/management skills, responsibility, musical skills in all its varieties, and flexibility in working with groups of people. Of course money is a major part of the programs offered, teachers who implement these programs are also key. Compensation /Reimbursement for items related to program success that don't qualify in regular DOE budgets can come from learning center funds instead of personal funds. Keep the learning centers status and funding, they create life long learners not just in music but in other aspects of life. Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Jayme Pisciotto

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I'm Jayme Pisciotto, an alumni of Castle High School, and I strongly oppose cutting funding for learning centers in Hawaii's public schools. These programs are essential to creating an engaging environments for students, allow them to explore different interests, and help foster soft skills that will help them in future careers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:52 AM

### **Name**

Nicholas Canfil

### **Organization**

Student at Waialua High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a student in 9th grade at Waialua High School and currently attending the robotics program since last school year. This program gives a lot of opportunities to students like me for future college and work. If the robotics program were to have less funding, it would affect the program greatly and affect directly my ability to learn. By decreasing the funds will impact the robotics program and the great achievements that has done for the past 25 years. Please keep our program running for our small community in Waialua and support our students to do great things.



Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing this letter in opposition to the DOE budget proposal of cutting funding for Learning Centers by \$17000 this year, and the eventual phase-out of all Learning Centers around the state. Though I cannot speak for other schools, Lahainaluna's Learning Center (LC) has done great work for our students and community.

A great example of this is the reforestation projects that have been taking place since the Lahaina fire. This project has gotten students, staff and community members to take part in not only reforestation but the larger endeavor of protecting our town from future fires.

Lahainaluna's LC gives non-traditional students an avenue to gain self-confidence, which may not be available to them in the classroom setting. Taking the skills they learn doing hands-on work to create and maintain agricultural projects throughout our school. These students learn and take responsibility. Working together on these various projects gives the students a sense of belonging and a connectedness or aloha for the school, community and the 'aina. Many of the students stay after school and give up their free time to create and maintain their projects. They strive for excellence in their projects that they do not often do in the traditional class setting. LCs promote the total well-being of our students.

As the culinary teacher at Lahainal have personally worked with the teachers and students and my program has benefitted from the products that our LC has produced. Produce like 'ulu, kalo, luau leaves, quail eggs and various fruits which we have used in class and to do events on campus. I have seen the change in many of these students.

If the DOE is truly serious about HĀ then cutting funding for LCs is a step in the wrong direction. Please reconsider the cutting of funding to LCs and their eventual phase out.

E Mālama Pono,

Colin Delos Reyes M.S.Ed.  
Lahainaluna High School  
Culinary Teacher  
Master

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:57 AM

### **Name**

Jennifer Sugahara

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:52 AM

### **Name**

Suzanne Bowen

### **Organization**

KHIS

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

My son is a junior at Kahuku High and Intermediate School. He has been in band since 7th grade. Mr. Furukawa is an excellent band instructor and has spent a lot of time with various programs in the band program. Marching band has started up again this year.

My son has benefited from the band program and Mr. Furukawa's direction and expertise. Middle school and high school can be a bit daunting for teenagers. My son found his place in high school through the band program. They spend many hours practicing after school and at football games.

Please consider keeping the funding the band program has at KHIS so other teens can develop their talents and have a place they feel confident in middle school and high school.

Mahalo nui loa,

Suzanne Bowen

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Charleen Haugom

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to voice my opposition regarding the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers Program. The Learning Centers have provided valuable opportunities and experiences for our students. These programs provide academic support outside of traditional classroom learning that are important for the growth students.

As a student I recall how impactful it was to have these hands-on programs to add to our traditional classroom experiences. They gave us real life experiences and applications that connected us with like minded peers that we may not have met, provided community engagement, and gave us a place to belong and grow.

Now as a staff member of the high school I see how these traditions have evolved and become even stronger and how dedicated our students and faculty are to these programs. The fact that these programs are continuing and growing prove how essential they are to our students and community.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Without these invaluable resources we significantly decrease the opportunities for student connection and personal growth creating gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:40 AM

### **Name**

Kupono Elmore

### **Organization**

Kahuku High and Intermediate School Music Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Kupono Elmore and I am a former third generation student of the Kahuku High and Intermediate School Music Learning Center. Me, my two brothers, my sister, my father and my grandfather have all attended Kahuku since the 60's and have gone thru the programs provided by the Music Learning Center. I was fortunate enough to have lead award winning groups thru the marching band program placing at the top of marching band competitions around the island. This program became a safe haven for me during my time at Kahuku and allowed me to become the person I am today. Since leaving the program, we have all become great contributing adults becoming nurses, flight attendants and myself becoming a teacher. Without the program, I would not have been able to discover a love of music and pursue my degree in Music Education from the University of Hawaii. I strongly oppose this agenda in that you're taking away a huge opportunity for the Keiki to grow in music , a form of art that is known to bring happiness and allow the Keiki to grow into strong and capable adults of society with amazing life skills. Please allow the Learning center to keep their distinguishment and budget, the arts are know to enhance a students mind. Mahalo.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:57 AM

### **Name**

Elizabeth Baker

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts Academy

### **Position/Title**

Assistant Program Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Honorable Members of the Board,

I write to you as a proud product of our Hawai'i public school system, a current tenured educator in our DOE, and an alumna of Central Theatre Arts Academy - the Performing Arts Learning Center at Mililani High School. As an alumna of CTAA and an invested educator in our public schools, I've seen firsthand how Learning Centers like these shape students' lives and future and I ask that you oppose this budget that shifts the financial responsibility of these programs to individual schools.

I serve as an Arts Educator in a multitude of capacities: as a Choir and 'ukulele teacher at 'Ilima Intermediate and as the Vocal Instructor and Assistant Program Director at Central Theatre Arts Academy. I bring these qualifications before you to share that I have an invested interest in the continued support of the arts at the state level. However, beneath the titles, I stand before you as someone who loves the arts, who loves to teach, and who loves to see our students flourish in the safe spaces the arts can cultivate.

Per Superintendent Hayashi's email, "the Department is proposing in its budget to shift funding responsibility for 29 existing Learning Centers from the state level to the school level." While this will allow the Department of Education to claim that there was no aim to defund Learning Centers, for the schools that do not have an extra \$17,000+ lying around, dissolving these funds at the state level will certainly spell their demise. This budget proposal shifts a critical financial responsibility to schools already stretched thin. For most, finding this additional money to sustain programs simply isn't feasible.

We are asked, then, to examine the intention versus the impact of the Department's proposed budget and your decisions today. While the intention of approving this budget may not be inherently malicious, the impact it will have will absolutely devastate the lives of our students and students around Hawai'i. As those sitting on the highest educational board with, hopefully, the future of our keiki at the forefront of your priorities - I urge you to oppose this budget and to realign the protection of Learning Centers back to the state level.

Members of the Board, I ask you to consider: what do Elle Woods, Tracy Turnblad, and Orpheus have in common?

These three protagonists from our most recent productions (Legally Blonde, Hairspray and Hadestown respectively)

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are young people who advocated for change in support of causes that they cared deeply about. Much like these young protagonists, our students look to us to make decisions that safeguard the arts they cherish. Please help us in showing them that their voices and passions matter – not just in fiction but in reality.

If the state no longer provides money for our Learning Centers, the fact is that many will cease to exist in their entirety.

Unfortunately, defunding the arts is a tale as old as time – but today, Board Members, I urge you to write a new narrative that values our students' growth, creativity, and future. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Kade Haney

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Supporting our band and choir programs is an investment in our students' overall education and personal growth. These programs offer much more than music skills; they develop critical life skills like discipline, collaboration, and resilience. Band and choir provide students with a safe space to explore their talents, build lasting friendships, and take pride in their achievements. The impact of music education reaches beyond school, helping students become more well-rounded individuals prepared for future challenges. Preserving funding for these programs means we're preserving an essential outlet for expression, creativity, and community in our school. Let's make sure we continue to give students these invaluable opportunities.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Janelle Papin-Wong

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This proposed budget would cut funding for programs that are critical to students' learning and development. Learning center funding cuts would disproportionately harm our community's most vulnerable youth who depend on these programs for social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development that they would not get at home or in other parts of their school day. I strongly oppose the current budget proposal and respectfully ask that the Department of Education reconsider reallocate funds to continue these programs for our keiki.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:52 AM

### **Name**

Shannon Haney

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Music education is essential to our students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Band and choir not only teach the technical skills of music but also foster creativity, discipline, teamwork, and a sense of belonging. These programs are unique in how they bring students together, helping them build confidence and perseverance—qualities that benefit them far beyond the music room. By investing in band and choir, we're investing in well-rounded students who excel in and out of the classroom. Maintaining funding for these programs ensures that our students have access to the full spectrum of education that enriches their lives and prepares them for future success. Let's continue to support and prioritize the arts as a vital part of our school community.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:57 AM

### **Name**

Erin Macedonio

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Staff

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Cedric Gates

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose against this agenda

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:19 AM

### **Name**

Mariel Dominique

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the reduction of the budget for DOE learning centers. These centers support activities that are enriching and fulfilling for the students. My daughter's robotics team at waialua high and I intermediate school does a fantastic job at preparing and training kids for the future, specially in our rural are school with not much funding available for this.

Please maintain or increase budget for our kids' future sake.

Mariel

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Emerald Gates

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

This agenda is against our keiki, so I'm against this agenda. No thank you!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:29 AM

### **Name**

Anselm Fautanu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As you may know, theater has not been the most popular subject in Hawaii but it has been the most foundational in many student lives. Ever since I've done theater in Farrington, it has opened the doors to new opportunities and communities that helped me get along better with personal issues, as well as helping others with their issues. Many students rely on these theater programs to gain exposure in growing personally, with it also being a safe space to be themselves. I beg you to please reconsider your decision on this and thank you for your time.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### Name

Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak

### Organization

PlayBuilders Theatre Company of Hawai'i

### Position/Title

President, Board of Directors

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Testimony 2024-10-31

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>



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<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_OI1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_OI1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak

President of the Board of Directors,

PlayBuilders Theatre Co. of Hawai'i

Retired Professor of Theatre and

Director of the Asian Theatre Program

Department of Theatre & Dance,

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Yu Erh Lin Chen

### **Organization**

Waiakea high school technology learning center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

Waiakea high school technology learning center provide great learning resources for the big island students, it make my children (even 3 years old kids) see more possibilities to learning advance STEM concepts and operate the robotics or 3d printers. They truly spend times into community to help big island better.

10/31/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM

### Name

Clifton Dobson

### Organization

Pearl City High School Music and Performing Arts Learning Center, Highlands Intermediate Schools  
Music Performing Arts

### Agenda Item

VII. Hawaii State Public Library System's operating budget and capital improvement projects request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

STRONGLY OPPOSED to eliminating Learning Centers.

Dear Committee Chair and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) related to realigning resources. This reduction will have a significant and detrimental impact on the vital learning opportunities offered to students and the community at the Pearl City High School and Highlands Intermediate Schools.

The funds allocated to EDN100/BQ (16770) are crucial for supporting a wide range of growth opportunities these programs and initiatives do to enhance student learning and prepare them for future success. These programs include:

- Pearl City High School (PCHS) Music and Performing Arts (MPA) Learning Center: This program is designed to increase and broaden the abilities of students with interests, initiative, and discipline to explore limitless boundaries of knowledge and learning in the music industry. Uniquely, this learning center provides opportunities to "All" public school students, unlike other sports activities that require tryouts for a limited amount of talent, which not all students meet, and therefore need other way to explore talent. Learning Centers like the PCHS MPA capture more student participation than any other group activity. With valuable staffed Directors with more

than a decade of experience and knowledge has produced future graduates at the local and University's through scholarships designated for music students.

The PCHS MPA Learning Center has also enabled students to participate in leadership roles in which they are mentored by band directors enhancing the students ability to seek career opportunities beyond music and related disciplines. To add, this Learning Center curriculum substitutes Physical Education courses because of its high demand for physical conditioning benefiting the participating students with physical fitness and health.

The PCHS MPA has had a consistent band group rating of AA and/or AAA marking strides in the growth of the program every year.

The PCHS MAP is a staple within our Pear City community as well serving to provide music and entertainment through performing in parade events throughout the year, even in the Honolulu City Lights parade. PCHS MAP Hosts the annual Oahu Marching Band Festival, Pearl City Complex Music Festival, and the Hawaii High and Middle School Band Festival.

The City's Royal Hawaiian Band currently includes some of the PCHS MPA staff as well.

This Learning Center is lead by Dr. Chadwick Kamei, who was also very instrumental, as a leader, in the restoration of the Lahaina School Music and Performing Arts Program in honor of the participating students and victims of the wildfires. [Chadwick.kamei@k12.hi.us](mailto:Chadwick.kamei@k12.hi.us)

- Highlands Intermediate School Music and Performing Arts- Led by Daniel Lim, this program under Lim's direction sets the tone in middle school student participants for each child's growth towards high school engagement. Lim engages his student participants in upper classmen music activities in concert and marching band performances. He has mentored our daughter a PCHS Alumni and currently a Nursing student at Chaminade University. Although not in music, the character and discipline she is applying to her studies today started here with Mr. Lim.

We are truly blessed to experience all of the various levels of disciplines within this Learning Center and know that stories like ours are surmountable.

In addition to the above program services, the funds from EDN100/BQ (16770) are essential for purchasing supplies and materials needed for instruction, competitions, and extracurricular activities. These resources are vital for creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment that inspires students to excel.

The proposed reduction of funds will inevitably lead to the following consequences:

- Limited program offerings: The reduction in funding will force us to curtail or eliminate valuable program resources, depriving students of opportunities and experiences to explore their interests and develop essential skills.
- Reduced student participation: Fewer resources will limit the number of students who can participate in these programs, hindering their academic and personal growth and future career successes.
- Diminished quality of instruction: The lack of adequate funds will impact our ability to provide high-quality instruction, limiting students' access to state-of-the-art equipment and materials.

I urge the committee to reconsider this decision and maintain the funding for EDN100/BQ (16770). By doing so, you will ensure that Pearl City High School and Highlands Intermediate Schools can continue to

provide exceptional educational opportunities for our students in the area of Music and Performing Arts and contribute to the development of future leaders and professionals. Reducing such programs as the Learning Centers from the foundations of education and areas that benefit the future of our keiki should be always a top priority in the Department of Education!

Mahalo for your time and consideration

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Carlee K

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

As someone who has been a part of a learning center program for eight years in elementary through high school and over four years as an alumnus, I oppose the proposal to cut funding for all learning centers. What I enjoyed most about the Castle Performing Arts Center (CPAC) Learning Center was the many opportunities they provided me. Through the CPAC Learning Center, I enriched my education through the arts. Many do not respect the arts as a career, and see them as "just a hobby." Without artists in all capacities (painters, dancers, actors, sculptors, poets, and more), many people lose their source of entertainment and escape they never knew they needed. The learning center program was the place where I fell in love with theatre. I want to be involved with theatre in some capacity for the rest of my life because of this program. As someone who currently works as a dance instructor and choreographer for multiple theatre programs, I want to inspire future generations to follow their passions in the arts or whatever they choose to follow. Learning centers also provide the opportunity for students to enhance their education without cost. Many private and tuition-based programs require payment for students to a member of their program. Through these learning centers, students can pursue or discover their passions without the major worry and burden of costs. Even if there is money involved, it is more manageable in the increasingly expensive economy and living situation that exists in Hawai'i. I ask the Board of Education to please reconsider the proposal to cut the funding from all learning centers. They have benefited many people across Hawai'i tremendously and deserve the opportunity and capabilities to continue providing fulfilling education opportunities for current and future generations.

Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### **Name**

Carolyn Komatsu

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

We hope this message finds you well. We are Ryan & Carolyn Komatsu, and we are the parents of a 9th grade student at Mililani High School. We are writing to voice our serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. We are in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Our daughter has participated in FIRST Robotics since 6th grade. From this experience, she discovered her strengths, found her career pathway as an engineer, sparked a new found passion for mechanical engineering, built a community of friends, grew in her confidence, gained character traits like perseverance, cooperation, kindness, self-directedness and so much more. Upon entering, she was a shy, anxious, and fearful kind of a student, but over the years, We saw her develop into a confident, social, joyful and determined person. Seeing the transformation, we felt so blessed to have a school that would offer this opportunity for her and was so happy to hear that they could continue in high school. Of course, it's more intense in high school and we were worried that her passion might drop since there are more challenges to work through. However, she continues to enjoy every moment of it. On those late days of staying til 8pm at school for robotics, I pick her up and she's tired, but she loves it and tells us that it's worth spending all that time there. That is for sure every parent's dream come true, having your child find their purpose and passion! Thus, it breaks our hearts to hear about the defunding of this program. We know it will have a devastating effect on our daughter and on our family.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

Please we respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ryan & Carolyn Komatsu

Carolynkomatsu@yahoo.com

11/01/2024

Sunofasushi@hotmail.com



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:14 AM

### **Name**

Malia Chrisco

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Cutting the funding for the mililani science programs and learning centers would be detrimental to the environment in which youth should be LEARNING. Science is an important program and for many is the only part of school that's even remotely entertaining enough for kids to keep coming. Many students AND student athletes skip school and have a poor attendance record and removing funding from science programs will make attendance rates drop drastically. If budget cuts need to be made they should be made to the sports teams because extracurricular athletic programs should not be placed before the WHOLE student bodies' education

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:14 AM

### **Name**

Stephen Chezik

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Cutting the funding for the science programs makes absolutely no sense. STEM is extremely important in this current age of technology and thus it is now more important than ever for our students to have a strong foundation in science. We have a wonderful selection of staff in the MHS science department that have inspired many students to pursue a career in STEM, myself included. I implore the board to consider finding another program to cut funding from.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 9:46 AM

### Name

Kaylene Sheldon

### Organization

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

October 31, 2024

To: Board of Education

Aloha Kākou:

My name is Kauwila Sheldon and I am a teacher at Kahuku High & Intermediate School and a long standing community member who loves the music center and appreciates the inspiration and marvelous outcomes that have come from the music learning centers. I am also an advisor for the Indigenous Engineering Club. Did you know that Hawai'i has a very serious nano plastic problem? We do and we need to strengthen our sense of Hawai'i by resolving these problems. I also belong to a community who believes in life long learning in STEAM, performing arts, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, business. I am writing to you in hope that you can find money through grants to support the music departments including all the programs, maybe ask City Council members to give their pay to the learning centers, or ask celebrities and the legislature to set aside monies to support these outstanding programs. So many of our children have gone through these programs and come out on top. For example, Keala Settle who is a 93 Kahuku grad holds a nomination fl or 1. Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical Drama 2. Outstanding Featured Actress in A Musical Outer Critics, including a number of Boradway productions and Drama Desk awards, Theatre World Awards, and Tony awards. Also Mandie Taketa a Castle graduate who went on to become a producer and actress. STEAM and engineering have also paved the way for our students in robotics and innovation. Agriculture should be a priority, what if the Mason ships never come in? We need to feed our people. Health should be another priority. Where are our priorities these days?

I oppose the propose budget decrease and budget cuts. Please find another way to support these programs.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:57 AM

### **Name**

Tracy Poouahi

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna High School

### **Position/Title**

Career & Technical Education Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

When Lahaina was destroyed by the wildfire one year ago, one of the first things the community wanted to save was the beloved banyan tree on Front Street. Soon after, community members began organizing and discussing ways to organize the replanting of native Hawaiian trees and plants to restore Lahaina to its original beauty. This shows the importance of teaching our keiki about agricultural production. Students of Lahainaluna High School's Ag Learning Center were going to assist in designing the landscape for homes and provide potted plants and trees for community members who wanted to build their garden to what it once was.

With the devastating decision to de-fund the Learning Centers across the state, the students of Lahainaluna High School are losing the funds to help restore Lahaina to what it once was, the ability to learn about the skills to help the community, and the teacher is losing the coordination periods to help organize these amazing projects and more.

My name is Tracy Poouahi and I am the Career and Technical Education Coordinator at Lahainaluna High School. Lahainaluna High School's agriculture program has been a vital part of our community for years. From the students organizing a pumpkin patch for the community, to teaching students about how to produce and maintain a large farm of row crops like corn, the agriculture students have always learned amazing things. When you ask an "old-timer" of Lahaina about what they learned at Lahainaluna High School, many will tell you about the piggery and tasty corn that we produced. Now, the students are learning about quail egg production for our culinary program and growing flowers for lei production. Students are learning about the importance of sourcing our products in Hawaii. There are plans for interdisciplinary projects, where our culinary program was going to utilize produce grown at the farms for the Young Entrepreneurs Program. Now more than ever, we need to support our school's agriculture learning center.

After COVID, the wildfires, and the retirement of a teacher who was here for 40 years, our ag program suffered greatly. We were just getting back on our feet when we heard the devastating news two days ago that the funds would be cut and coordination periods defunded.

It is not just our school's learning center who will suffer losses. The ability to provide specialized instruction to students is vital to small local community schools and neighbor island schools. I urge you to please re-consider realignment of these resources.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:21 AM

### Name

Kaylene Sheldon

### Organization

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

October 31, 2024

To: Board of Education

Aloha Kākou:

My name is Kauwila Sheldon and I am a teacher at Kahuku High & Intermediate School and a long standing community member who loves the music center and appreciates the inspiration and marvelous outcomes that have come from the music learning centers. I am also an advisor for the Indigenous Engineering Club. Did you know that Hawai'i has a very serious nano plastic problem? We do and we need to strengthen our sense of Hawai'i by resolving these problems. I also belong to a community who believes in life long learning in STEAM, performing arts, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, business. I am writing to you in hope that you can find money through grants to support the music departments including all the programs, maybe ask City Council members to give their pay to the learning centers, or ask celebrities and the legislature to set aside monies to support these outstanding programs. So many of our children have gone through these programs and come out on top. For example, Keala Settle who is a 93 Kahuku grad holds a nomination fl or 1. Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical Drama 2. Outstanding Featured Actress in A Musical Outer Critics, including a number of Boradway productions and Drama Desk awards, Theatre World Awards, and Tony awards. Also Mandie Taketa a Castle graduate who went on to become a producer and actress. STEAM and engineering have also paved the way for our students in robotics and innovation. Agriculture should be a priority, what if the Mason ships never come in? We need to feed our people. Health should be another priority. Where are our priorities these days?

I oppose the propose budget decrease and budget cuts. Please find another way to support these programs.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Phyllis Raquinio

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG OPPOSITION to this agenda item, particularly in regards to reducing funding for Learning Centers across Hawai'i.

As an alumnus of Maui High School who was in the Arts and Communication pathway and a member of the Blue Thunder Robotics team throughout my entire high school life, these programs provide skills that are applicable to real life jobs and set students up for careers they are already considering. Although I am not currently in a STEAM-specific career, I still utilize the skills I have learned in my time in these programs in my current profession as these skills can be applied to various fields.

There are many Maui High alumni who see the importance of these programs and return to share their knowledge with the students who are currently part of these programs, such as Destin Daniel Cretton, who directed the Shang-Chi film and is overall a very successful director.

I also have a younger sibling who will be a freshman at Maui High School next school year who is currently taking a video class and may be interested in being a part of a STEAM program.

By reducing and ultimately removing funding for these learning centers, current and prospective students will not be able to apply the knowledge and skills they learn that would already give them an advantage in the already high demanding and competitive job market. These learning centers are critical to ensuring that Hawai'i's youth are learning various hands-on skills that will set them up for their future.

I urge you, for Hawai'i's youth, please oppose the reduction of funding for learning centers.

Thank you very much.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:25 AM

### **Name**

Ainsley Coullahan

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I have been in theatre since I was 11 and was a part of my first CTAA show when I was 15. CTAA has provided me the opportunity to participate in this beloved art. This crucial program allowed me to learn and improve my skills as an actress. CTAA and other Learning Center programs create spaces that enhance engagement and foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. These programs often serve to inspire students who might not otherwise engage with activities such as sports and traditional academic activities. The arts must be taken just as seriously as any other programs. The arts help us understand culture, history, and the human experience as a whole. Cutting funds for these programs would take that away from so many students. Cutting funding would not only limit access to these experiences but also exacerbate educational inequities by depriving students from lower income households many opportunities to add to their education. Students who cannot afford to go to private programs rely on Learning Centers to get their education in their field of interest. Everyday, I see first hand how Learning Centers impact students and it would truly hurt to see that taken away from my friends, my peers, and my educators. Please think about the students who are in the programs today as well as the future generations who should have access to them.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:21 AM

### Name

Kaylene Sheldon

### Organization

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

October 31, 2024

To: Board of Education

Aloha Kākou:

My name is Kauwila Sheldon and I am a teacher at Kahuku High & Intermediate School and a long standing community member who loves the music center and appreciates the inspiration and marvelous outcomes that have come from the music learning centers. I am also an advisor for the Indigenous Engineering Club. Did you know that Hawai'i has a very serious nano plastic problem? We do and we need to strengthen our sense of Hawai'i by resolving these problems. I also belong to a community who believes in life long learning in STEAM, performing arts, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, business. I am writing to you in hope that you can find money through grants to support the music departments including all the programs, maybe ask City Council members to give their pay to the learning centers, or ask celebrities and the legislature to set aside monies to support these outstanding programs. So many of our children have gone through these programs and come out on top. For example, Keala Settle who is a 93 Kahuku grad holds a nomination for 1. Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical Drama 2. Outstanding Featured Actress in A Musical Outer Critics, including a number of Broadway productions and Drama Desk awards, Theatre World Awards, and Tony awards. Also Mandie Taketa a Castle graduate who went on to become a producer and actress. STEAM and engineering have also paved the way for our students in robotics and innovation. Agriculture should be a priority, what if the Mason ships never come in? We need to feed our people. Health should be another priority. Where are our priorities these days?

I oppose the propose budget decrease and budget cuts. Please find another way to support these programs.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Yoni LeGrande

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha and thank you for consideration of my written testimony in opposition of Hawaii DOE Agenda item VIII. Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027.

I have had two children graduate from Sunset Beach Elementary and then Waialua Intermediate and High School (2020 & 2024) and am a firm believer in making the most of what is available to you. My own experience has been one filled with some excellent teachers and coaches, and dedicated school administrators. That said, the most important and formative experiences that my children have had at school have been the Learning Center programs for STEM and Engineering. Not only did these programs engage my son with technology and a skill set that far out paced anything he could have learned on his own, his social and emotional growth was incredible. I can say with absolute certainty that his full tuition scholarship to an well respected engineering college was a direct result of his participation with the Waialua Robotics program. The same can be said for every senior in that program. These programs don't and can't operate in a vacuum. Learning centers are dependent on the dedication of directors, volunteer mentors and parents. These kids are learning to commit themselves and work hard to succeed in these programs. Sometimes these programs are the only way a student might find their passion or interests. And they need the life blood of a fully supportive board of education who values and funds these programs. The BOE should be fighting for these learning centers especially ones like STEM, engineering, business and agriculture that are quite literally the future for our kids. The BOE's "No Growth" Budget, is just that. It shows a lack of engagement and commitment to Hawaii Public School students. Please don't approve this budget request. Do better.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:21 AM

### **Name**

albert fung

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose cutting funding to Steam, Media, Performing Arts, Engineering, Agriculture, Music, and Health, we need these programs!

**I am writing in opposition to the BOE pending budget to reduce funds to the Learning Centers in Hawaii.**

I am a parent of an alumni of Moanalua High School.. Moanalua High does not have a theatrical program, my daughter was able to participate in the theatrical program at CPAC and KHSPAC. Both programs welcomed her and gave her the opportunity to learn about the theatrical arts.

I am a founding board member of CPAC Encore Association, my membership the board has allowed me the opportunity to see the immense impact of the Learning Center on its students. I am also well aware of the budget and costs involved in producing shows. Any reduction in the budget will greatly impact these programs. The current budget of \$17,000 is appreciated but well below what is needed to continue producing top level shows. CPAC Encore Association works diligently throughout the year to assist with fundraising so that we can offset production costs.

The Learning Center at CPAC is a nexus for the performing arts students. It is a safe place where they can learn, make lifelong friendships and appreciate the arts. Granted most students will not seek employment or further education in the performing arts but the fact that they have learned to appreciate the arts is the foremost goal.

I hope that you will consider the education in the arts as a goal for the Department of Education and continue to fund the Learning Centers.

Respectfully Submitted,  
GM

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Cameron Weston

### **Organization**

Radford Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Mykol Leon-Guerrero

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Eagan McCullion

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:25 AM

### **Name**

Arshalyn Agmata

### **Organization**

Radford Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Sean Michael Galamgam

### **Organization**

Radford High school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Rage Paras

### **Organization**

Radford highschool

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Mikhayla Balais

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Dominic Sanchez

### **Organization**

Radford highschool

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Ismarie Cardona

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Raymond Fraga

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Tristan Jackson

### **Organization**

Radford

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

If you cut the school funding YOU will lose a majority of the jobs that RUN Hawaii

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Jace Davis

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Judah Barker

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Hannah Trees

### **Organization**

Maui Economic Development Board, STEMworks

### **Position/Title**

STEMworks Program Specialist

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I am a former teacher and current grant writer and researcher with STEMworks, a STEM education program run by Maui Economic Development Board. I am writing to strongly oppose the elimination of funding for DOE school learning centers. These centers provide essential afterschool activities to public school students, and the cost per center (less than \$20,000) is extremely low compared to the benefits that the community gains from students being able to engage in free afterschool activities. Education research has consistently shown that students who participate in afterschool activities see improved academic performance, improved attendance, and improved attitudes about school in general, and this increases the likelihood of their pursuing college degrees and high-skill occupations. In light of this, these learning centers should be considered an essential part of school services. Cutting these kinds of programs has a long-term negative impact on our local communities, not only directly affecting students' school experiences and academic performance, but also impacting their families who may rely on DOE afterschool activities as a form of free childcare and local businesses who cannot thrive without local skilled workers who are well-educated and prepared for a variety of occupations.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,

Hannah Trees, PhD

Research and Analysis Specialist

Maui Economic Development Board, STEMworks Program

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Randi Jeung

### **Organization**

Oahu Resident

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a graduate of the Hawaii DOE system and an advocate for lifelong learning, I am submitting this testimony to voice my opposition to Article VIII in the DOE's proposed budget request. I strongly urge you to NOT cut appropriations or coordinator positions for Learning Centers. Programs like these offered invaluable enrichment during my childhood, shaping my path in ways I couldn't have anticipated. As adults and kupuna, it's our duty to build a brighter future for the generations that follow. The DOE has made many important and innovative advancements since my time in the K-12 system. This would be a giant step in the wrong directions.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

preston church

### **Organization**

radford

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Grayson Farnsworth

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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This program means a lot to us students. It's provided job opportunities, useful products for the community, and invaluable education. Please do not cut funding for these essential Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:25 AM

### **Name**

Jay3 Ray

### **Organization**

Leilehua agriculture

### **Position/Title**

Former student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello government ! Again!, I am here to confront you on how foolish you people are to try and shut down another perfect and recognizable program for WAHIAWA 96786.

First it was storefront, now it's leilehuas agriculture program? How dare you! I am a former student of both programs and from my personal experience agricultural was one of the best classes I ever had ,also we use to hold events on holidays I don't know about now because of the budget cut but come on have y'all even experience the events first hand I don't think so! So please do not do this to leilehuas agricultural program.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

JACQUELINE MEYER

### **Organization**

BIG ISLAND TOYOTA

### **Position/Title**

PRESIDENT

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

PLEASE DO NOT DEFUND THE TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTER (TLC) OF WAIAKEA HIGH SCHOOL

1. We've collaborated with local companies and business to hold STEAM camps and events and we were able to reach over 2700+ of Hawaii's keiki that showed interest in pursuing a career in STEAM
2. We provide various learning opportunities for our students to learn all aspects of STEAM including building, programming, design, modeling, and business.
3. This previous season we placed 10th place out of 61 teams in the Orlando Regional competition--and the 8th overall team in the state of Hawaii.
4. Our team has been able to travel all over the United States for First Robotics Competition regionals, placing as semi-finalist or winners in multiple competitions over the span of 21 years
5. Some of our previous students are currently working on the Mars robot with NASA, launched a rocket, and one worked on a microsatellite

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:14 AM

### **Name**

Inga Macatiag

### **Organization**

Waialua Robotics team

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The robotics program is very important. My daughter has learned so much. We need to continue funding these programs.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Chanel Agas

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Tayja Abanto

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

PPT AVID Tutor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:14 AM

### Name

Maya Leslie-Berengue

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

The livelihoods of our community and the education of Hawai'i's children are at a critical juncture if funding is cut from learning centers.

A reduction in funding for educational programs, especially in the arts, would have a devastating impact on teachers' careers and, more importantly, on the quality of education available to our students.

Theater in particular plays an essential role in our schools, offering students a unique, multi-faceted learning experience.

Students who participate in performing arts programs consistently excel across multiple metrics, including graduation rates, self-confidence, social abilities, and focus.

Theater itself equips students with adaptability, memory skills, a strong sense of responsibility, resilience under pressure, discipline, empathy, and improved reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

11/01/2024

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

All of these enhancing skills theater has to offer, are foundational for future success. From my personal experience as a student at Hawai'i Conservatory of Performing Arts, I have witnessed the transformative power of theater on students, helping them to grow both academically and personally.

Eliminating funding for theater and other enrichment programs would deprive students of these vital learning opportunities. Access to such programs not only fosters individual growth but also helps students explore potential career paths, encouraging students to set bigger goals and reach higher.

Public school students in Hawai'i deserve access to a well-rounded education, including the arts. These programs are not luxuries; they are lifelines that contribute to a vibrant, capable, and prepared generation. Let's ensure our children receive the quality education they deserve.

Please do not deprive future students of these essential, life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Maya Berengue

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Denise Yamamoto, and I am a College and Career Counselor at Mililani High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

This is the 18th year that I've been helping students with their post high school goals, many of which have gone on to STEM focused or performing arts careers. Eliminating these programs is really a disservice to our students who rely on these rich opportunities to add to their resumes and help them solidify their goals and dreams. Over the years, I've been to many of our musicals or play productions and I continue to be in awe of our students. Some of our alumni have even made it to Broadway and beyond. I've worked with a student who was so immersed in our science programs, that she was able to get a full scholarship to Columbia University. These opportunities would not have been possible without the support of our vital learning centers.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Denise Yamamoto

~~~~~  
*Mrs. Denise Yamamoto, College and Career Counselor/C&CC Coordinator  
Mililani High School - CEEB 120197  
95-1200 Meheula Parkway  
Mililani, HI 96789*

(808) 307-4243  
(808) 307-4200 (MHS Main Line)  
(808) 627-7375 (Fax)

Website: [College and Career Center Homepage](#)

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:21 AM

### **Name**

Jennifer Slotter Clawson

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

Curriculum Coordinator & Drama Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

State level funding for learning centers is crucial to their existence. These centers provide access to opportunities that would not otherwise be available to students who's schools do not have funding to put these enriching programs in place. They spark student interest in area that they did not know existed. For some students, these programs are why they come to school. In a time of decreasing attendance rates and general lack of interest in school, it is crucial that we do not cut funding for programs that give students a sense of belonging. There must be other ways to manage school funding more sensibly than to cut learning centers. I implore the committee to please reconsider this proposal and seek other alternatives. Please, before making your decision, think of the students who depend on these programs to bring that spark for learning into their lives.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

DOUGLAS HARTMAN

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

General Education Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose a reduction in funding for all learning centers across the state. Please keep the funding as it was this past year. The learning centers are working and too important to eliminate.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### **Name**

Shana Brown

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Shana Brown, and I am the parent of a 11th grade student at Kalaheo High School. I am writing to voice my serious concerns about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

The Learning Centers have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience, providing essential academic support outside of the classroom while also fostering a sense of community in our students. This program provides opportunities that are rare to find in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

At my son's school (Kalaheo HS), the Learning Center initiative funds the Academy of Media & Design. This is an AWARD WINNING Learning Center that includes Film & Media Production and Digital Design. Students in the academy have the opportunity to do hands on production, work with professionals, and apply what they learn in the classroom to real world situations.

Eliminating funding for this program would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. Investing in the Learning Centers is an investment in the success and well-being of our students and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Shana Brown

808-386-6307

shanajbrown@hotmail.com

As the parent of 4 Castle Performing Arts Center alumni I am shocked that the Board of Education is even considering cutting funding for learning centers. Learning centers are the number one draw to a school for kids with options and the number one saving grace for kids with few opportunities. Let's look at CPAC as an example. Through the years I have witnessed many kids who would normally struggle to find a place they belong in school find that place in the performing arts classes at Castle. They come from all over Oahu, often convincing their parents to get them a geographic exception and drive an hour out of their way just to be part of this amazing program. The young elementary kids in Kaneohe dream about getting cast in the CPAC jr shows. These kids learn to shine on stage but they learn so much more through this program. They learn hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. Being part of a show requires many long hours of faithfully showing up, and working tirelessly with others to create something important. For the privilege, they also show up faithfully to class, working tirelessly to keep their grades up, so that they can participate.

My 4 children learned skills in this learning center that prepared them for life. They developed a work ethic far and beyond anything that I could have instilled in them. They gained opportunities to travel and represent the public schools of Hawaii. Hawaii's public education is often maligned by outsiders, so to see these kids perform at the Fringe in Scotland, or keep up with professional dancers in dance classes in NYC is quite impressive and proves that Hawaii public schools have a lot to offer students.

Some of these kids have gone on to be professional working actors in NYC, and some have stayed local, being a part of Hawaii's impressive community theatre family. Kama'aina might not realize just how unique the local theatre community is here. Outside of NY, LA, and possibly Chicago, live theatre opportunities like we have here are unimaginable. The talent, and opportunities to develop that talent, are prized here in a way that easily accounts for the many locals that have performed on Broadway throughout the years. Other CPAC alumni learned lighting, sound production, and costuming in the program and have gotten work here using their skills to continue making our theatre community thrive.

CPAC is just one of the many learning centers that Hawaii's public schools have become known for. There are similar reasons kids have sought out Ag and STEM programs. These programs are one of the things our school system does really well. Learning Centers give kids in need opportunities and purpose, and they give kids with every advantage a reason to choose public education over private schools.

So why would you defund something that works and entices students so that you can put all that money towards something that is unproven? Keep what is working, fund it and keep it strong, while you create other programs that fill the gaps. Don't burn it all down to make a huge gap that you have to fill. Not only is that incredibly risky if you don't get it right, but you're bound to create chaos when all the kids with GEs no longer have a reason to be at their school. But more than any other reason, defunding the learning centers will ultimately disenfranchise the kids who need them most and they may never get another opportunity like they get from this program.





11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### Name

Kaikoa Viveiros

### Organization

Mililani Science Learning Center

### Position/Title

Alumni

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Kaikoa Viveiros, and I'm an Alumni from Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who has benefited immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they were to my education and later my career. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Being part of the FIRST Robotics Learning Center program at Mililani High School was a pivotal experience that shaped my career path and personal growth. The hands-on STEM learning and mentorship I received helped me discover my passion for technology, which was an integral part of my decision to pursue my Associates degree in Computer, Security, Networking Technologies and my Bachelor of Applied Science Information Security and Assurance. All of this came together to lead me to my current role as an IT Operations Analyst at Aloha Pacific Federal Credit Union.

Not only did the FIRST Robotics Learning Center program teach me technical skills, it also equipped me with invaluable soft skills such as organization, communication, leadership, and teamwork. These abilities have been crucial to my success. Defunding the Learning Center would mean stripping future students of the same transformative opportunities that have made a profound impact on my life and career.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

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I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kaikoa Viveiros  
kaikoa.viveiros@gmail.com

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### Name

Patrick Karjala

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools. As a 1999 graduate of public high school on Kauai, I participated heavily in performing arts, and it had a foundational impact on my schooling and life.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARISAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARISAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

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Mahalo,

Patrick Karjala

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Noa Helela

### **Organization**

Academy of Creative Media at Windward Community College: Hawaii Conservatory for Performing Arts

### **Position/Title**

Playwright

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the performing arts programs in Hawaii public schools.

Performing Arts programs not only teach and encourage creative and critical thinking, team-building, stress management, self-confidence and expression, literacy, and many other important life skills, they are also vital community spaces for the students in them. This is especially true for students who struggle to participate in other group-based educational activities such as sports teams and debate clubs. This includes many neurodivergent students who face various academic and social challenges preventing them from fulfilling their potential in such spaces, such as time-management, processing issues, and bullying.

These students often thrive within the performing arts, and not only are able to find their voice and learn how to assert and express themselves in creative ways, but they also tend to become more motivated to excel in other academic fields due to increased self-discipline required for working in theatre. In addition, these students' social lives tend to improve due to increased self-confidence and communication skills, coupled with community involvement through which they can connect with like-minded peers.

The same is true for many queer students, who often face a disproportionate amount of bullying and discrimination, from fellow students and unfortunately in many cases staff alike. These students often have few if any safe spaces or communities in school, or at home or in other spaces they are a part of. For many queer students, performing arts is the first and sometimes only place they can feel safe and comfortable being out and being their true selves, and in these spaces they can meet other queer students with whom they can share their experiences.

Performing arts programs are also very important to students of color, particularly those of native Hawaiian ancestry. Through theatre I have been able to learn about and embrace my multicultural hapa identity more than I ever had. Watching and working with many Hawaii-based productions, and writing and working on my own productions, while collaborating with extremely supportive teachers and peers has made a world of difference.

Hana Keaka for example, are Hawaiian-language plays that have seen increased popularity in recent years, in which acting students have to learn and memorize their lines in 'olelo Hawai'i. This also provides opportunities for students

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to learn how to creatively write in 'olelo, which improves their general writing and linguistic skills as well as gives Hawaiian students an avenue through which to connect to and share their own culture, and provides other students with opportunities to learn more about culture of the islands they are growing up on.

A large portion of students in these and many other categories suffer from mental health issues including self harm, suicidal ideation, and drug addiction. Additionally, many of them are often on the receiving end of physical, psychological, and sexual violence from peers, family, and/or other adults in their lives. Having a safe space where they can learn creative and academic skills while connecting with peers in their community is absolutely vital and life-saving for these students. As someone whose life has been saved multiple times by performing arts programs both in my youth and as an adult, I can speak first-hand to the dire necessity of these programs.

Countless studies can also echo the innumerable academic and social benefits of theatre programs in public schools. Memorization, adaptive learning, collaborative ability, and graduation rate are among the many benefits that theatre students carry into their adult lives, which have a statistically higher success rate than they would without performing arts. These students also have huge improvements in their overall quality of life.

Cutting theatre programs in Hawaii schools would not only strip thousands of students of their safe spaces, increasing already high risk factors for mental health issues and other dangers; it would be an act of sheer academic negligence.

I hope that the Board of Education is able to take these benefits and necessities into full consideration, and makes the best decision for the students whose lives and experiences depend on these programs.

Sincerely and with Aloha,  
Noalani Helelā

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Richie Franco Jr

### **Organization**

Kalama Intermediate School

### **Position/Title**

Band Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Committee Chair,

It is scientifically proven that children who study music further their brain development over their counterparts who don't. They also boost their coordination, concentration, and self discipline. As an educator for over 20 years, I've seen many "bad" kids turn "good" after being in band. Budget cuts ALWAYS take place where kids need a creative outlet the most. These "bad" kids will only become worse without some kind of creative outlet. What are you looking to achieve with these cuts? Who are you looking to help? I've seen this in Chicago AND L.A. and all it does is make the downtrodden even worse off. PLEASE think of OUR keiki. PLEASE look to help them and NOT the corporate bigwigs who sell books. PLEASE make a stand: for once make a decision that HELPS the kids.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Aaliyah Cobenatoro

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Zyon Blaze Telles-Kuwahara

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Kaydenjon Penaloza

### **Organization**

Radford High Schol

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Cullen Goss

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Jada Salcedo

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Troy Weyer

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Rayden Dayton

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Jessica Garrett

### **Organization**

Kahuku high band

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My daughter is in band at kahuku intermediate and high school. she is looking forward to being in the high school band and playing at the football games. Band has given her so much confidence and a small community to belong and find meaning at the school. It is vital that our school get the funding for band to continue and Kahuku high. All these students need a place to grow and develop beyond athletics and academics to enrich their lives and provide for future scholarship opportunities. Please do not pass this without giving our schools funding.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Roy Nguyen

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Kameakia'i'inakanaka Brock

### **Organization**

Radford highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Jesley Arakawa

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Mickinzie Marks

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Brayden Kocher

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Alexander Snow

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

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11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### Name

Jordan Parsons

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha kākou Hawaii Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts that would significantly impact STEM, performing arts, and other essential programs in our public schools. As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the detrimental effects these cuts would have on our children's education and future opportunities.

STEM education is not just about preparing students for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It is about equipping our children with critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation skills. These are the very skills that will enable them to compete on a global stage and contribute to Hawaii's economic growth and sustainability.

In a world increasingly driven by technology and innovation, it is imperative that we invest in our STEM programs, not cut them. Our children deserve the best education we can provide, and that includes access to robust STEM programs that will prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Moreover, these programs have a multiplier effect. They not only enrich students' educational experiences but also foster well-rounded individuals who are creative, empathetic, and resilient. The performing arts, for instance, complement STEM by nurturing creativity and communication skills, which are equally vital in today's world.

Shifting funding responsibility to the school level may exacerbate inequities. Not all schools have the same resources or fundraising capabilities. Centralized funding ensures that all students, regardless of their school's economic status, have access to these vital programs.

I urge the Board of Education to reconsider these proposed cuts. Our children are the future of Hawaii. Investing in their education, particularly in STEM and arts programs, is key to ensuring that they, and our state, thrive in the years to come.

Please, let's not balance the budget at the expense of our children's education and future. Instead, let's work together to find solutions that prioritize their needs and the long-term prosperity of our state.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

Jordan Parsons

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Filipo Muller

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Bella F

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### **Name**

Niuma Leilua

### **Organization**

DOE

### **Position/Title**

Student/CTAA Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am a member of CTAA, the performing arts learning center located in Mililani High School. I am testifying against the proposed policy VIII. For years, CTAA has been a central part of the community. Serving a way for many students, myself included, to become confident with themselves. And proceeds to help with broadening their horizons, and pursuing their passions/hobbies. My experience within CTAA has always been a great experience. It allowed me to become more social and find people within this community to befriend and such. And I'm sure this is an experience that isn't only subjected to CTAA, but many other learning centers. Both agricultural and STEM programs alike. Defunding these programs lessens students abilities. It takes away from the many beneficial experiences students gain from being a part of these programs. This only continues to negatively impact the education of children from all ages. Again, I ask that you take the time to rethink this decision, because future generations will never get to experience these programs to their fullest.

Thank you,

Niuma Leilua, CTAA member

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Brittney Honda

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

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11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Kate F

### **Organization**

Radford

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Sean Jandoc

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I enthusiastically OPPOSE the decision for the DOE to cut funding for the Performing Arts Learning Centers. As a young Hawaiian growing up here in Hawai'i during the 90's I remember thinking how strange it felt to dance, to do something different than what the rest of the crowd was doing. It wasn't until I saw my friend dance hula in a malo that my mindset changed, and I became interested in trying hula. That interest turned into passion, which led me down a path to learn more about my Hawaiian culture and now I have the pleasure of being able to pass along that passion to my own students as I have become a teacher of Hawaiian Language and Hula at Castle High School. How does this tie into the DOE's decision to cut funding for the Performing Arts Learning Centers? Because I know the value that this type of community can give to anyone who wants to pursue a passion outside of the traditional ways of earning money. It allows students to feel safe amongst peers that have similar interests, and build a community that they will always be able to call upon later on in life. It allows students to explore different avenues of performing arts as well. They might not be a dancer or singer, but they could have a long career as a stagehand, director, lighting designer, costume designer, set designer, etc. and if I'm not mistaken, aren't these skills that can translate to the "traditional jobs/ways of making money?"

My son had the pleasure of being part of a CPAC production last year as fifth grader, and from a parent perspective I can attest to the fact that my son learned a lot of valuable lessons from being part of that production. He learned to be more punctual, he learned how to make use of his time by balancing rehearsal times and study times, he was able to forge new friendships with kids not just from his school but from the other Kaneohe schools in the Castle/Kahuku complex, and most importantly I have seen his personality grow so much more because of this experience.

If performing Arts had such a meaningful impact on my life, and as well as my son's life, why would you deny other kids the opportunity to find their passion through the arts. Again I enthusiastically OPPOSE the DOE's decision to cut funding for the Performing Arts Learning Centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Nathan Krahn

### **Organization**

Admiral Arthur W. Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Radford High School desperately needs funds for its Papa La'au program, as well as its construction program. The Papa La'au program provides military students with lessons in agriculture, in the traditional Hawaiian way. The building and construction program is a pipeline to the trades, which our young people desperately need. Trades continue to be declining as college attendance has increased, and the program is a way to combat that. I strongly oppose cutting funding for the Papa La'au program as well as the construction program, and hope you will reconsider removing this program our young people desperately need.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this testimony today to stand in ardent support of the continued funding of HIDOE's Learning Center by STRONGLY OPPOSING the current HIDOE budget as it stands. As a former student of the Hawai'i public school system, I can confidently state that a learning center not only greatly improved my quality of education and life as a HIDOE student, but dramatically affected the trajectory of both my career and my life.

I attended Kaua'i High School and participated in KPAC (Kaua'i Performing arts Center) for all of my middle and high school time. KPAC was a window into a world of opportunity for me. I found a lifelong community of friends, teachers, and mentors in KPAC. I found solace, acceptance, and celebration from what can be a cold and rough high school environment in KPAC. AND, I found my future career in KPAC (as have countless others).

I implore you to find a way to ensure that these critical spaces stay in the upcoming HIDOE budget. Learning centers offer not only a bastion of creativity and community for countless students, but they also offer career readiness opportunities and paths.

In short, I cannot (and do not) want to imagine what my time in intermediate and high school would have been had I not had access to a HIDOE Learning Center. These learning centers are a critical creative and artistic outlet for students across the state, and sometimes the ONLY way for students to engage in theatre.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions at [speetjen@hawaii.edu](mailto:speetjen@hawaii.edu).

Sincerely,

*Maile Speetjens*

Jessica Maile Speetjens  
Associate Professor of Costume, Hair, Makeup Design  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Traci Miyasato

### **Organization**

Pearl City High School Music Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Committee Chair,

I am writing to oppose the phasing out of funding for Learning Centers. As a parent of a child in the Pearl City High School's Band Program, I see the value and impact Learning Centers like the one at Pearl City High School have on students. Not all students thrive in a traditional classroom environment, nor do all students excel in athletics. Subjects like music, performing arts, media, robotics, etc provide a safe space for students to express creativity, form friendships, learn leadership skills among many other things. These programs and Learning Centers can be the driving force to motivate students to attend school and give them a place of belonging.

Please reconsider phasing out funding, as not all schools will be able to allocate funds to continue the Learning Centers. They are vital to our children and community.

Thank you for your consideration.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:50 AM

### **Name**

Cory Wakano

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Technology Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education ,

I am writing to you in opposition of the operating budget request. If the budget is cut, it would hurt the program and not help the future students interested in robotics. The funding that is given to the robotics club is a valued part of the program. It allows the students to mentor and teach the younger generation about robotics. The program gives a great way to explore an interest that met become a career. I honestly believe that it was this program that had solidified his major at college. He is going for a double major in software development/engineering and business

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 11:23 AM

### Name

Chase Wakabayashi

### Organization

Castle Performing Arts Center

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

My name is Chase Wakabayashi, a senior at Castle High School, and an avid member of the Castle Performing Arts Center/Learning Center (CPAC). I oppose the reduction of funds for the Learning Centers (Row 77). The budget request states funding will be eliminated "to better align resources to achieve strategic plan prioritization and to sustain operations that support teaching and learning". I respectfully disagree with this statement. In fact, I believe it aligns with the strategic plan rather. First, I would like to cite Desired Outcome 1.1.4, Department Action Item 3. This action item states, "Provide guidance and prioritize funding opportunities for schools to offer more co curricular and extracurricular activities that are inclusive of all students — including those who are high-needs as well as all races/ethnicities (SY2023-24)." This action item perfectly defines what the Learning Centers do as they provide opportunities for all students to experience co curricular activities. CPAC specifically provides activities relating to the performing arts and are very inclusive as to who they have within their programs. This includes people of all different types of backgrounds, we've even had exchange students from other countries enroll within the learning center and perform onstage. By eliminating funding for the learning centers would not align with this Action Item but rather, go against it instead. Another Desired outcome I would like to cite is 1.3.1., Action item 1, "Provide training, coaching and resources for schools to offer age-appropriate experiences for career exploration and development that advances progressively through the K-12 continuum (SY2024-25)." As mentioned before, learning centers are open to all DOE students. This includes students from all over the island as well, not just those at Castle. We currently have students from schools ranging from Campbell all the way to Kalani. Action item 2 as well states "Provide more opportunities for students to apply their learning in a Hawai'i-based and global context". Recently, through the learning center, we were able to apply the skills we have developed in a global context. This last summer a group from CPAC were able to perform at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. I was part of this group. We have made memories, connections, and further developed our skills to a level we never would have dreamed of due to this opportunity. Also Action Item 6 States, "Partner with colleges and industry partners to broaden opportunities for accelerated high school students' attainment of college credits and industry-valued certificates" The Learning Center provides classes part of the early college program partnered with WCC in order to provide accelerated students college credits. This year as well, students part of the Theater Craft class, a class partnered with Castle High School and the learning center, are able to obtain OSHA certifications for free allowing students planning on going into virtually any industry to gain a head start. The next Desired Outcome, 1.3.2, Action item 1, states "Advocate for resources to expand extra and co curricular activities (such as athletics, e-sports, academic support, culture and arts) to engage and support middle school

11/01/2024

students and their families (SY2023-24)." I would like to emphasize the word "arts" included within that Action Item. The purpose of CPAC is to provide extra resources to all students and the community specifically related to performing arts. When including other Learning Centers, this expands outside just the arts and cocurricular in general. CPAC specifically has a program for younger students, 5th-8th grade, to give them opportunities to perform as well. This program is called Kids Start. All schools within the Castle complex are visited by a representative and taught the basics to performing. They then are given an opportunity to audition for the show we perform every year exclusive to Kids Start. Students from outside the Castle Complex are also welcome and highly recommended to come out and audition as well. This program provides a good fundamental start to many kids' careers in the performing arts. To conclude, I believe that the elimination and/or reducing the funds of the Learning Centers is a detriment to our community not just for Castle, but as the state of Hawaii as a whole. I'm aware that this is one of many opposing opinions to the DOE 's operating budget request, specifically, Row 77. I'm not sure how aware most of you are about this but all the Learning Centers throughout the state have banded together on social media to oppose this decision for the reasons I have stated. When I think of this, one term comes to mind, Ne'epapa. This is a perfect example of that as we have the entire community banding together in order to prevent a place they once called home or still do, from disappearing. Thus Mr. Superintendent and the rest of the board members, this concludes my proposal as to why I oppose the reduction of funds for the Learning Centers (Row 77).

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Jaimee Kasadate

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The DOE is planning to cut learning center budgets. In elementary and high school I was a part of the Castle Performing Arts Learning Center. Programs such as the arts and stem are incredibly important for childhood development. It is with the CPAC Learning Center that I developed skills such as communication, confidence, cooperation. In addition, my love for performing arts came from CPAC and now I am attending college in New York majoring in musical theatre because of the center and my teachers there. In addition, I've seen countless other kids come into the program and be so excited and have fun. This is where many people have found a safe and happy space to be themselves and get to find the love of performing. They bring joy to people in the community by performing. To cut learning centers would be to cut important learning opportunities for students of all ages.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### **Name**

Brayden Secio

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Members of The Board of Education,

My name is Brayden Secio, and I am an alumni of Roosevelt high school and current student at University of Hawaii West-Oahu. I am submitting this testimony to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget request for the Hawaii State Public Library System (HSPLS) for the fiscal biennium 2025-2027, which I believe jeopardizes the future of our state's essential learning centers.

Learning centers in our schools have a profound and irreplaceable impact on students and community members alike. They serve as hubs of inspiration, creativity, and knowledge-sharing for individuals of all ages. For me, personally, these resources were transformative. I found my passion and my path in life through my school's play production and media programs. Even though our programs had limited resources compared to others, my teachers made every effort to provide us with rich, valuable experiences. They fostered a spirit of creativity and innovation that I carry with me to this day.

Defunding these essential programs is not just a cut to the budget—it is, in effect, cutting off pathways for students to discover their passions and access new career opportunities, especially in industries growing here in Hawaii. Without robust funding, learning centers may lose the resources necessary to operate or, worse, face closure. This would be devastating not only for current students but also for our community's future.

To defund these programs is, essentially, to kill the opportunities they provide for young minds to engage, explore, and grow. We are at a critical moment where the foundation of education and creativity in our communities is at stake. Without these programs, many students might never discover their potential or the opportunities available to them, especially in fields crucial to Hawaii's future economy.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts that threaten to defund Hawaii's learning centers. Let's invest in the inspiration and education of our youth, just as past generations invested in us. Please consider preserving and protecting these invaluable resources that have changed lives and continue to open doors for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Brayden S

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Arlene Colis

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Learning Centers are essential to the dynamics of high schools. The one at my school has offered students employment opportunities, coordinated community events and school events, and fostered a sense of community amongst the students, instilling in them a sense of pride in the plants they cultivated with their own efforts. Further, it continues the enrichment opportunities for students after middle school. Many students have benefited from the funding opportunities provided to middle schools' enrichment programs. It would be a disservice to the same students after the transition to high school, where these enrichment programs are already scarce due to a lack of available staff (volunteer basis, but that's a problem for another topic).

Further, these programs keep students in a safe learning environment that allows them to further practice and apply their learning.

Please do not cut funds for Learning Centers statewide for the sake of the keiki.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### Name

Arlene Pai

### Organization

Radford High School

### Position/Title

Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Robert "Kapuni" Patcho is one of the most dedicated teachers on our campus. He provides his students with unique learning opportunities and opens up new career paths for students who are very much in danger of leaving high school without completing their education. He motivates them to stay in school and connects what they learn in the classroom to real-world experiences. He is the only building and construction teacher at our school and the levels range from R&C Construction 1, 2, and 3.

He also teaches 4 levels of Foundations of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources.

Mr. Patcho has a partnership with the Hawaii Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund, which runs a program whereby any student who takes 2 construction courses at Radford High School and receives a grade of B or better bypasses the hiring process that is required to join the union. His students gain direct entry into any of the Carpenters Union, both in the United States and Canada. They also circumvent the enrollment windows, which only happens twice a year. Students are enrolled into Honolulu Community College, where they will earn an Associates Degree in Applied Trades.

Here is a list of class of 2024 graduates who have joined the Hawaii Carpenters Union one week after graduation.

1. Azariah Sudog, Heidon Tolbe-Higa, Daniel Lopez, Jerico Labasan - Apex Construction
2. Makana Dayton - Swinerton
3. Jarelle Reganit - Coastal Construction

Their current pay starts at \$21.70 an hour with full benefits. Apprentices are expected to get a raise of \$3.00 to \$4.00 every 6 months or every 1,001 hours. Their maximum salary will top out at \$52 an hour or \$108,000 a year once they reach the journeyman level.

Mr. Patcho has been an invaluable member of our faculty and has guided many young men and women to successful careers where they earn a living wage and are able to afford to stay in Hawaii. Please do not cut the budget for such a valuable program. Thank you for your time and attention.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:28 AM

### **Name**

Jason Duncan

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Social Studies Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education Members:

I'm writing on behalf of Mililani High School students and teachers that are impacted by the proposed cuts to learning centers and programs such as the Central Theatre Arts Academy and the Science Learning Center. Upon hearing about the proposed cuts, I have been really disappointed and distraught about the prospect of the school having to make difficult decisions to keep these programs alive. I've seen firsthand how these programs benefit students both at the intellectual and socio-emotional level. A few years ago, I was an adult participant in the Central Theatre Arts Academy production of High School Musical. I was simply amazed at the time and energy students put into making this production be successful. Furthermore, Central Theatre Arts Academy was a safe haven for these students who could bond and develop positive relationships with peers, teachers, and support staff. Likewise, these programs provide students opportunity to make broader educational connections and to stretch their abilities through hands-on activities. It is through activities such as theater, robotics, etc... that students begin to make meaningful connections and build on knowledge/skills they learned acquired in a classroom setting.

I ask you to please reconsider the reallocation of funding for these programs. If anything, our students should be provided more of these opportunities and teachers should be compensated for the extra amount of time and energy they put into keeping these programs alive outside of regular class time. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Jason Duncan  
Mililani High School  
Social Studies Teacher  
Model UN Advisor  
History Day Coordinator



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:33 AM

### **Name**

Sherry Wakano

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear HIBOE Members,

My name is Sherry Wakano and I am a parent of a graduate from Waiakea High School who participated in the Waiākea TLC Robotics Program. I am writing to you in opposition of the Department of Education's Operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. This student run program not only encouraged and supported my son's passion for programming and computer science, it also gave him first hand and hands on exposure to what this field, and the future of this field will be. He is now a freshman at Oregon State University majoring in Computer Science Science and I honestly believe that the WHS TLC Program helped him decide to go into the direction of Computer Science and gave him the confidence to do so.

Learning to work with others, collaborate to achieve a common goal and be able to financially sustain this program were other instances where this program excelled in to influence their students. But they won't be able to continue without your support.

With the future trends in this field, there is a need to continue to direct and support students who will become the future. So please, continue your support for the Waiākea High School TLC Program for the SY2025-2027 and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sherry NT Wakano

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:33 AM

### **Name**

Kendra Antonides

### **Organization**

Oahu Vet Clinic

### **Position/Title**

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The agriculture program needs to be funded to help better the future and environment

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:36 AM

### **Name**

Kamerinn Williams

### **Organization**

Kaiser High School Media Communications Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Title: BOE Budget Meeting Written Testimony

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board of Education,

We are students from Kaiser High School writing on behalf of our film-oriented Learning Center. We recently heard about the potential cut in funding and would like to implore you to reconsider this decision. The funding provided to us is very important to our program as it provides us the means to purchase equipment such as cameras, microphones, and editing software. As more students join film and learn to express themselves through video creation, our equipment needs to be updated and expanded. Our current funding barely covers these needs and so with a cut in funding, our classes would no longer be able to stay up to date on technology advancements in the film industry. As a film class, we are teaching students skills that can help them in future employment opportunities. Therefore, outdated technology and equipment will hinder students' abilities and knowledge, making it harder to advance in both the class and in the industry.

In our IB Film class, the three of us have been given many wonderful opportunities that would be impossible without the funding given toward the Learning Center. We have been able to participate in filmmaking competitions such as Shoots Summit Hawaii as well as get a chance to compete in the upcoming national STN competition. Entering these contests have allowed us to expand our experience working in film as well as gain more knowledge and insight into the filmmaking process.

Because of the funding granted to our Learning Center, we were also given the opportunity to take a high-level film course over the summer at a local college for free. Not only has this shown us the college class experience, but the knowledge we gained from this course has significantly improved our cinematography and scriptwriting skills, making the videos we produce gain much higher quality.

Lastly, the biggest opportunity we were given is when we were able to work with the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, or the HIDTA, to make a short film that was shared with our community and its officials. Working with two representatives of the program and two other IB film students over the span of 3 months, we produced short films showcasing the dangers of substance abuse and social media addiction. The films gained a lot of attention from county officials and state board representatives; much of it due to our use of the high tech equipment and gear during production, which were all bought using the funds given to the Learning Center.

All of this would not have been possible without the funding provided to our Learning Center by the BOE. We hope that by continuing to provide us with funds to purchase equipment and software, students in succeeding classes after us will be granted the same opportunities and support we had.

Sincerely,

IB Film Seniors of Kaiser High School

11/01/2024

Alex Delgado  
10/31/2024

### Keep the Learning Center Program

With the learning center many students have been able to choose a career or have an idea what they want to be in the future. Also, being able to gain new skills or talents that they were only able to achieve due to the help of the learning center. The Learning Center has given people Academic Choices, talent development, Career Opportunities, safe environment, Academic enrichment, and social-emotional learning. From personal experience the learning center has made me the person I am today.

The Learning Center provides students and parents with academic choices. With the learning center students are able to explore their interest, develop skills, and also include CTE (Career and Technical Education). With CTE students are able to understand one specific career in that field. The learning center isn't open to specific people, it's open to everyone who wants to take part in it.

Due to some students not knowing their talents, the learning center is a perfect way to find out what you're good at. The fact that the learning center has many opportunities for students to improve any skills which help prepare them for the outside world. With the learning center you can also gain new talents or skills which can benefit students' futures. Students learning and improving their skills/talents tend to gain more confidence in that specific area they are good at. Due to the fact that the learning center has helped me improve many of my skills and help me gain many leadership opportunities.

Career Opportunities is the biggest part of the learning center. While being involved with the learning center it's a great way to start building their resume. Also, there are chances where students can get internships in organizations which are related to their career goal. It gives the student an opportunity to decide if that is the career they want to pursue or not. The career opportunities that the learning centers have is the reason why I'm pursuing business.

The learning center is a safe area for students to be open and build good connections. If you need someone to talk to but you don't want your friends to know about it then the teacher will always be there to hear your problem and give you advice on what you should do. Even though we keep the learning center safe, we want students to be able to have fun at the same time. The learning center is like a new family for students. I always found myself safe in the learning center knowing my friends and teacher were always there for each other.

Academic enrichment is also a big part of the learning center. With the learning center you're learning so many things and also during so many activities. Learning center can be also part of a club which students will enjoy due to the fact they will be having fun but also gain/learn new skills. For example, when I was in the learning center we had to make genki balls to throw into the ala wai and we learned about the purpose of the genki balls and what it's made of. The learning center is excellent in giving students fun, information, and activities.

The learning center is not only about learning it's also about supporting those with learning and emotionally. While asking for help the teacher will try to help to the best of their abilities if it is learning or emotional. Students don't always have to ask the teachers, there are other students who will be willing to help other fellow students. Due to the fact that the learning center is a safe place, no one is afraid to ask for help. For me the learning center was the safest place due to the fact I know I can talk to others about things and they will always support me.

In conclusion, the learning center gives so many opportunities for students to have such a good future. With the learning center they are able to gain/build talents and skills along their journey. The learning center provides so many opportunities for so many careers. The learning center is a safe place for students to talk among others and their teacher. Learning center is a good way to expand students' knowledge. The learning center is a second family who will always support you. If I didn't take part in the learning center I wouldn't be the person I am today.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:10 AM

### **Name**

Anna Sikkink

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

I'm writing to ask to please reconsider pulling funding from Hawaii's Student Learning Centers. I personally participated in the Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA) program at Mililani High throughout my high school career, and have seen the incredible impact it had on students, including myself. Many students who don't find their place in sports or other competitive extracurricular programs find a sense of belonging in Learning Centers like performing arts, STEM, business, and agriculture. I gained additional knowledge and skills beyond the classroom from being a part of a Performing Arts Learning Center, including construction through building stage sets, use of power tools, using sewing machines to create custom clothes for costume design, and teamwork and coordination from taking part in backstage operations during performances. We also had the opportunity to learn about light and sound operation, stage management, performing live music, performing on stage, and front of house operations before, during, and after each show. I made lifelong friendships and many of the skills I learned through this experience were helpful as I transitioned to college and my career. I still look back on my time at CTAA fondly and am so grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the program.

In my career now, I work directly with students and teachers and have seen first hand how beneficial these Learning Centers are for Hawaii's students, giving them a chance to develop both hard and soft skills beyond the classroom, find a place they feel accepted, and help them succeed academically throughout high school, college, and beyond. I've seen how students gain so much from participating in robotics programs - our students have been winning tournaments and going on to national competitions, showcasing how much they are excelling from participating these programs. The topics covered in these learning programs and the additional hands-on learning opportunities they afford would not be possible within a regular school day or classroom setting, and our teachers have been so dedicated to put in the extra time and effort to build these extracurricular programs for our students. Because of this, I believe that these programs are just as important, if not more, than sports - which are not at risk of losing their funding.

By removing funding from these Learning Centers, many programs will no longer be able to sustain on their own, and students will no longer have access to these opportunities. This would be a huge negative impact on Hawaii's students. I ask that you please reconsider the proposed budget, and find a way to continue to fund Learning Centers for Hawaii's students. Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:36 AM

### **Name**

Lilly Balukoff

### **Organization**

Castle performing High school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the budget line 77

I have been in the performing arts program since 6th grade and every year after that I have auditioned for all of the musicals I could. Right now I am doing an acting class, I am in CDE(Castle dance ensemble), and I am Jovie in the musical Elf. If it weren't for the performing arts program, I would not be at Castle high school right now. I would have been in a private school that I did get into but decided not to go to for the performing arts. I really love this program and would hate to see it gone.



To the Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kian Kelly, and I'm an alumni of Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to oppose the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which will take away important educational, social, and career opportunities for students.

The Learning Center provides an experience that teaches students skills not normally taught in the classroom. In robotics, we apply what we learn in class (math, physics, science, etc.) to a real project with a strict timeline guided by mentors experienced in the industry. This challenges students to be creative, persistent, solve problems, and manage a full scale project. Along the course of the robotics season, students develop engineering skills including programming, manufacturing, and computer aided design. In college and in industry, these skills are crucial and absolutely necessary for STEM majors.

As Mr. Kikugawa always told us, "You get out of the program what you put in." the potential for what students can gain from this program is limited only by the students determination to learn.

Similarly to sports, the Learning Centers program brings together students with similar interests and fosters lifelong friendships. The hours spent working on robotics projects creates a close bond between the team. I've personally met some of my best friends through the robotics team whom I never would have met otherwise.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kian Kelly  
kellkian@oregonstate.edu

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:23 AM

### **Name**

Kaylee Cieri

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the Budget Line 77.

As a student that is involved with one of the learning centers (CPAC) I have learned so much and gained so many opportunities from the program. I have been with this learning center for the past 8 years since I started with CPAC when I was in 5th grade. I oppose budget line 77 because the funding supports the programs that allow imagination and creativity among students. Taking away learning centers will cut down the opportunities younger students have.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Keoki Tudela

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Daelyn Doeh

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to oppose the cutting of funding & submitting testimony to help keep our special Music Learning Center distinction and funding in all the schools nationwide. My son is currently a band student at KHIS and it is such an amazing program for the students and the community.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Jo Ann Mastin

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

While the idea of redistributing funding to fulfill the overall needs of the Department of Education is needed, I feel that reducing funding for Learning Centers across our state would be detrimental for our students and the communities that take pride in the work that come from places like the Nanakuli Performing Arts Center (NPAC). I witnessed the work of Robin Kitsu at a recent Hawaii Alpha Delta Kappa Founders' Day on October 13, 2024. His testimony left the room of educators inspired as the impact of such a program not only makes a difference in students but also the greater community. The students who performed that day benefit from a program that's been 30-plus years in the making. Programs like take time to grow and to cut off funding now would simply be a detriment to the work they've done so far.

At James Campbell High School, our learning center has been isolated to one field where we once had two fields for our students to work and grow produce. One of the fields now houses another building to accommodate our large population. Our natural resources pathway, while small, needs financial resources, not just to sustain the daily workings of the program, but to encourage students to participate in organizations like Future Farmers of America. Our students, when given such opportunities flourish.

Our Department of Education is large and does need to consider where they allot their budget, but not at the cost of programs like our learning centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Elizabeth Ratliff

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

Associate Professor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Honorable Members of the Board,

This testimony is submitted in opposition to the proposed cuts to the funding of Learning Centers in our public schools. While I understand that a shrinking demographic of K-12 must be causing some serious budgetary woes, I do caution the Board to carefully consider the impact to students that would be caused by shutting down these valuable learning centers. As educators, our concern must focus on student needs and preparing them for the world that they are about to face. That world is changing rapidly, at a pace never seen before in the history of mankind. What I am speaking about specifically is the impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to have on our society, starting with this generation.

The impact of AI is already being felt across the country as AI replaces call centers, robots deliver restaurant food, and automation replaces stock workers and greeters at retailers. According to the World Economic Forum's 2020 report, *The Future of Jobs*, by the year 2025, 85 million jobs currently performed by humans will be done by machines (WEF, 2021). Today, society is moving from the information or digital age to what researchers are calling the fourth industrial revolution, also known as the age of artificial intelligence (Schwab, 2017). The reality that this generation will face is a world where the only jobs that will be available to them require complex skill sets tailored to adapt to our technological realities.

As a researcher studying AI in Education, my job is to ask the question of what those skill sets are and how do we prepare for them? With the rate of change in AI development and quantum computing, what we can predict is that this generation is likely to see a move beyond narrow AI (machine learning) where learning to use these tools (digital literacy, quantitative reasoning, and command of natural languages) was sufficient for them to use AI to turn raw data into something meaningful or to make some decision. As we move to general AI (machine reasoning), the skills needed to adopt and adapt to these technologies must expand as truly thinking machines will need guidance in philosophy (ethics, logic, epistemology, ontology, and consciousness), physics (Higgs boson or God particle, neural networks), and psychology reinforcement learning, machine-human interactions) (Casey, 2022). Critical thinking, story-telling, and philosophy are the key skills this generation will have to master to deal with intelligent systems (Mishra and Siy, 2020) and require us as educators to expand our interdisciplinary offerings.

My question to you as educators is, where in your academic programs are you able to best teach these kinds of skills?

Problem-solving, story-telling, critical thinking, ethics, and the human condition are taught in the Humanities, specifically in learning centers that support active learning, such as the Castle High School Performing Arts Center. Currently, AI is moving from narrow intelligence to general intelligence, but there is a foreseeable future where AI surpasses human intelligence. What we are teaching our children now will decide whether our future with machine learning will look more like Star Trek or more like Terminator. Let us not cut off our noses in spite of our faces; we should be expanding our humanities programs and getting more students involved, especially in those educational spaces that actively teach problem-solving, ethics, philosophy, storytelling, and critical thinking. We should not be cutting our learning centers; they will be vital to our future! Let us instead give our Hawaii students a role in the AI technologies future; our island culture is particularly rich in storytelling and ethics. These are the skills that need to be brought forward to our larger community, the nation, and indeed the world to help us adapt to the technological future that faces us all. The future employment of our children rests on how we prepare them for a world dominated by AI; let us focus on giving them the skills that they will need to thrive. The future of our society will likely rest on how well these students can parlay those skills into responsible technology. Please continue to support funding for our public school Learning Centers.

#### References

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- Mishra, A.; Siy, H. An interdisciplinary approach for teaching artificial intelligence to computer science students. In Proceedings of the 21st Annual Conference on Information Technology Education, Virtual Event, 7-9 October 2020; p. 344.
- Schwab, K. (2017 ). The Fourth Industrial Revolution. New York: Crown.
- WEF. (2021). The Future of Jobs 2021. Retrieved 7 12, 2020, from World Economic Forum: <http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2018/>

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 11:45 AM

### Name

Bobbie Ann Hanohano

### Organization

Kahuku High School Marching Band Alumni

### Position/Title

Alumni/Current Math Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

### Written Testimony

#### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I am a Kahuku High & Intermediate Alumni, I am also a Marching Band Alumni (1990-1993). Marching Band was one of the best things I did in High School, it not only kept me from getting into trouble, it taught me courage, patience, how to work hard, be successful and to win. I oppose the budget cuts that DOE is proposing where it impacts Kahuku High School Marching Band & Vocal Motion (Music Program), as educators, as parents, and as a community our children deserve to be funded and recognized for their efforts and hard work just as other sports are. If these funds are cut, the backlash effects it will have can be detrimental not only for the Music Program in a while, but it will be a blow to our students moral, their motivation to perform, and their self esteem. If DOE stands for caring for "the whole child" cutting these fund will prove that statement is far from the truth or agenda that students, parents, and educators believe.

Mahalo.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:55 AM

### **Name**

Rovielyn Faith Piso

### **Organization**

Farrington Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

If I were to relive any part of my high school days, it would be on stage. Feeling the warmth of the spotlight, in an echoing auditorium, singing, dancing, and laughing while we rehearse and move through scenes. My life now wouldn't have been the same without theater. My friends, my family, my independence, and my view of the world expanded every time I see the curtains open and hear the audience cheer. Theater has opened not only my eyes but the eyes of countless students. Along with their directors and mentors whom also share their love of the stage. Vocal coaches, stage managers, sound technicians, costume designers, choreographers, cosmetologists, set designers, they all carry a piece of a puzzle that do not also include the students or actors/actresses but the puzzle of community. It's the passion and dedication within a community that makes a show come to life. Full of all those talented individuals are the ones behind all the performing art centers. They've all gained from their experience and have nurtured its craft to be able to put their best self out into the world.

In the words "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" written by William Shakespeare in his play "As You Like It" shows not only is theater in the spotlight but it's also the Earth we walk on. I've first taken to the stage as someone who wasn't able to be heard. Others who were also accounted for as shy and quiet or scared and timid. But after some time and with the help of my acting group I've gained the knowledge and excitement of what it's like to perform. Making a story come to life, piecing together a character who could be completely different to myself. Performing to the audience and sharing all the laughter and cries together. I've learned how to become a better version of myself, putting myself in these characters, setting the scene along the story, showing emotion with every word in my lines. Showing myself what my past, present, and future could look like with just my imagination. Saying "yes, and" to every possible thought just to see what could come next. I was fortunate enough to have the support and push from everyone who enjoy seeing me perform. Creating memories and learning from my mistakes to make me such a capable young adult. Gathering friends who I can always count on and learning from directors who are always happy to teach me. Theater, performing, watching, and experiencing. It's what I love the most during my time in school. And I hope even more students are able to experience that. To discover a side of them that is meant for the stage and to share with the world their stories and to create such an encapsulating experience.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:36 AM

### **Name**

Shane Kaneshiro

### **Organization**

Alumni of McKinley High School

### **Position/Title**

Alumni of 2024

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello,

My name is Shane Kaneshiro, and I am an alumnus of McKinley High School, class of 2024. I oppose this agenda item. When I was in High School, I was in the Tiger Media Academy, which will be in jeopardy of being cut from the school due to this item due to this agenda item. This academy has shaped my high school experience as a whole, teaching me and giving me lifelong experiences that I will cherish for the rest of my life. If you continue with this agenda item, it won't just affect the current students who attend the school, it will affect the future students throughout the state.

Thank you for letting me testify today.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:33 AM

### **Name**

Ablan Landon

### **Organization**

McKinley highschool

### **Position/Title**

Alumni 2024

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Landon Ablan and I am a 2024 alumni of McKinley High School. I am opposing this agenda item. I am a graduate of the McKinley highschool TMLC program. I was a part of the graphics department. And while I was never great at graphic design, it taught me many valuable lessons. It taught me how to operate with technology better. And it taught me hard work, staying in afterschool everyday to complete a project. But I am not opposing it for myself, but for the students. I know many students who have excelled in the TMLC program, and those students have gone to college for majors relating to what they did in TMLC. Graphic design, film, and media are important to the alumni and the future students. The world is changing, and it's changing fast. Students must learn these technology based skills to excel in the future. I ask whoever may read this to not go through with the agenda item. If the TMLC program is cut, countless students futures will be altered as they will never be able to know their passion. This is for the future of Hawaii as a whole. Thank you for letting me testify.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Ikaika Hussey

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha kakou:

My name is Ikaika Hussey. I live in Kalihi Uka, Oahu. I am appearing here today as a private citizen, though for I am a candidate for the House of Representative, which is an institution which Kamehameha III established in 1841, during a time when Hawaii was becoming a global leader in education and literacy. I have some experience with educational finance: I serve as a trustee for an independent school; I am a former DOE and charter school teacher; and I worked for a short time as a House Finance budget analyst responsible for the DOE budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the operating budgets of both the Hawaii State Public Library System and the Department of Education.

I am dismayed to read that this Board is preparing to vote on budgets that includes significant cuts to these two key public programs. I believe firmly that we should be spending more, not less, on public education. And given that many of my constituents are students in DOE schools, I urge this body to reconsider the actions being contemplated today.

I understand the political exigency of the moment, and the desire to present a rational and reasonable budget. But I cannot countenance an austerity budget. Please present the Legislature with a fiscal request that incorporates your greatest ambitions for our educational system and our students. Set the standards high and give us the vision and pedagogical latticework to achieve it. And please charge the Legislature to do our job, which is to figure out how to provide the resources necessary to support your vision.

Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

amy sulunga

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha-

My name is Amy Tuiaana Sulunga, alumnus and current parent of a Kahuku High & Intermediate School student. I write in opposition to VIII: Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 that would jeopardize Kahuku's special Music Learning Center's distinction.

Many generations of North Shore students and families have been positively impacted by our Learning Center, including my own family which is on our 2nd generation of band students. Endless studies on the positive impact music has on the brain, on mental health, on reducing anxiety, blood pressure, and pain as well as improving sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and memory. It's a no brainer to support music in our schools.

The center itself is a safe haven for our kids to dive deeper into their musical talents whether they're in Esther Macy's national award winning choir or Pablo Furukawa's band making an exciting comeback to the marching band arena. Kids are encouraged to hone their performing skills, know the importance of daily practice, self discipline, make and keep commitments, and are able to explore their artistic talents here. Things are just getting more exciting with Mr. Furukawa's brave endeavor to revive our marching band, once labeled Pride of the North Shore, & the recipient of many state and national contests.

Please vote against the Agenda Item "VIII: Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 as it would negatively impact our learning centers across the state. We support music in our schools, these learning centers,& the distinctions they receive that helps with how they're funded.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Amy Sulunga

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

Lisa Ponce de Leon Terai

### **Organization**

Ponce de Leon

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The board does not need any more money. Why would you take this knowledge and experience away from the students? These programs are vital to their growth as a human being and to able to adapt into society. If anything, we should cut your pay. And add more, educational programs for students. I work with Kaimuki High School theater department. They do a wonderful job and it's a great experience. I watched them grow over the years and I can't believe that this program will be taking away from them.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:59 PM

### **Name**

Mason Selley

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Reducing funding for learning centers will negatively impact the students by reducing their opportunities to see and participate in disciplines they want to pursue in the future. Another option should be available. Think of the students.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Natasha Boteilho

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, my name is Natasha Boteilho. I am a C/O 95 graduate of Waianae HS, Entrepreneur and community member in Waianae. I am writing to OPPOSE the budget cut to the Learning Centers that will affect many schools here on Oahu. I am a successful product of the Learning Ctr at WHS. I found my love for science thru the Marine Learning Ctr in 1994. We gained knowledge thru hands on learning in our aquaponic tanks, learning about salinity and PH levels to grow limu, fish and shrimp to survive. We learned how to raise, maintain and sell these products at farmers markets and direct sells since there was no such thing as social media. With these funds we were able to travel to Kona and learn from bigger Aquaponic farms how to turn our small classroom into a bigger operation. We learned about self sustainability, the importance of limu and trying to revive and produce a natural food source of Hawaii Nei. The Marine Science program opened doors for us with Polynesian Voyaging Society. We were able to learn from Nainoa Thompson and Mau Piailug about navigational sailing aboard Hokulea on a 1 week sail around Oahu. As an entrepreneur, I still buy and sell limu purchased thru the Marine Science Learning Ctr. That's 30 yrs of connections in our community for our community. My kids are 2nd generation entrepreneurs who also make pickle limu for their own personal fundraisers.

If you buy any poke from Makaha to Nanakuli, odds are the limu in the poke came from the Marine Science Learning Ctr.

As you can see, I am just one of many stories of how the LEARNING CENTERS can impact a students life. I hope my testimony makes you all reconsider slashing the budget and maybe reconsider adjusting the budget so these centers can continue to impact the lives of our students.

Mahalo Nui,  
Natasha Boteilho



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:57 AM

### **Name**

Rebekah Laurion

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Cutting the budget for State Learning Centers will significantly harm students by reducing their opportunities for STEM and fine arts programs. These programs are not only important learning opportunities, but they provide students with close-knit communities of like-minded students who support each other. My son was a part of The Central Theater Arts Academy (CTAA) for the last 3 years and I cannot overstate how his participation in that program got him through high school. It's where he developed his deepest friendships and had space to be creative and seen. Too many high-school age kids struggle with school, friends, and self-esteem and we lose too many of them to dropping out, drugs, or suicide. Do not take away these essential communities from kids who desperately need them.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

Alexis Schmid

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board of Education, I like school so I do not support this thank you

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 11:47 PM

### **Name**

Alexandra Tom

### **Organization**

Moanalua High School - World Language Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Secretary

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello my name is Alex Tom and I am currently a junior at Moanalua High School. I am serving as the secretary for the WLLC (World Language Learning Center) this school year. I have been in the club since my freshman year and throughout my high school career so far, this club has had a significant impact. I've made friends, built connections with teachers, and learned more about various cultures from around the world. Without this club I truly believe I would've been an entirely different student that I am now. Please reconsider the impact your decision will have on the young minds because it matters so much more than you may think. Thank you for your consideration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:55 AM

### **Name**

Erin Kojima

### **Organization**

Waiakea High School Robotics

### **Position/Title**

Participant

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am an alum of the Waiakea High School robotics program, where I was taught the basics of robotics and, more importantly, learned that I could be an engineer one day. I participated in robotics from elementary through to high school, and it was a formative part of my childhood. Robotics brought me not only STEM exposure, but also community and opportunity. Through robotics, I was able to travel to the mainland and abroad for competitions and met people from around the world who had the same interests as I did. Because of all this experience, I chose to major in computer science and did, in fact, become a software engineer, and still am one today. Without robotics, I would not have even known this was a career option for me.

The robotics program benefited greatly from the learning centers budget, as building and shipping a possibly 50+ lb robot to the mainland every year is costly, on top of the high registration fees for competitions. Not only that, but we also have many amazing mentors from the community who help build up the skills of students like me, and it is great to give them the financial support they need to do good work.

Please do not cut out learning centers from school budgets. Learning centers like robotics give students the opportunity to explore their potential and could very much impact the rest of their lives, like it did for me.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:09 PM

### **Name**

Kekela Oku-Fernandez

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a Castle Performing Arts Center alumni, it is absolutely devastating to hear the news of the proposed funding cuts for Learning Centers. CPAC was an essential part of my education as a young student and continues to be the foundation on which I build upon in adulthood. With the cut of this funding, individual schools will be forced to make incredibly difficult decisions with their allotted budgets which will not side in favor of Learning Center programs. It should absolutely not be on schools and teachers to find the funding for their programs, let alone programs that are essential to building and nurturing the young minds who will go on to become the pillars of our communities and the world at large. My involvement in a Learning Center program allowed me to find a pathway I was passionate about, so much so that I continued my studies in post-secondary education, and now am able to apply that knowledge through my career as a Technician/Associate Technical Director working to support a secondary educational performing arts program. I have witnessed many of my peers forge pathways of their own in which they continue to use their education to follow their dreams, and inspire and educate the next generation. I have seen first hand the success of properly funded programs with the quality of work and students they are able to produce, and also their ability to sustain their programs. How can we expect greatness from the next generation without investment? Please reconsider the proposed budget cuts and protect the funding of Learning Centers. Mahalo.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:09 PM

### **Name**

Todd Sato

### **Organization**

Hilo High School

### **Position/Title**

Secondary Educator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

According to VIII Department of Education's Operating Budget for 2025-2027, I want to submit that this would be a disservice for all students in these Learning Centers, especially ours which is called, PALC, (Performing Arts Learning Center) here at Hilo High School. So please do not cut these programs since many of our students here at Hilo High enjoys performing for our parents and community leaders. They should continue to improve on their skills so that they will be productive in our society. So I want to ask to stop this cutting of this budget and to allow our students to be successful and proud to be awesome young ladies and gentleman. My daughter enjoyed her 3 years here at Hilo High by creating the stages and other scenery.

Much mahalo and aloha,

Mr. Todd Sato

Hilo High School

Social Studies Department Head

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:07 PM

### **Name**

Jeferson Streiff

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, Board of Education. I am a former graduate of Castle High School and a former member of Castle Performing Arts Center (CPAC). I am testifying against the proposed budget cuts to the learning centers all across Hawai'i.

From my Sophomore year to my Senior year- I was heavily involved with CPAC. I quite literally could not imagine where I would be without it. I first moved to Oahu back during the pandemic in the fall of 2020. I was in a completely new environment, I knew nobody, and I was just starting high school. It was not the ideal situation for any kid. However, there was a class that I was a part of that made me feel welcome to my new home. That class was my Exploratory Drama class. I had the pleasure of being taught by the wonderful Kami Wakabayashi, who encouraged my crazy antics and gave me the place to be myself. She was the teacher who introduced me to the performing arts and I was hooked on it pretty fast. Fast forward to my sophomore year and we were beginning to attend classes in person.

All of a sudden, it was like I was back to the first day of freshman year. I knew nobody and I was in a completely new environment. However, thanks to Karen Meyer and Kami Wakabayashi, I found a home at CPAC. They welcomed me with big arms and I instantly met lots of wonderful people. I learned how to express myself, I learned how to deal with conflict, and I learned how to channel my energy into creation. The learning center helped provide the resources needed to teach me how to do live sound for theater. I am currently pursuing Sound Design as a degree and it's all because of CPAC.

Highschool has given me many hard times, and there was a time where I didn't quite think I would make it. Because of the support I had from my teachers, I was able to push through those hard times and keep trying my best. I think that if the Performing Arts centers all across the island were to disappear, you would truly be doing a disservice to the hundreds of kids who don't have somewhere to fit in. CPAC accepted everybody- kids who were queer, kids who were lost, we even had foreign exchange students perform with us.

Please, don't take away the Performing Arts. There are many kids' futures that you would completely destroy.

Thank you for your time.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:36 AM

### **Name**

Milena Hernandez

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a CPAC alumni, performing arts programs are a necessity to students. These programs are the only place where many students find acceptance and safety. CPAC instills life skills and confidence in students. This program prepared me for the "real world" more than anything else would. I learned to work hard for what I want. I learned how to express myself, how to handle rejection and disappointment, and how to take feedback to be better. I learned hard skills like how to build and use power tools, because all the sets are built by students. Many students would not have access to dance, music, and stagecraft classes without these programs. When you cut funding to arts programs in public schools, you are sending the message that if you can't afford private classes, it's not for you. That is a huge disservice to the children in our community. Our children deserve to have a safe learning environment that fosters their creativity and talents. Performing Arts should be accessible to every public school student because these programs prepare students to have a successful future, no matter what they choose to do.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:47 AM

### **Name**

Anonymous ~

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Chair and Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027, which proposes to cut funding for public school learning center programs. As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the impact this lack of funding will have on our children and our community.

As a parent of a child who attended one of these learning centers, I have seen its impact in helping my child become a strong, confident, and high achieving young person in this world.

I believe the arts and sports in schools should be treated equally, as they both help students develop their skills in teamwork, communication, and leadership. The arts and sports instill the values of hard work, perseverance, respect, and trust. Yet however, the arts are often ignored and easily placed to the wayside by many.

My hope is for the DOE to look at budgets with a certain lens, whereby funding for the arts and sports are woven together. If there is a proposed decrease in funding for the arts then there should be an equal proposed decrease in funding for sports. Viewing it in this perspective, I hope members pause and reflect and open their eyes to the overlooked impact the arts have on our students, which no amount of money could ever replace.

Mahalo for your consideration in this matter.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:23 PM

### Name

Shayla Basuel

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

As a past student who was lucky enough to have had access to performing arts programs during my time in high-school it would be a saddening to know that future students will no longer have that same opportunity. Please, please

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do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Sincerely,  
Shayla B.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

Morgan Krens

### **Organization**

Windward Community College

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board of Education,

Cutting the theater budget would be detrimental to our students in ways that are not being considered. Theater programs do more than just teach students how to act, dance and sing. It is used as a tool for learning public speaking, teaching empathy, and can be a coping mechanism when navigating school as a growing individual. It may seem like a dead end path but not only have countless people been successful in the performing arts but it sets students up to be successful in other areas of study and career paths where appealing to an audience can be essential such as marketing, realty, politics, and much more. Personally, the performing arts has always been a healthy and creative outlet for me that has prevented me from being self destructive and given me a reason to continue moving forward through devastating times in my life. To preach about mental health these days and then take away one of the biggest most accessible coping mechanisms from students would be denying a safe space that many already rely on heavily. Please reconsider this decision.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:23 PM

### **Name**

Shannon Hill

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Art, music, and the performing arts are vital to a healthy society, and must be fully funded in our public schools. Every school should have art, music, and performing arts programs led by highly qualified teachers. The arts should not be subjected to constant cuts and threats of cuts. Advocating for the arts should not be an endless endeavor. The importance of the arts is well documented, and well known. I support art, music, and performing arts being in all public schools.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:09 PM

### **Name**

Rachel Morgan

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

We want to keep the funding for our after school programs and theatre programs in DOE schools across hawaii

For 40 years, the DOE has funded 29 learning centers at middle and high schools across the state. The centers typically host after-school and weekend programs ranging from theater classes and film production classes to robotics competitions, providing students with field trips and training they wouldn't otherwise experience during a traditional school day.

Each learning center is given an annual budget of \$17,000 and a part-time coordinator, but the DOE proposed in its published budget request to eliminate the appropriation for these centers next year and cut coordinator positions in 2026. The department cited the need to maintain overall funding levels and use its resources more efficiently. This is a huge blow to programs that would directly support future workers in our industry.

We oppose this budget cut and want to keep the children of Hawaii educated in all faculties of the word, including the arts!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:30 PM

### **Name**

June Misaki

### **Organization**

Retired babysitting

### **Position/Title**

Babysitter

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

There is no universe where eliminating the theater program at PCHS would e resulted in a sane, productive, excellent Federal worker that my daughter has become. I am so proud of her achievements but know in no uncertain terms that this would not have been possible without the theater program. TRUTH. Please think of all struggling teens and help them to find their place in this world by offering them a "different" means to success. This program got her out of SPED and into regular classes and onto graduation. Don't abandon those that struggle

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:33 PM

### **Name**

Siaumau Song

### **Organization**

Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Keeping the learning center can help us to get the full experience of what we want to do in the future. It can help us to better understand more about the subject and how it/everything works.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:33 PM

### **Name**

Claire Sorge

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Claire de Lune. I was a student at Castle High School from 2019 to 2023, and much of my time there was spent in the performing arts center. I had been performing since I was a kid and chose to go to Castle specifically for their theatre program, as my family didn't live in the area. Throughout my time in CPAC I've made lifelong friends, learned valuable lessons, and found a way to pave my own path in life. I currently attend the Hawai'i Acting Conservatory, working to become a full-time performer, all made possible because of CPAC.

If funding is removed whatsoever from the learning centers, it would be a grave injustice to those who cannot afford other opportunities. Not only is theatre fun, but it creates a safe space for children to be themselves and teaches valuable lessons. Statistics even back up the importance of theatre-according to the American Alliance for Theatre & Education, students involved in drama outscore non-arts students on the SAT by an average of 99 points, and performing students' attendance is better. Drama improves reading comprehension, communication skills, empathy, creativity, collaboration, teamwork, time management, confidence, and more-all skills required in any field of study and throughout life.

The learning center funding should also not be removed for STEAM, engineering, agriculture, media, health, music, and business. Public school students don't always have money available to look for teaching outside of the classroom. Most look to these centers to teach them the skills to pull themselves out of poverty. Removing this funding would prevent a bridge between classes-something life nowadays has made even harder.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### Name

Mara Kaizawa Hiramoto

### Organization

President William McKinley High School - Tiger Media Learning Center

### Position/Title

Teacher, Learning Center Coordinator

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

The Learning Center Programs offer students learning enrichment opportunities in a particular field. As a Coordinator of President William McKinley High School's Tiger Media Learning Center (TMLC), I have witness firsthand what the Learning Center can do for our students. It is through the half position that we are able to find the time to plan and coordinate, as well as complete all the paperwork required of us to put on extra events such as community service, field trips, guest speakers and trips off island. The additional funds helped TMLC to no only offer these extras to our students, who's demographics is of mostly lower social economics, but to also offer learning equipment that aligns with the creative media industry. Our students are able to learn the various technical skills needed to be successful in pursuing a career path in Graphic Technology or Film & Media Productions while learning employability skills that can translate to any career. As a Learning Center, we are held accountable through an evaluation that encompasses all stakeholders.

Here are some of what our students say:

- TMLC has helped me learn all about cameras, mics and lenses, and TMLC has helped me make new friends and explore the world around me. (Chase % 2025)

- I feel like the world needs more programs like this because we're an extreme lack of art and it's in demand. (Zyler % 2025)

- For me, I really think that the Tiger Media Learning Center, it's really a great way for me to connect with other people who are interested in video making. But through these classes, actually, I've been able to really develop my speaking skills. (Carissa % 2025)

- This program is kind of like, what do you do next for college and stuff? Because I learned a lot of stuff like on the field trips. I remember going to UH West Oahu, I would never have imagined even thinking about going there. (Elven % 2025)

- Tiger Media Learning Center has helped me a lot in my career path because I really appreciate all the opportunities we get. I think that having these competitions really helped me to learn what it's going to be like to film in a real life setting. And I'm trying to be a film student, so this is also important to me and all the opportunities I would never be able to do if we didn't have what we have in the classroom. (Aubrey % 2025)

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- Thanks to all the field trips and all the competitions and all the people, the networking, the community events that this film program has exposed me to. I was really able to get insight on what my career could be like after I graduate. I feel like this really fueled my passion for film, just being able to see how people are making these kinds of things behind the scenes. That has become my passion now. Like I've found my passion through here, and I think that's really something, an opportunity that I'm really I feel very lucky to have. (Jennifer % 2024)

- Here's how TMLC has impacted my life. First, it's given me a platform to express myself. Secondly, it's allowed me to be creative and implement my ideas through Digital Media. Third, it's built my communication, team building, professionalism and problem solving skills. Fourth, it's given me opportunities to enter competitions local and nationwide to earn prizes and recognition. Fifth, it has left a lasting impact on my life. (Gavin % 2024)

To cut funding to the Learning Center Programs would be detrimental to so many students. There will be no way schools can match the funding of the Learning Center Programs at the school level. We are asking to oppose Agenda Item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium, and to restore funding back to the Learning Center Program. Thank you for your consideration and support.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:30 PM

### **Name**

Logan Kamakele-Cordeiro

### **Organization**

Nanakuli Performing Arts Center Alumnus

### **Position/Title**

Graduate

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public school. Performing Arts has helped me throughout my life because in the past, I was a very troubled kid who went through a lot during my childhood. But when I discovered theater, it changed my life learning to be a better, responsible person, and a role model to my community. Please I beg of you, don't break their hearts. Because this is a place where they are not alone and know that they're family. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Logan Kamakele-Cordeiro

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:33 PM

### **Name**

Keivn Turner

### **Organization**

Kama`aina

### **Position/Title**

Self

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose cuts to the DOE budget that will affect public school learning centers across the state. This \$17,000 annual budget per learning center has been in place for 40 years and would reduce student access to film production and theater classes, business internships and robotics competitions. Please give kids in public schools more opportunities not less. Mahalo

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:23 PM

### **Name**

Joshua Meredith

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Keep funding learning centers for middle and high school students across the state. Don't cut their funding. The amount of positive impact on student's lives and ultimately on the local economy that is developed and supported by these learning centers, their teachers and staff, is far greater than the small amount of funding they require. Instead, figure out a way to increase funding to learning centers as part of a strategy to further diversify Hawaii's economy, because the results will more than pay for themselves.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:40 PM

### **Name**

Geneva Esguerra

### **Organization**

Mililani Performing Arts Learning Center /CTAA

### **Position/Title**

Learning coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,  
My name is Geneva Esguerra and I am the Performing Arts Learning Center Coordinator at Mililani High School which is more commonly known as Central Theatre Arts Academy. I come to this meeting with a unique perspective because although I am a coordinator now. I started my journey with Hawaii Learning Centers as a student. These programs raised me to pursue my passions and inspired me to become the educator I am today. I am asking this board today to take serious consideration of this budget and to oppose the decision to shift the responsibility of learning center funding from states to schools. You have heard the testimony of many of our students because what this budget decision evokes is fear and uncertainty. Under state funding, there is a level of protection that ensures the survival of these programs. When shifted to school level funding we are suddenly exposed to an overwhelming amount of variables that could mean the end of our programs. We are asking our already financially strained schools to choose between our Learning Centers or a surplus of other valuable school initiatives. A choice that they didn't have to make as the DOE Stated, for four decades. The money to fund all of our learning centers is just a small drop in the bucket of this budget proposal. What our students and I are asking is that you simply continue protect these learning Center funds as you have already done till this point.

Mahalo and thank you for your time

Geneva K Esguerra

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:40 PM

### **Name**

Elissa Rudolph

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Opposing educational programs to be defunded. These programs no matter what are important to all students for their future.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:23 PM

### **Name**

Daniel Li

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Board Members,

I hope this message finds you all well. My name is Daniel Li, and I am an alumni of Kalani High School, and a three-year participant in the band. Though I am a young man, I feel that I should speak on this issue. My experiences in the band program have formed core memories that I will never forget, and taught me important life lessons in perseverance, leadership, and hard work. As far as I know, Kalani High School is not affected by the proposed spending cuts, however I feel compelled to speak out in support of the affected programs. I have many friends who've participated in band programs which would be affected, as well as others participating in STEM programs. In order to keep these opportunities alive for more students like me, I would encourage the Board to continue funding for these critical Learning Center programs.

Thank you,

Daniel Li

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:40 PM

### **Name**

Heidi Hui

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I, Heidi Hui, oppose the agenda item: VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027. I am an alumni of McKinley High School, its TMLC program has helped me experience what the graphic design career is about. I hope you can hear my rejection out. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:30 PM

### **Name**

Myja Stevens

### **Organization**

CTAA

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This is my first year in CTAA. Before this I've never really been a part of a theatre program, even though it's been an interest of mine. I've been in various organized activities and sports but never been introduced by a more welcoming group of people. Everyone is so genuine because they are doing something that brings them joy to their life, and helps them build for their future careers. It's creating a new passion of mine, but also many upcoming kids would like to pursue this in the future too. Central Theatre Arts Academy creates a safe space for kids.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:54 PM

### **Name**

Laura Toterò

### **Organization**

Local 665

### **Position/Title**

Costumer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please keep all our learning centers - including KHSPAC, Castle Performing Arts Center, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center going. Do not Defund!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:50 PM

### **Name**

Joshua Diaz Palomo

### **Organization**

Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear BOE,

Hello, my name is Joshua Diaz Palomo and I'm a student that attends Lahainaluna High school. I'm writing this letter to let you know about my concerns on cutting the funds for the school. I believe that the school has put the money to good use and has help educate our students here. With the money that we get we are able to work on projects that help teach and provide for the school. Having machinery and supplies for the Agriculture program can help expand it making it a better learning environment. I'm also a student employee that works after school hours feeding the animals we have and doing tasks in the greenhouse and around it. The employment not only provides me money but also helps me learn more about the agricultural industry, learning to care for animals, using machinery for future plantations, etc. With me having to help this makes more time for my teachers to plan things and organize everything easier, something less for them to worry about.

My personal experience that I had throughout the agriculture learning center was great. I have learned a lot and have better knowledge than I had a few years back. I have learned to propagate plants how to grow them, their needs and information on the type of fertilizer can help. This program not only teaches me how to work with plants but also can be important in helping our environment. We have grown endangered native plants like the lama. I have also learned about many native flowers and foods as well as their Hawaiian names. We have previously fertilized 'ulu trees that also help grow food that we can use in the culinary program. Another program that we learn a lot from and has people from colleges help educate and give us opportunities. With the help of funds we also get to participate in field trips. A recent one we attended was at Honokowai Valley where we got taught about the Hawaiian history of the place. Along with some endangered plants/birds. This team at the valley was to help grow and replace the trees that burned down during the fires. At the end we got offered opportunities on how we can come help our island.

I'm thankful for the opportunities and education that I have received throughout these years in the agriculture program. It was very exciting to learn and helpful for my future career since agriculture is one of the things that I love to work with. Events that could happen in the future are more field trips that can be both fun and educational for everyone. Lessons for me to be able to use other tools and machinery that can help expand our plantations. The more crops that we are able to grow the more events we can host where we can give back to the community. The fundings also help provide for me to be able to work, helping out. This makes things more problematic for my teachers who already have a lot of things they need to deal with.

11/01/2024

Best regards, Joshua

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:40 PM

### **Name**

Daphnei Hussein

### **Organization**

Nanakuli Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Learning centers across the island are vital to the growth and upbringing of our community. I was born and raised in Nanakuli and have been part of the Nanakuli performing arts center from the year 2012 to 2016. Growing up on the west side of the island it is more common that you see broken families, substance abuse, drugs, and gang related activities. I joined the program and it changed my life and opened opportunities for me to be able to travel to go to college for Theatre. When I was a junior in high school I was even able to visit the White House in result of being a part of the program. The Nanakuli performing arts center has been around for over 30 years and Robin Kitsu as well as the Kitsu family has poured their heart and soul into making sure that children like me found their homes and a place where they felt safe. As a result of the learning center, I have graduated college have a job in healthcare. I am able to have confidence speak clearly and I am not afraid of any opportunity or any challenge that comes in my way. I was even fortunate enough to introduce Windward community college performing arts directors to the learning center in Nanakuli and create a bridge program where students are able to take college courses for Theatre and already start on their associate degree at Windward community college. There have already been two students as well as myself who went through the program and are currently exploring theatre as a career. If it wasn't for all of the qualities and skills, I've learned through the learning center that I carry with me to this day. I definitely would not be here. I highly recommend not cutting funds for Nanakuli performing arts center as it is a vital program to the west side and the community in general. So many families have invested years of time, energy and effort and aloha just so that our community can have a program where kids feel wanted safe and welcomed with open arms.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:50 PM

### **Name**

Jonathan Bitanga

### **Organization**

Hoolanapua

### **Position/Title**

Facility Director

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

This program is a vital part to the lives of our students

It is the ability and freedom to express and be creative through this avenue

We as a community teach values and support of each other so lets be the example to our future leaders by showing our support for their arts.

Mahalo



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:50 PM

### **Name**

Sheldon Yano

### **Organization**

Retired

### **Position/Title**

Retirex

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I experienced first hand how important alternative courses are to the unique individuals that are growing into the productive adults we want to see. These kids need theater to understand that while not everyone is the same, we can still succeed in their s world through different channels. Please don't cut programs that may be the alternative that saves their lives.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:43 PM

### **Name**

Ashlynn Gouveia

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,

As an alumni of Kahuku High school and a former band student all throughout my intermediate and high school years, this program was an exciting part of my school years. I was able to travel with the band during my high school years and it was a great memory that I have for the rest of my life. It is a core memory that I always want other kids a part of this program to experience. Without the funding, children won't even have the idea of the possibilities.

Fortunately, my child has been part of the music learning center at Kahuku High school since 7th grade. This program has helped her grow into the student she is now by allowing her to grow her self confidence. This program continues to encourage her self identity and she loves it. She will be entering into her senior year next year and we don't want this funding to rob these children from the experience and opportunity. Please consider keeping the funding in the school system for the music and health learning centers.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:54 PM

### **Name**

Melissa Kreutner

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Programs proposed for being cut are needed for our students to have more opportunities. The skills they learn can allow them to diversify our economy and help them become productive members of society.



**IATSE Local 665**

**HAWAII'S TECHNICIANS**

for

**FILM, TELEVISION, STAGE AND PROJECTION**

Since 1937



**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES, MOVING PICTURE TECHNICIANS, ARTISTS AND ALLIED CRAFTS  
OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND CANADA, AFL-CIO, CLC**

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State of Hawai'i  
Board of Education  
Queen Lili'uokalani Building  
1390 Miller Street  
Honolulu, HI 96814

**GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING  
Thursday, 10/31/24 at 1:30PM – ROOM 404**

**RE: Budget Cuts to Learning Centers**

Aloha, Board of Education

MAHALO for allowing us to provide testimony in STRONG OPPOSITION to the 2025 – 2027 DOE budget cuts slated for our 29 Learning Centers.

The IATSE is the largest entertainment union in the world, and Local 665 is its Hawai'i Chapter, representing nearly 800 members and 700 future members across all Hawaiian Islands. This will directly impact workers in our industry.

We rely on these programs to inspire and educate our keiki to someday enter our field of work in film and television production, theater classes, robotics programs, entrepreneur internships and other hands-on opportunities. It is our hope that we will continue to have middle and high school students learn about our artistic and technical crafts and enter the UH-Mānoa and West 'Oahu campuses and the Academy of Creative Media programs upon graduation from high school.

Please keep the \$17,000 per learning center annual funding in the state's budget.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Irish Barber'.

Irish Barber  
Business Representative  
Mobile (808) 479-1770

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Claire Garcia

### **Organization**

James Campbell High School

### **Position/Title**

Special Education Teacher, Drama Club Co-Advisor, Girls Soccer Assistant Coach

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The learning centers at all of the school here in Hawai'i are vital parts of our education system. Not only are they staples and pillars at each school, but they allow the students to delve deeper into their interests in a safe environment. To cut these programs would be doing an incredible disservice to our students, it is truly horrifying that it is even a prospect.

As educators, it is literally our job to support the intellectual growth of our students, and cutting these programs negates that purpose. I sincerely urge the Department of Education to not pass this resolution and keep our learning centers open around the state. To cut them would be selfish and shortsighted by the Department.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Maria Angelica Dacles

### **Organization**

James Cambell High

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The reason why we need the learning center is because not only does it help us socialize but also helps us learn our problem solving skills It has also helped us become independent and have a sense of control

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:33 AM

### **Name**

Matauaga Song

### **Organization**

Campbell High School AG Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I think the state shouldn't get rid of funding for the learning centers. As a student of James Campbell High School, the learning center is vital in mine and plenty other students' personal growth as a whole. It shows new viewpoints on various different careers that can be offered from what we love to do through the learning center. It allowed connection, learning, personal growth, social skills, and many, many more important skills that can better our future.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Nguyen Tran

### **Organization**

Campbell High School Ag. Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The Agriculture Learning Center is so much more than learning farming technique as it connects us to the land, instills in us the means of sustainable living, and protects agricultural traditions that are fundamental to the identity and food security of our community. Keeping the center alive means hands on learning experiences for students and our community-a sound foundation in environmental stewardship, plant science, and food production. It is supposed to be the place for the inspiration of new generations, so taking care and understanding where their foods come from are imperative. It will be a great loss for current students and people of all walks of life using its knowledge and skills in everyday life to keep healthier lifestyles and communities.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Caitlin Tong

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello,

My name is Caitlin Tong, and I am a graduate from the Castle Performing Art Center. I am concern about these budget cuts as it is removing not just an artistic outlet, but job training for our young adults. I now work locally for film and event productions. Utilizing skills and connections I gained in highschool. I also work with the current CPAC students and have recommended them for job rolls post highschool.

Film is a large industry in Hawaii, and already we have to fight to keep those jobs for Hawaii residents. Coordinators from LA of course want to bring in their LA friends, taking away jobs that could be held by local people. Well paying jobs. By losing a part of our skill training we are losing the argument that people in Hawaii are just as able to take these rolls as the people the shows would like to import for the jobs.

I was able to buy a house as a single owner because of this job. As a Young adult I was able to stumble into a multiskilled career path that allows me to afford to stay in Hawaii and support my loved ones. This would never have happened without highschool theatre. Removing funding and support from these programs is a disservice to our students, to our children who were raised here and deserve to be able to stay here.

Further, removing the support rolls from the theatres is just financially stupid. As a lack of staff will drop the building's ability to be rented out. Leaving these very expensive buildings, already full of expensive tech, to languish and hemorrhage money.

I struggle to believe that these cuts will do anything positive for the future of Hawaii. And am suspicious of anyone who claims so.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:12 PM

### **Name**

Keahi Kuikahi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I strongly oppose

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:04 PM

### **Name**

daylan bernard-cheek

### **Organization**

Campbell high school and all learning centers

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

We need to keep the program because it is really fun, and I have seen it personally help out the community. All-learning centers make a personal impact in their high school paths. Not only it helped us as students be more career ready, but it has helped me find some type of interest in what I want to do after high school.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 1:15 PM

### Name

Shaina Raelyn Caspino

### Organization

Community Member

### Position/Title

Educational Pathway Coach

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I stand before you today to advocate for the vital programs that shape the lives of our keiki in the Westside community. We must come together to oppose any proposed cuts to the Department of Education's budget that threaten the funding for after-school programs such as the Nānākuli Performing Arts Center (NPAC) and the Wai'anae High School Marine Science Learning Center.

These programs are not merely extracurricular activities; they are lifelines for our students. They provide safe havens where our keiki can explore their creativity, engage in meaningful learning experiences, and find the support they need to thrive. For many students in our community, these after-school programs are crucial in keeping them engaged and inspired, steering them away from negative influences and the streets.

The Department of Education's proposed \$2.3 billion operating budget includes a request for \$3 million to sustain after-school programs for middle school students in 2025. However, the plan to cut roughly \$2 million from learning centers over the next two years is alarming. These centers, primarily located on high school campuses, offer invaluable programs in STEM, media, agriculture, and more, equipping our students with the skills necessary for their futures.

We know that historically, after-school programs are often the first to face cuts and the last to see restored funding. This trend cannot continue. Now, more than ever, we must rally to ensure these programs receive the resources they need to thrive. Our keiki deserve access to opportunities that foster growth, creativity, and a sense of community.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts and prioritize funding for after-school programs that are so essential to the development of our young people. Together, we can stand up for the future of our community and ensure that every child has a safe place to learn, grow, and succeed.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to our keiki.

Mahalo,  
Shaina Caspino

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:54 PM

### Name

Dr.h.c. Robert Kakalia

### Organization

Ka Makani Kaili Koa

### Position/Title

CFO

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Commentary Testimony on the Department of Education's Operating Budget Request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Kuraya a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Waiwai a me ka 'Oihana Kaho'okele, mahalo for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the Department of Education's (DOE) operating budget request for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027. My intention today is neither to support nor oppose the proposed allocation, but to emphasize the vital importance of equitable kāko'o (support) across all facets of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education, highlighting Hawai'i's unique STREAMY approach. STREAMY (Sciences, Technologies, Reading, Research, Remuneration, Electronics, Engineering, Arts, 'Āina, Mathematics, Mele, Mo'omeheu, and You) incorporates 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge) alongside Western scientific concepts, creating an approach that celebrates both global and local perspectives and aligns with Hawai'i's cultural heritage.

National and Hawai'i-based research underscores the positive impact of STEAM programs compared to STEM alone. For example, the Arts Education Partnership found that students participating in STEAM programming performed 12% higher in standardized tests for math and science compared to their STEM-only peers, while Project Zero at Harvard University showed a 15% improvement in memory retention with arts-integrated learning. Additionally, the American Institutes for Research reports that STEAM programs contribute to an 18% improvement in problem-solving skills, highlighting how creative and real-world application deepens student understanding.

In Hawai'i, these benefits are even more significant. A report by the Hawai'i Arts Alliance revealed that students involved in STEAM programs had 20% higher engagement in school activities, with teachers reporting a 25% increase in collaborative learning and interest in STEAM-related career pathways. These statistics align with the Department of Education's goals of preparing students not only for academic success but also for pathways that enrich our communities and contribute to Hawai'i's evolving economic landscape.

To further illustrate STREAMY's interdisciplinary importance, we can envision the journey of a spacecraft to Mars. Such a mission relies on more than technical science and engineering skills; it incorporates cultural understanding, creative thinking, and environmental stewardship. The sciences and technologies are essential for understanding planetary conditions, while 'ōlelo (language arts) and research foster effective planning. Remuneration underscores essential budgeting, engineering and electronics guide design, and arts and 'āina (cultural and environmental awareness) inspire a sense of purpose and identity. Mathematics ensures precise calculations, while mele (song) and mo'omeheu

11/01/2024

(cultural values) support morale and unity among the mission team. Finally, “You” represents the students and communities who benefit from this comprehensive, culturally rooted learning approach.

To ensure the ongoing success of STREAMY and similar initiatives, we recommend that the DOE and BOE consider partnerships with Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs) registered in the HlePRO: State of Hawai‘i eProcurement database. Through a DOE-issued Request for Proposals (RFP), qualified 501(c)(3) NHO vendors could apply to provide grant support, co-host fundraisers, and solicit donations and sponsorships to sustain and administer programs such as Castle PAC and Nānākuli PAC. These partnerships would offer sustainable kāko‘o (support) while enriching students’ educational experiences with a culturally aligned, locally grounded approach.

In conclusion, comprehensive kāko‘o for STREAMY programs and partnerships with NHOs would considerably strengthen Hawai‘i’s educational landscape, preparing haumāna (students) to be both globally competitive and locally committed, embodying the rich cultural and intellectual legacy of our ‘āina aloha.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:15 PM

### **Name**

Mariko Quinn

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a graduate of Castle High School, which is a location of the Castle Performing Arts Center I have seen firsthand the valuable impact this program made on many of my peers in high school. Without that program, a lot of my peers would have gone to other schools or been overall less engaged in their educational experience. Similarly, in my current position with the education department at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology, I have also seen the incredible value of the Wai'anae Marine Science Learning Center. This center has opened students eyes to the possibility of working in the marine field, which they likely would not have gotten otherwise. There are countless examples of the importance that these programs have on the lives of kama'āina here in Hawai'i. As we seek to create a workforce that is able to stay in Hawai'i and contribute the communities we grew up in, it is critical that these programs continue to be prioritized. I strongly urge the DOE to continue funding these programs.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Kenaniah Fiu

### **Organization**

Campbell high school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I believe We need student learning center because it benefits the next generations coming up. It also provides students with joy and confidence towards going to school because the tools the learning center can provide.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Prince Paleafei

### **Organization**

Campbell high school/All learning centers

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

What makes the learning center so important is the benefits that come from it. Students or kids alike come together to collaborate or share ideas, which helps with social skills. It's not also going to help the students but the teachers as well, it allows them to spend time with small groups of students and help them with their issues together or individually. The learning center includes a large variety of activities, having a variety will engage the kids making it more enjoyable to learn. We would love to keep the learning center, it's needed and fun to have around.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:15 PM

### **Name**

Seaenna CorreaGacia

### **Organization**

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As an instructor of an early college STEM summer program that heavily works up with many programs that will become negatively affected, I have seen the influential impact that these types of established programs have instilled in our public local school students. Shifting of budget will negatively affect many of these schools' financial ability to provide successful programming that will impact students' ability and long-term trajectory for college and career pathways that have specifically benefited our local student success.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:15 PM

### **Name**

Sanoe Tuitele

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:23 PM

### **Name**

Fu'ameleke Tauanu'u

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

EA III

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### **Name**

Jane Haituka

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jane Haituka, and I am the parent of 3 (present and former) students of Mililani High School (MHS); my daughter is a MHS senior, my son is a MHS freshman, and my oldest son graduated from MHS in 2023. I am writing to voice my **SERIOUS CONCERNS** about the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program. I am in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the proposed elimination of funding for the **LEARNING CENTERS** program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

My daughter has participated with Central Theater Arts Academy since her freshmen year. My son has just begun his journey with FIRST Robotics. I know first-hand the incredible benefits of the Learning Centers, which have been a cornerstone of our students' educational experience. My children have put in countless hours to support Theater Productions and Robotic builds. They have learned skills and built products which they can be proud of. They have learned technical skills, but also about hard work, accountability, responsibility, endurance, and teamwork; how to work toward a common goal and see it through--priceless. The Learning Center programs, both for Art and Technology have sparked my children's imagination, help them to create something tangible (Theater sets and robots) and ignited a passion for a future career path.

The Learning Centers have helped to foster a sense of community in our students. There have been many times when my children didn't feel like they fit in, but in the Learning Centers, they were always welcomed and supported. In Theater and FIRST Robotics, they've met students with similar interests and have built strong and enduring relationships. Through their hard work they have built confidence and realized that they can be effective community contributors. Through these programs they are also encouraged to participate in community service and have help to support on campus and off campus events.

As a parent that helped 2 of my children through the College application process, I know that grades and ACT scores are **NOT** enough for acceptance and for scholarships. Depending on their career goals, it's also important that our children are involved in activities like Theater and FIRST Robotics. My daughter is trying to get into a college for Film Production. Her chances would be incredibly low if she didn't have the knowledge, skills, and experience that the Central Theater Arts Academy provided. My son has ambitions to study Computer Science, and participation in FIRST Robotics will help better prepare him and build his resume. These programs provide opportunities that are rare to find

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in a classroom environment - specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Our Keiki, Our Future! How can we (as a community) strip programs that support STEAM, Agriculture, and the Arts? The state has been supporting the Learning Centers for nearly 40 years, and now DOE is stating that the Schools need to come up with the funding. That is NOT realistic, and everyone knows it. Is there a plan to help the Schools maintain these programs? What message are we sending to the students AND the community when we do not invest in the continued and enhanced education programs for technology, science, agriculture, and art? We must be better than this. By eliminating funding for this program, it would strip away opportunities for many students to receive the personalized attention they need to succeed. It would create gaps in learning that could have lasting impacts on their futures—set out kids back 40 years behind technology and science. I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider these proposed cuts. The Learning Centers are not only an investment in the success and well-being of our students but by extension, our community. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Mahalo,  
Jane Haitsuka

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### Name

M S

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing to voice my strong opposition for the proposed reduction in funding of the Hawaii Department of Education Learning Centers.

My daughter attends Castle High School, which receives funding at the start of the school year for their Performing Art Center. This funding was not enough to take care of all production costs, but it was enough to give the program a jump start - paying hardworking teachers, financing necessary supplies - giving enough time for the box office monies to come in and take care of the rest of the cost needed to maintain the program. Without this important funding, the program cannot continue.

The Hawaii Department of Education's Mission Statement is : "[to] serve our community by developing the academic achievement, character and social-emotional well-being of our students to the fullest potential. We work with partners, families and communities to ensure that all students reach their aspirations, from early learning through college, career and citizenship."

Cutting funding for Learning Center's is in direct opposition to the DOE stated mission. Performing Arts may seem unnecessary for a child's development in academic achievement, but they are vital to a child's character and social-emotional wellness and are vital for those students who aspire to pursue a career in Performing Arts.

The Hawaii DOE Core Values are: "Hawaii seeks for its students to meet and exceed world-class academic standards, and do so in a way that reflects our island perspective. Hawaii's students have strengths and abilities unique to an island home, with a tradition of stewardship, community, and mutual responsibility. We will cultivate, advance, and draw from Hawaii's rich traditions and Native Hawaiian host culture."

How does defunding Learning Centers help the DOE in achieving these Core Values? Casting the live action movie of 'Lilo and Stitch' took so long because casting agents were looking for local talent and were struggling to find them. That may sound inconsequential, but think about this: Who will be left to tell Hawaiian stories if the Hawaii DOE cuts funding to Performing Arts? Hawaii has a culture rich in performing arts - from the annual Merrie Monarch Festival to the free hula shows in town, there was no written language before European contact because all history and stories were passed down through performing arts, Queen Lili'oukalanani herself was a songwriter and poet. There are entire future generations of performing artists who will lose the chance to tap into this integral part of their culture if this proposed cut to funding is allowed to pass. Why make this choice to silence or lessen their voices, why vote to limit their choice of expression?

It might be easy to look at performing arts programs and label them as an extra, unnecessary frivolity, but tell me this: what is your favorite song and who wrote it? What is your favorite movie and did it tell a story that was a reflection of you or your upbringing? How many local artists are out there today and do you think there are enough of them? Too many of them? Do you want to see more of them? Or do you think the world is inundated with local voices and perspectives?



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Or think about it this way: what would the world look like if there was never a performing artist of any from Hawaii? Is that a world you want to live in?

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:33 PM

### **Name**

Noeau Machado

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Schools need to support arts and agriculture

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### **Name**

Malia Kau

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Counselor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community.

Students in our learning center are truly engaged problem solvers; helping to solve real world problems. A few of my students created a project to build an aquaponics club at Radford HS. With the help of our Learning Center, they hope to have the guidance, materials and funding to bring their project to life. Cutting this program, will stop many of our students from developing the real world skills needed to be the leaders and problem solvers of our future.

The Learning Center at Radford is an invaluable resource that connects our students to our pacific culture and provides them with hands on, real world learning.

Aloha e,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts that would eliminate funding for performing arts centers and the Wai‘anae Marine Science Learning Center. As a concerned citizen, student, and supporter of accessible education in Hawai‘i, I believe these cuts would be detrimental to our students and communities who utilize these spaces.

The Wai‘anae Marine Science Learning Center is crucial for providing hands-on, place-based education programs that connect and empower students by engaging them with their local environment and cultural heritage.

This center:

1. Offers unique learning opportunities that cannot be replicated in a traditional classroom setting.
2. It helps students develop a deep understanding of marine ecosystems and conservation while also fostering connections to supporting terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.
3. Encourages students to consider the interconnectedness of environmental systems, empowering them to think critically about restoration efforts and apply these perspectives when addressing broader environmental challenges.
4. Fosters a sense of environmental stewardship among students and the community.
5. It provides valuable skills and experiences that engage students in potential careers integrating Indigenous knowledge and Western science in various fields, including environmental science, conservation, resource management, and related disciplines.
6. Serves as a vital outlet for students to explore their interests, develop their passions, and grow both personally and academically in a supportive, hands-on environment.

Furthermore, the center aligns perfectly with Hawai‘i's commitment to sustainability and preserving our natural resources. By cutting funding to this program, we risk losing an invaluable educational program that contributes to both fostering future leaders and community well-being.

I urge the Board of Education to reconsider these budget cuts and prioritize funding for Marine Science Learning Centers and other similar programs across Hawai‘i. Investing in these educational resources is an investment in the future generation and the long-term health of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration. Aloha

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:34 AM

### **Name**

Ann Olson

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I wholeheartedly oppose the decreasing of Learning Center funding for any calendar year. The Media Communications Learning Center here at Kaiser High School is a vital part of program and our International Baccalaureate Programs. The Kaiser High School MCLC has produced many students who furthered their film and media studies post high school and beyond. The idea of cutting funding for a program which will supplement much needed media, steam, arts, robotics, business instruction for our students who will become the leaders, the movers-and-shakers of tomorrow is economic suicide. You are risking taking our future economy decades behind in fields of science, arts, media, film, and so much more.

As a mother of a student who took IB Film through our MCLC, went on to college and graduated with a College of Creative Media and Arts bachelor's degree and has now returned to the same MCLC department to pass on, teach and share his māna'o, I can truly testify that these programs are instrumental in the development of students and their futures.

Do not penalize our students.

Mahalo for your time and consideration in reading my testimony.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### **Name**

Serena Flores

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, I am writing in support of keeping all our learning centers - including KHSPAC, Castle Performing Arts Center, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School Performing Arts Center going. I have been working in the film & television industry in Hawaii for about 20 years. I had exposure to video production in elementary school and fell in love with it. I pursued this passion all throughout high school by taking video production classes and being a part of my school's Video Production Club. Had I not had an opportunity to take these classes, I would not have known how much I enjoyed it or that I could even have a successful career in that field. It also gave someone like me who was not involved in sports, another extra curriculum activity that I could spend my extra time doing. It definitely kept me busy and out of trouble. I feel like different types of programs that appeal to students with varying interests is so vital for the learning experience. Mahalo for your time!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:33 PM

### **Name**

Ranell Asuega

### **Organization**

Palolo Neighborhood Board

### **Position/Title**

Chair

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose removing the theater/performing arts program. The program is very much needed at kaimuki.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:43 PM

### **Name**

clCarol Lloyd

### **Organization**

Hawaii Children's Theatre, Kauai

### **Position/Title**

Board member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Do not eliminate Learning Centers and Theatre programs. They are vital to the enrichment of our students and to our communities. It would be a travesty to eliminate these Centers and programs



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:23 PM

### **Name**

KIM COCO IWAMOTO

### **Organization**

Former BOE Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

When I served on the BOE, I voiced my objections to any cuts to the DOE budget. Today I am a parent of a DOE student and I continue to testify in opposition to any proposed budget cuts. Raising revenue for government services is the primary responsibility of the State Legislature. Their historic income tax cut was there mess that caused these cuts. They should clean up their mess.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:12 PM

### **Name**

Sione Vimahi

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern.

Aloha! I have 2 boys taking band in Kahuku High/Intermediate School, one 8th grader and a Junior. Being in band has helped them become more punctual, honest, respectful, disciplined and self driven. Music has been good for them, and if funding are been taken away, reduced, that will have a negative impact on my boys, and all the other band students, especially those who want to pursue music as a carrer. As the D.O.E, you guys are responsible in helping our children succeed now while in school and thrive after graduation. The reduction in funds for these programs will be a failure on D.O.E's to prepare, help and support our students. Fight for the students future. Just know, you guys are accountable for not doing all you can to support these students. Make the right decision for our kids and their future. Mahalo nui loa.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:33 PM

### **Name**

Susan Hawes

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Good afternoon,

I'm an O'ahu Community Theater actress, improviser, and HIDOE substitute teacher. I was going to tell you about my son, a 2020 graduate of Mililani High School, and the way CTAA changed his life. I was going to recount how he found such a positive home in the CTAA theater program that he decided to change his college focus to musical theater, being accepted into a program with a 2.5% acceptance rate, earning over \$20,000 worth of scholarships. I would tell you about how he graduated in May, and is on his second professional show in Denver, with a lead role, and was just cast as a lead in an Equity theater show in Florida this very morning. But that's a success story, created by CTAA and its incredible leaders, that is very visible. Those are changes and accomplishments that anyone can see and verify through transcripts and offers and programs and audiences.

Instead, I'm going to talk about the success stories that aren't as visible. In my own years of public school theater programs back in the 80s and 90s, and in my experience being a backstage mom, sewing and painting backdrops, standing in the wings for quick changes, and hosting post-show get togethers at our house, I can tell you that kids involved in the theater arts are such a mixed bag. There are the extroverts, sure, and the class clowns who are given a chance to put structure to their chaos. There are the shy, often silent students, the ones who still wear masks, long after the threat of COVID has subsided, because it allows them to continue to hide. There are the leaders-in-training who assist the directors and stage manage. But there are also so many kids who struggle to find their place in the social structure. They are lost at home, lost in school, and have no place in traditional after school activities. You know these kids. We all knew them. Perhaps you were one. And as I'm sure you remember, it's in the arts where they find a loving, welcoming, life-changing home instead of deep-seated loneliness. There is so much more to a performance than the kids at center stage. The majority of the work happens with a can of paint in a school cafeteria, or internships at a lighting panel or sound board, or in a room full of sequins, buttons, and sewing machines. These skills and these friendships, chosen families really, are vital to the success stories for these kids. They matter there. Their contributions are on full display. These are the kids who make me feel terrified by the potential loss of these learning centers. We can continue to do better by them. I have watched some of them go from barely holding on to thriving. For them, and for the tens of thousands of O'ahu residents and taxpayers who experience the joy of live theater with these hardworking students every year, please reconsider, and move to fully fund the Learning Centers.

Thank you,  
Susan Hawes

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### Name

Sheilynn Kato

### Organization

HSTA

### Position/Title

CTE FACS Teacher

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing to oppose Article VIII which is proposing public school budget cuts that could impact valuable courses and programs that are offered at our local public schools. As a certified Family and Consumer Science teacher, I see first hand how students benefit and thrive in courses that are not one of their CORE classes (math, english, science, social studies). Programs like performing arts, agriculture and STEAM provide opportunities for students to not only apply skills learned in the CORE but to also develop new skills while exploring possible career options.

Personally, as a student in the public school system (Mililani Waena, Wheeler Intermediate, Mililani High School), I was a student who LIVED for her elective classes in high school. Classes like Food Science, Culinary, Accounting, Keyboarding and PE were the courses that I looked forward to every single day. When I attended University of Hawaii Manoa, I knew I wanted to major in secondary education with a focus on either Business education or Family and Consumer Science because I did not see myself teaching a CORE subject everyday of my life! While Performing Arts, Agriculture and STEAM were not my personal interests while I was in high school, I know many students who are very passionate about these programs. Decreasing vital funding to these programs will have a long lasting impact on the future of our public school students who have found themselves and possibly even a future career in these programs.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 1:41 PM

### Name

Kayuga de Guzman

### Organization

Waialua Robotics

### Position/Title

Alum

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

I am Kayuga de Guzman, a proud recent graduate of Waialua High School, Class of 2024, and an alum of Waialua Robotics. I am writing in strong opposition to Agenda Item VIII regarding the proposed reduction of funding for state Learning Centers (LCs) in the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium.

Joining Waialua Robotics in the eighth grade changed the trajectory of my life. The wonderful resources and experiences I had access to have not only shaped my career aspirations, but profoundly impacted who I am as a student, a leader, and a human being. Through the guidance and opportunities Waialua Robotics provided, I have developed a passion for innovation and a commitment to positively impacting the world around me.

Waialua Robotics is more than a STEM program—it's a lifeline for countless students who, like me, benefit from a safe, nurturing space that encourages us to explore our academic and personal limits, unlike any other place in the islands. The program empowers local kids to compete internationally, showing us that, as Hawai'i public school students, we have the ability and drive to achieve great things alongside our peers from around the world. In my five years with the program, I witnessed its profound impact on dozens of students, inspiring us to attend and compete at top-performing universities and institutions to further our education in STEAM fields. Thanks to Waialua Robotics, I find myself at the top business school in the nation, Wharton Business School, eager to gain knowledge that I can bring back home to support our community.

With the proposed cuts, my three younger siblings and thousands of keiki across Hawai'i will have fewer opportunities to learn, grow, and dream. These programs are not just a "want" but a true necessity. They give kids like us the hope, confidence, and ability to build better futures.

While we certainly understand and support the desire to continually improve the experiences of our Hawai'i public school students, the impact and proven success of the existing Learning Center programs are undeniable. We, as keiki, want to make a difference in this world. The Learning Centers provide us with the resources to do just that. I urge you to carefully consider the cost of cutting funding for these programs not just in dollars, but in dreams, aspirations, and lives.

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Mahalo,

Kayuga de Guzman  
Waialua High School, Class of 2024

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:41 PM

### **Name**

Kathleen Hoppe

### **Organization**

Individual Citizen

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha kākou,

I am writing about the proposed budget cuts to Hawai'i public schools, particularly the learning centers. I currently hold a Masters degree in both Educational Counseling and Educational Leadership, am a proud product of the public education system, more specifically the Marine Science Learning Center at Wai'anae High School, or MSLC. This program taught me the components necessary to be a productive and contributive community member and inspired me to become an educator. I learned computer programming, news writing, story-telling, 'ike Hawai'i, entrepreneurship, conservation, and social emotional skills all in addition to the content of marine science. The class was rich in cultural values that motivated positive action and behavior in all my peers, and brought us closer together despite being a part of very different social groups. You simply cannot put a monetary value on the enrichment, education, and aloha received in our beloved MSLC. To cut funds from learning centers means to cut opportunities from students that are invaluable, and can positively change the trajectories of their futures. It is simply unconscionable. Our coast also houses the Nānākuli Performing Arts Program, which also has been such a wonderful program for our coast keiki and has changed lives through increased confidence, public speaking, and love for the arts. Please do not allow these cuts of the public school learning center, and please do not make their existence based on the preference of a revolving door of administrators and their whims. It is not pono.

Mahalo piha for listening to my testimony. Make the right choice for keiki.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:05 PM

### **Name**

Alexa Grean

### **Organization**

Central Theatre Arts

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Alexa Kamalani Grean and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I have done theatre since I was in elementary school. As a senior, looking back on my experience in this art form I realize how much is owed to Learning Centers.

Providing opportunities for our youth is necessary for their development. Mililani High School prides itself on the many opportunities we offer our students. Think of what this "shift" will do to the schools that don't have this privilege. Of the schools that struggle enough to keep their programs alive.

If the arts weren't necessary, none of us would be here. To create such an uprising in a matter of days, in a manner of hours shows how much this means to people. Not just current students, this has spread across the states. To people who have never done a production before. The arts have always been underfunded but there is a reason why it has never disappeared.

Seeing my passion being potentially ripped away before kids even have the chance to experience the gift of these centers is a shame. Taking away creative outlets for children hurts them, whether they are up on stage or not. Entertainment is important. Theatre is important. Arts education is important. Especially for our youth, especially on this island. Hawaii's already limited experience in our theatre community is hard on students who wish to pursue theatre in their futures. We don't get the same opportunities as those on the mainland. As a student trying to major in musical theatre, I would have no chance without our Learning Center. We have to work twice as hard to compete in an already massively competitive industry.

Shifting our budget to the schools without sustaining them is just as bad as cutting them completely. The arts are necessary and crucial to the well-being of our community. I urge you to think about what you're doing to these kids.



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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 12:40 PM

### Name

Maya Manzo

### Organization

Pearl City High School

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Hello I am writing to you today as a grade 11 student from Pearl City HS. I am personally in the performing arts program, in the band and i play the tenor saxophone and have been for the past 5 years, and the positive effect from the program is nothing short from incredible. I have not been inside the program for long as it has only been 3 years, but it's more than enough time to feel the warmth and care from my band directors and fellow band members.

When entering high school there's nothing scarier than the thought of not fitting in, because of the program i have made countless friends who accept me as i am. I believe strongly that music is needed in everyone's life. It's a way of art and expressing yourself, even if you might not see it as expressive think of it as therapeutic.

Many turn to their instruments to find a sense of peace, and in my experience my instrument is more than just a piece of metal. It's a way to turn all the chaos around me into muffles and to feel a sense of harmony through every note and rhythm I play. I am constantly surrounded by teens who try to find a sense of tranquility and belonging and many might find it in drugs, or illegal substances. It breaks my heart to see that, and it would be devastating to see some of the kindest people change from their instrument to a vape.

I have never seen anything in high school take more unity than a band. Dozens of students come together everyday to piece together harmonious masterpieces. A concert band takes effort among everyone. I ask before you pass this, you think about the hundreds of thousands of kids that come through this program year, after year. My family has been through this band program for 20 years. Think about the eager students waiting to come into highschool to be apart of a band, because i've seen them myself. Each year i see students wowed by the sound of a band, and i can't find anything like it anywhere else. Think about the kids who have passion to be a musician, and the dreams you are stripping away.

Think about the future of our generation. I ask you politely, please let the kids dream become a reality. Please save our band program because it's more than just a class. It's a second family, a family i'm scared to leave as a senior. This program needs to stay.

With love and a caring heart,  
Maya Manzo

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:55 PM

### **Name**

Jeffery NihipaliDay

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha my name is Jeff NihipaliDay i am writing this in opposition to your bad decision many of our public schools have Theaters on on campus, what are those gonna become when funding is gone. BAD DECISIONS for the state  
OPPOSITION OPPOSITiON DO NOT PASS

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 1:43 PM

### Name

Kehaulani Abiva

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

BOE Testimony Regarding Biennium Budget lack of support for Performing Arts

Dear Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education

Dear Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education,

Aloha, my name is Kehau Kimokeo Abiva. I am writing this with deep concern, asking you to strongly reconsider the cutting of funding for performing arts programs.

As a child, I had an innate desire to perform. I was always begging my parents to put me in dance classes, voice lessons, and theater. However, as the baby in a family of five, coming from a single income home, my parents simply couldn't afford to put me in classes (as they are extremely expensive).

I was able to audition for the cpac program in elementary. They selected kids each year to be in an after school program for singing and dance classes, under the direction of the incredible & talented Ronald E. Bright. After these accelerated classes we would end our studies with doing a huge production for all the elementary schools, and our community to see. (Performed at the Ronald E. Bright theater, seating hundreds and hundreds of people per show.)

This was a free program that allowed me to feed the passion I had. My love for performing grew and grew. I remained in the cpac program until I graduated from high school. By the time I graduated, I was in countless shows, dance performances, musical productions etc. and even got a college scholarship from the school for performing. It became my whole life! It was a happy, confidence boosting, safe place for all of us to express ourselves and unite ourselves through our different backgrounds. It kept us all busy, out of trouble, striding for excellence and learning the importance of respecting each persons different lives & talents.

This program was so incredibly life changing for me, that I decided it was imperative for me cultivate, and curate my college career to give back what I was so freely given. I went to the University of Hawaii at manoa where I was on the dance team and earned my bachelors in arts (with a focal point in education).

Months after graduating I got hired to sing and dance in a multi million dollar production (Legends in concert: Rock-a-Hula) where I would perform 6 nights a week. I simultaneously started teaching dance at castle high school six periods a day for the cpac program. None of this would have been accomplished or achievable without the CPAC program.

I have first hand seen so many peoples lives positively change from this program. I've seen joy, love, upliftment, safety, and togetherness. Please please reconsider this decision. Our communities and children deserve to have the privileges we once had.

MAHALO!

11/01/2024

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:15 PM

### **Name**

Neil Annandale

### **Organization**

Home

### **Position/Title**

Father

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hello. I am a father of children who have attended Kahuku High and Intermediate School. The Kahuku Music Program has had a tremendous impact on one of my children in particular, so much so that now in college she has a desire to pursue a degree in music education. My daughter had such a positive experience as a member of the Kahuku Band. The music program at Kahuku not only enhances the lives of students, but it also enriches the community with its concerts and performances. I offer my support for keeping the Learning Center funding for the Kahuku Music Learning Center. Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:03 PM

### **Name**

Aleiah Leilua-Toloai

### **Organization**

Hawai'i Pacific University

### **Position/Title**

Academic Peer Mentor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a student, we must retain and keep our arts, business academies, and STEM opportunities within our schools. They foster and prepare students for success, encourage a sense of belonging within student-led communities, and equip students (especially those in high school) with the mindsets and learning skills (collaboration, public speaking, overcoming hurdles) needed for post-secondary education.

As an Alumna of McKinley High School (Class of 2023), I ask that we continue to fund these programs; in recognition of the students who currently and have represented both the Business Academy & Tiger Media, many of my peers have developed skills and made connections that have shaped them for life. I only want to see the same opportunities for future classes, as well as continued retention within schools: these are the same programs that promote and support graduation rates for our local high schools, colleges, and community.

Please reconsider in reducing the budget that funds these schools, and understand that our programs/academies are of utmost importance. Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:30 PM

### **Name**

Colin Devane

### **Organization**

Campbell High

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Opposing eliminating funding for learning centers:

I just took over a Marine Science Course as a long term sub, and because I was able to visit the learning center here at Campbell, the students got hands on experience with an Aquaponics system. This has enabled me to teach them many important, but more abstract concepts, which empowered their learning. The enjoyed visting the garden and we discussed how plants can affect water, and then saw a demonstration of it in the aquaponics system. It would be a huge loss to their quality of education on campus were we to lose the learning center. Please keep them funded.  
Thank you



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### **Name**

Thompson Wong

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha e Board of Education,

My name is Thompson Wong, and I am a graduate of the Tiger Media Learning Center (TMLC) at President William McKinley High School— a Learning Center that would lose its funding if the Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027 moves forward as is.

In my day job, I work for the Hawai'i State Senate as a Communications Specialist. Though I am strictly testifying in my personal capacity, the work that I perform for the Senate would be naught without the foundations that were built and solidified by TMLC. It was through this career pathway in high school that I was able to explore my creative passions, and hone the skills that I would not have learned in the traditional education track. It pains me to imagine students with untapped potential due to the loss of programs like TMLC.

I understand the challenges of determining the budget for the new biennium as we continue to address the Maui wildfires and other issues across the state. It is also my personal belief that we must also be looking towards the future to recognize how these fund reductions can hurt our keiki. Members of our Senate Ways and Means Committee have publicly addressed the desire to invest in industries like agriculture, film, health, and more, to further grow our economy. They have also expressed the need to incentivize our keiki to stay in Hawai'i by opening these job opportunities for them to partake in. How can we accomplish this when we cut the funding for programs that nurtures these career pathways?

Please reconsider the defunding Learning Centers in Hawai'i. These programs are vital for our students to find and grow their potentials into careers that they can find success in, the same way I have at the Senate.

Mahalo,  
Thompson Wong

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:33 PM

### **Name**

Kanani Annandale

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

During my time at Kahuku, I dedicated myself to various amazing organizations, most notably the Kahuku Band and the Kahuku HOSA chapter, both of which are at risk of losing funding as a result of this proposal. I can honestly say I grew and learned the most within these programs. The Kahuku Band taught me discipline, diligence, and, most importantly, passion. I was able to flourish as a musician and an individual, learning difficult musical concepts while also practicing leadership and other important life skills. The Kahuku HOSA chapter allowed me to nurture my love of health care. I made lasting connections and learned a lot about future career paths. It is no exaggeration to say that I would not be the person I am today without my experience in the Kahuku Band and the Kahuku HOSA chapter. To reduce the funding of these programs would be to devastatingly limit the youth and community of Kahuku and all other susceptible high schools. The funding of these programs is undeniably necessary for the progress and preparation of students in entering higher fields of learning and living. Please, please consider the present and future of these students. Please help our schools and allow our students to maximize their potential. Thank you.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 2:40 PM

### Name

Suzen Kukana Murakoshi

### Organization

Hawaii Public Theatre

### Position/Title

Artistic Director

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

### Written Testimony

#### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

The Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, team-work, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence and the ability to deal with high stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better by every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

Countless studies have demonstrated the phenomenally positive impact of performing arts on education.

Here are a handful:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

11/01/2024

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_Ol1BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)  
<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please DO NOT deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

Mahalo piha,

Suzen Kukana Murakoshi

Artistic Director, Hawai`i Public Theatre

Acting Teacher, Punahou Summer School

Member of Unions: Actors Equity Association, Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television and Radio Artists

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:40 PM

### **Name**

Gavin Tanouye

### **Organization**

Waiākea High School Robotics Boosters

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, my name is Gavin Tanouye. My son, Ryan Tanouye will be heading into high school next year. Over the last 3 years my son has participated, competed and has been inspired by the robotics program at Waiākea Intermediate School. He has also interned at Waiākea High School with the robotics team there. It has been brought to my attention that the Department of Education is looking to cut funding that would greatly affect the robotics program at Waiākea High School. As my son is extremely excited to join the high school program next year this would greatly affect his knowledge advancement in this great S.T.E.M. program. Over the last few years, robotics has really inspired him to do better not only in his regular class work but also to learn what team work means and how to lead others. Ryan has also spent countless hours talking with the high school robotics team and that has opened his eyes to higher learning and where his future may lead in a possible career.

I ask that funding reduction for EDN100 not happen as this will greatly affect the robotics program at Waiākea High School that has been essential in inspiring so many students to go on to great things both at Waiākea High School, in college and beyond.

Mahalo for your time and consideration on this topic.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 2:45 PM

### Name

Angela Hoppe-Cruz

### Organization

Community Member - Parent

### Position/Title

Parent

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Angela Hoppe-Cruz a proud parent of our Nānākuli Wai'anae Public Schools. My family has been blessed by both the learning centers located on our coast: Nānākuli Performing Arts Center (NPAC) and WHS Marine Science Learning Center (MSLC).

My oldest son found his voice literally and figuratively on stage through NPAC. I promised he just had to give it a try for 1 quarter. That 1st quarter lasted 8 years. His love of the arts flourished under the guidance of his teachers and alumni of NPAC, learning discipline and commitment. The arts is a privilege that our community deserves. He is just one individual that found their voice, their strength and sense of belonging through this program. It has impacted countless youth and families, your support is needed to continue this positive trajectory. My son is now a sophomore in college and hopes to return to his community as a teacher or conservationist.

WHS MSLC like NPAC has served generations of families. My daughter will soon be attending WHS and looked forward to following in her father's footsteps and being a student of MSLC. Her father is a conservationist and the love he has and has taught our children was seeded in the learning spaces and opportunities afforded by MSLC.

As a social work professional, it is critical that our government leaders fund educational enrichment programs, learning centers. They serve to provide meaningful activities with meaningful trusted adults. At a time of increased violence, meaningful relationships and enrichment opportunities are crucial to mitigating/preventing violence. Both the learning center teacher leaders are regarded by their students as family, a place of Pu'uhonua. Please protect these programs so that our children have places of Pu'uhonua.

Mahalo,  
Angela

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:10 PM

### **Name**

Rufus Kimura

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a former Waianae High School student I oppose any action that would decrease funding to any Learning Center Program. During my public high school experience, the MSLC was the single success story amid a legacy of BOE failures. The dedicated teachers that curated this program, namely Mrs. Susan Lum and Mrs. Dana Hoppe were visionaries in effective hands-on learning. It's been almost 30 years since I was given the opportunity to participate in the MSLC but the lessons and values that I learned then are still a core part of who I am today. This program provided participants with a myriad of skills - such as effective written/verbal communication, business management, goal-setting and community service. As students, our self-confidence and characters were honed by the opportunities to camp and sail with the voyaging canoes Hokulea and Eala. Our real-world skills were refined by creating aquaculture business plans and then seeing those plans to fruition. For me, there is no other BOE program that has come close to benefiting the students of Waianae as effectively as the MSLC (and Searider Production) programs have. If the State of Hawaii continues to cut funding to programs with proven educational success it will exacerbate the Leeward coast's decline into crime and poverty. It is disappointing that the BOE - at the behest of the State of Hawaii - would like to reduce their fiscal investment in the effective education of local children. By reducing education you increase crime and poverty. The Leeward coast is already at its breaking point.

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 3:27 PM

### Name

Kalani Bright

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Testimony in Opposition to Reductions in State Arts Education Funding

I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to arts education funding in our state budget. Reducing or eliminating support for arts programs within our schools is a disservice not only to our students but also to our community and future workforce. Arts education is integral to developing engaged, well-rounded citizens and should be viewed as essential, not as a budgetary luxury.

Key Reasons to Preserve Arts Funding in State Education:

1. **Cognitive and Academic Benefits:** Arts education is linked to improved academic outcomes, including higher test scores and graduation rates. The arts activate and develop parts of the brain critical to creativity and critical thinking, which support learning in all other subjects.
2. **Emotional and Social Growth:** Participation in the arts builds emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness. Students gain valuable skills to navigate complex emotions, develop resilience, and improve social relationships, fostering a supportive school environment and helping address mental health needs.
3. **Cultural Literacy and Understanding:** Arts education promotes cultural awareness and inclusivity, essential in a diverse society. Students engaged in the arts are exposed to different cultures, histories, and viewpoints, creating an appreciation for diversity and preparing them to become informed, respectful citizens.
4. **Creative Economy and Career Readiness:** The creative industries contribute significantly to our state's economy, offering substantial job growth and innovation. Arts education nurtures creativity and adaptability, skills essential in a modern workforce that increasingly values problem-solving and innovative thinking.
5. **Mental Health and Well-being:** The arts are therapeutic. Engagement in creative activities reduces stress and anxiety, serving as an outlet for expression and a buffer against the pressures students face. Particularly in challenging times, arts programs offer a pathway to better mental health.
6. **Community and Civic Engagement:** Arts programs build stronger communities by encouraging students to collaborate, communicate, and participate in public events. Arts-driven projects bring schools and communities together, creating a sense of pride, identity, and belonging among students and residents alike.
7. **Self-Expression and Confidence:** In arts programs, students learn to communicate their ideas, express their identities, and take creative risks. This builds self-confidence, which translates into their studies and other aspects of life, leading to personal growth and empowerment.

### In Closing

Arts education is a powerful tool for personal and academic growth, cultural understanding, mental health, and career preparation. Removing arts funding will only serve to limit opportunities, weaken our educational system, and curtail the future potential of our students. I urge the state to recognize arts education as indispensable and to protect it for the benefit of our students and our society.



11/01/2024

Thank you.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:10 PM

### **Name**

Tammy Haili'ōpua Baker

### **Organization**

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### **Position/Title**

Professor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

As a former student of the Kaua'i Performing Arts Center, I strongly oppose these budget cuts for DOE learning centers. KPAC and their counterparts across our island chain provides opportunities for our youth that are fundamental to development and growth in a variety of disciplines. Joining KPAC in its inaugural year set me on my academic and professional trajectory for the work I do today at UHM. I am grateful for the opportunity that I received in the four years of study under the tutelage of Arnold Meister. I pass those lessons on regularly in my university courses and know that I would not be in the career I am in today without the years of training at KPAC. Please continue this funding so that future DOE students may experience the countless benefits of the learning centers like KPAC. Mahalo.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 3:40 PM

### Name

Mareva Minerbi

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Performing Arts engender creative problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, confidence, discipline, a commitment to excellence, and the ability to deal with high-stress situations.

Students who have access to performing arts programs unequivocally fare better in every metric (graduation, confidence, social skills, the ability to concentrate.) Theatre teaches students to adapt to changing circumstances, memorization, accountability, empathy and even reading comprehension.

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<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please, please do not deprive future students of such crucial and life-changing opportunities.

11/01/2024

Sincerely,  
Mareva Minerbi

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:43 PM

### **Name**

Anthony Kent

### **Organization**

Waiakea High Technology Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni/Patient/Community Member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Waiakea High's Technology Learning Center has a long history of successfully fostering interest and excellence in STEM-based programs. It is unconscionable to cut funding for a learning center that grows future scientists and engineers through technical and soft skill instruction when the need is so great. Please continue full funding for such a sorely needed educational resource.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:43 PM

### **Name**

Aaron Quitugua-Flores

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Aaron Quitugua-Flores and I am writing to oppose the budget cuts that will drastically reduce and eliminate the funding for the learning centers in our public schools. I was one of the valedictorians of Leilehua High School in 2002 and went on to attend Stanford University where I earned bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering. Today I enjoy a career in STEM and I believe wholeheartedly that I would not have been able to get on this path of success without the learning center programs. Through all 4 years of high school I was a member of the agriculture learning center at Leilehua. I gained incredible experiences that I would never have otherwise been able to have. Getting hands on learning experience of growing food, raising animals, maintaining and repairing farm equipment were just the tip of the iceberg. The program gave me a sense of community and afforded me opportunities to learn leadership and collaboration with the connection of the FFA club. I grew up without a lot of resources and if I did not have the agriculture learning center as a place to develop belonging and identity, I have no idea where I would be or what I would be doing today. Please do not take away these resources and opportunities for the youth of today. I feel now more than ever it is incredibly important for kids to find programs that will enable hands on learning and give them the chance to learn and discover things about themselves that can have a significant positive impact on the rest of their lives and at a minimum let them develop practical skills that they can use and pass on to others. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts and experiences.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:37 PM

### **Name**

Maya Wood

### **Organization**

Waialua Robotic Team

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

We are benefiting from the funding that school received from the state. Please do not reduce the amount. In fact, they should increase the funding for the schools. Thank you

Maya

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:01 PM

### **Name**

Kenaniah Fiu

### **Organization**

Campbell high school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I believe We need student learning center because it benefits the next generations coming up. It also provides students with joy and confidence towards going to school because the tools the learning center can provide.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:51 PM

### **Name**

Ally Marie Coloma

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This is terrible. As a student and teacher now, I can't imagine what would happen if these things were taken away. Schools have been working so hard to bring learning opportunities for students so that there is a place for all. This will make it so much harder to do that for students. It will also widen the gap between schools even more than it is right now. If you cared about students and cared about kids, this would not be even a consideration. If you stepped foot in a school and spoke to any of the students who participate in these activities you would hear how it changes lives and how it creates a safe space for students. School is for the kids, and that should be our first priority!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:51 PM

### **Name**

Olivia Taylor

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am very disheartened to hear of the DOE decision to cut its biennium funding for Learning Centers, and am writing this testimony to strongly oppose and reconsider that budget cut . As a child, I was privileged enough to perform with Mr. Bright in my 5 and 6 grade years. It is one of the happiest memories I have from elementary school, and my formative years in general (I am 43 and still remember that time distinctly, and fondly). Getting the chance to sing and dance in front of a live audience was a thrilling and rewarding experience! Through that process, I gained self-confidence, discipline, technical skills, as well as a strong sense of community. As children, we learned to work together as a group, and that when you work hard, that dedication pays off in the end. Without the CPAC, I would not have had the opportunity to sing or act, as we could not afford private lessons.

Please don't take away such an amazing program and opportunity for our Hawaii keiki.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 4:51 PM

### **Name**

Kaori Muto

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Our children receive a great deal of learning experience through these learning centers and need to keep them running.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 1:53 PM

### **Name**

Rebecca Marshall

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The funding for school year 25-27 Waiakea High School will lose \$17,000 cutting their robotics program out completely. This is unexceptionable. Waiākea High has accomplished so much in robotics. Winning awards and exposing students to the life of possibilities in the robotics field.

If our future is going toward tech and the children are out future this budget cut id a death knell to our future.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 5:21 PM

### Name

Katherine Liu

### Organization

N/A

### Position/Title

N/A

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

As a McKinley High School Alum, I OPPOSE the proposed budget decreases that will ultimately result in full budget cuts of Learning Centers in Schools Across Hawai'i. These Learning Centers provide valuable resources for students as they learn about different career pathways and hone their skills to better prepare for higher education and work experiences across various fields. Many of the resources provided in these centers are otherwise inaccessible to a majority of students who are unable to afford the software, materials, and networking opportunities that DOE funding provides. By implementing budget decreases that will cut these programs from schools, the DOE will be widening the accessibility gap for low-income students; further perpetuating social and economic disparity, making it even more difficult for the upcoming generation of entry-level professionals to have a broad skillset and background. Please do not approve this budget request to preserve invaluable resources for Hawaii's keiki!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Natalie Portugal

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut the funding for the music center. My daughter participated in music through the school from seventh through 12th grade. It was definitely one of the highlights of school for her. In fact, she was planning to graduate early and decided not to just so she could participate in music one more time. It brought a lot of joy and motivation for her. Her teacher was definitely one of her favorites. We need more funding, not less.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Joi Uyehara

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Music has been proven time and time again to uplift people and bring people together. Music has a way of enriching people's lives and has shown that people involved in music have had great positive impacts and influences that stay with them beyond their school years. It has also been proven that music has been a great tool to express oneself and even find one's purpose. So why take it away?

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:45 PM

### **Name**

Aaron Uyehara

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern. Please keep funding set aside for music programs and invest in our children. Music is good for the soul. It is good for mental health. We should be investing especially the keiki.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:21 PM

### **Name**

Marissa Deponte

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose article VIII. These programs must, for the future of Hawaii, continue. Unless these programs become a large part of core curriculum in public schools, then these programs must continue as after school programs.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:32 PM

### **Name**

Gerrie Nakamura

### **Organization**

Retired

### **Position/Title**

Doe retired

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Leilehua High School Agricultural Learning Center needs the funding. Jackie Freitas won teacher of the in recognition of beyond expectation instruction for her students as well as service to our Wahiawa community- Please return the monies originally allotted to the Learning Center so it can continue to benefit not only students but out Wahiawa citizens. Aloha

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:32 PM

### **Name**

Mariano Hernandez

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 1:43 PM

### **Name**

clCarol Lloyd

### **Organization**

Hawaii Children's Theatre, Kauai

### **Position/Title**

Board member

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Do not eliminate Learning Centers and Theatre programs. They are vital to the enrichment of our students and to our communities. It would be a travesty to eliminate these Centers and programs

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 7:48 PM

### **Name**

Eliza May Shumway

### **Organization**

Hau'ula Elementary School

### **Position/Title**

Music Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please support all the music program with funds. Music helps in students overall learning.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:40 PM

### **Name**

Gabriel Yere

### **Organization**

Moanalua High School World Language Learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Treasurer

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Gabriel Yere and I am a student of Moanalua Highschool and treasurer of The World Language Learning Center in my school. The learning center at my school has really helped me understand and appreciate other cultures. It has opened my eyes to the parts of cultures that isn't "mainstream" or widely known, as well as showing the meaning behind their dances and cuisine. and I believe that with the events that our World Language Learning Centers around the state holds, it allows people to showcase their own culture, and learn about other cultures. Some schools don't have enough funding to keep their language centers, so cutting funding for learning centers means the removal of these centers which lessens cultural understanding and awareness. Which limits our understandings of each other, be it the students, teachers, faculty, counselors, vice principals, principals.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:15 PM

### **Name**

Jeannette Sunn

### **Organization**

Kamehameha Preschools

### **Position/Title**

Vice Principal

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

One of our preschool student's father is associated with the marine science program at Wai'anae High School. He invited our staff to visit the school and learn about what they do. We were able to visit then schedule an additional two days of visits for our regional staff for professional development and then field trip for students and families to learn about the program. It is such a great community resource and educational opportunity for the students at Wai'anae High School. The work both the faculty and students do contribute to building awareness of the importance of mālama 'āina and kai. Funding for this program and others like it should be awarded as it promotes educational opportunity in fields that are not necessarily common for our students to engage in. It always promotes positive impacts to our environment and can effect change for a better future for Wai'anae, Hawai'i, and the world.

# An Opposition to the Budget Cuts Stated in Agenda VIII for Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027

The State of Hawai'i is abundant in its diverse culture, land, ecosystem, and most importantly, its people. Hawaii's public school system is a prime example of the interconnectedness of our community, and how people, with similar interests and passions, can come together to make a difference, and to make their dreams come true. Across the state, a multitude of teachers & students spend countless hours after school, developing activities and programs that make it possible to find a hobby to do after school, socialize with friends, and even meet new ones. These student programs are essential to student success. The removal of the Technology Learning Center Program inhibits students to develop engineering skills and STEM skills, limits experience that could prove helpful for a college application or resume, and limits connections that students make with one another.

Waiākea High School is the school that I call my own. It is full of a diverse mix of people, from the students who participate in the many sports throughout the year, to the dancers of our cultural clubs, and to the kids who love to do art as a hobby, Waiakea High School is a school full of opportunities for students to find their path into the future, and to connect with one another, strengthening our community. I find myself grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of our student activities program, as an executive member of our Student Government Association, a program designed to create meaningful activities for students, teachers, and staff to enjoy. As an SGA officer, I have the opportunity to meet many new people across my campus, students that I, unfortunately, didn't know attended this school. I've been able to learn about their interests, and what they love to do after school. Getting to know these people more has allowed me to better understand what these students want, and what Waiakea is able to offer them.

At Waiakea, the Technology Learning Center, or TLC for short, is a STEM center that is run by our computer science teacher, Mr. Tom Murphy. The TLC prepares for a national robotics competition that takes place in the contiguous United States; he and his students spend hours on end working on various parts of this robot. Within the TLC, there are several aspects that require a group of students to work on, they are:



- Promotion/Public Relations
  - When it comes to promoting, these students reach out to local media, or, utilize social media. Promotion allows them to effectively reach out to the general public, especially if fundraising or an open house is being held. These students work hard to ensure public support and success. They are able to develop their marketing and public communication skills.
- Programming
  - Students will collaborate, program, and test out various functions of the robot, ensuring that they work properly, adjusting and rigorously testing the code. These students work hard up until the very last minute, so that the robot can properly function during the competition. These students develop an understanding of coding languages, problem-solving skills, and collaboration.
- Building
  - These students work to construct the robot, implementing wiring, frame, and the overall build of the structure. Students ensure that the build is stable, and if requirements are met for the competition. These students are able to learn hands-on engineering and construction skills, skills which can be applied to their real life careers.

All of these projects allow students to develop skills that are essential for working in any Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics environment, these students are also able to develop communication, collaboration, and problem solving skills, as well as make new lifelong connections. Waiakea High's TLC also supports our neighboring school, Hilo High.

Waiakea High's engineering & robotics teachers also hold a summer robotics program designed for elementary level students, aimed specifically at girls, an underrepresented faction within the engineering industry, the TLC and Waiakea Engineering collaborate in order to get young students interested in the world of robotics.

In a world full of opportunities, from business clubs like DECA, to student government, to grassroots organizations, the world of college applications is an extremely competitive environment. Colleges look for students who have experience in the career/major they would like to pursue. School programs, such as the TLC, allow for students who

Waiakea High School is not the only school that has a TLC, schools around the island, as well as the state, have hundreds of students interested in the world of engineering, technology, and/or robotics, a removal and downsize of these programs limits the opportunities that prepare students for the real world, and allow them to gain experience in college. I urge all Board of Education members to reconsider the closure and shut-down of the TLC program.

To whom it may concern:

Aloha, I believe that budget cuts to learning centers such as Waianae High School's Marine Science Learning Center (MSLC) would have a detrimental impact on both students and the community. I attended Waianae High School from 2005 to 2009, and during my junior and senior years, I participated in MSLC. Initially, my decision to join was driven by uncertainty regarding my future major, as I simply wanted to be with my friends. However, this choice ultimately became the most significant decision of my high school experience, one that continues to benefit me as an adult, 15 years later. The knowledge I gained during those two years helped shape me into a diligent individual who holds themselves to high standards. Marine Science provided me with an educational experience that is relevant to my career. Skills such as adaptability, integrity, accountability, self-discipline, and professionalism are just a few of the strong work ethic principles I learned at a young age through my involvement in Marine Science.

Marine Science is a program that teaches students the biological and physical science of marine life and ocean ecosystems, during my time in school it was a part of a Natural Resources based academy which consisted of Agriculture, Hawaiian Study, and Food Service; all subjects complement one another and offered such a well-rounded perspective on environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management. Since it's been 15 years, the learning outcomes and academic curriculum for the class is a blur. However there are many aspects and values to Marine Science I have learned.

I recognize the importance of maintaining a balanced budget and the responsibility of the board in making these decisions; however, I urge consideration of the potential negative impact that reducing funding for beneficial programs may have on current and future students. As I highlight the Marine Science Learning Center at Waianae High School as an example, I encourage you folks to keep in mind of the other learning centers across the state that offer similar benefits. Marine Science provides substantial academic, cultural, and community benefits. I will present key information that illustrates how it positively impacts each of these areas.

Marine Science is academically beneficial as it offers students a multidisciplinary understanding of both biological and physical sciences, such as oceanography, ecology, and environmental science. Through studying marine ecosystems, students gain hands-on experience with scientific research methods, data analysis, and critical thinking. These skills not only enhance understanding of marine environments but also prepare students for careers in science, technology, and conservation. Additionally, Marine Science promotes STEM education, fostering problem-solving abilities and environmental literacy, which are valuable in a range of academic and professional fields.

Culturally, Marine Science is culturally beneficial in Hawaii as it strengthens the connection between students and the traditional Hawaiian relationship with the ocean. Hawaiian culture deeply values the concept of malama 'aina (caring for the land and sea), and studying Marine Science helps students understand and respect this stewardship. It also revives traditional knowledge, such as sustainable fishing practices, navigation, and the ecological understanding embedded in ahupua'a (land division) systems, which promote sustainability from the mountains to the sea. By learning these cultural practices alongside modern science,

students develop a holistic approach to marine conservation that honors both Hawaiian heritage and environmental responsibility

The Waianae community, while known for its unique character, unfortunately carries a challenging reputation, and recent months have seen an increase in violence. As a Waianae native, I have witnessed the impacts of these events and believe they can be mitigated. Providing our children with access to programs and activities is crucial for fostering their growth into respectful and responsible young adults. To send our youth into the world without strong values and morals would reflect poorly on both parents and schools. While the phrase 'it starts at home' holds truth, I believe schools play an equally important role. Our children spend nearly as much time at school as they do at home, making it essential to offer them enriching programs and extracurricular activities that support their development is highly valuable. Marine Science provides a platform for students to develop essential skills such as responsibility, conflict resolution, teamwork, positive engagement, life skills, critical thinking, and awareness of career opportunities. By imparting these skills and knowledge, the Marine Science Learning Center can function as an impactful resource for driving positive change in communities affected by crime, ultimately fostering resilience and hope for a brighter future.

In closing, I respectfully urge the board to reconsider any proposed budget cuts to learning centers such as the Marine Science Learning Center at Waianae High School. Like other programs throughout the state, this program not only enriches the academic experience of our students but also serves as a vital resource for nurturing responsible, engaged members of the community. The skills and values imparted through Marine Science are essential for the personal and professional development of our youth, as well as for the overall well-being of the Waianae community. By investing in this program, we are investing in a brighter future for our students and our community as a whole. Thank you for your attention to this important matter

With much Aloha, Mahalo

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 5:08 AM

### **Name**

Sheralyn Fely

### **Organization**

Kahuku High

### **Position/Title**

Tutu of a student very into music

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I support continuing monies for the arts at all schools you plan to cut. My Mo'opuna have come so very far in his love of classical music and his clarinet. Please dont do this. He has put down his phone and electronics since he discovered music. He is in AP classes and is motivated because of the arts. Please don't do this. Don't take away funding. There is much more to Kahuku than football. This is wrong and if you have keiki in the arts and music, you know , right? Mahalo Nui for your time.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 2:02 AM

### **Name**

Arlene Mailo

### **Organization**

KHIS Music Learning Center

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My daughter has is a senior and has been a part of the KHIS band since intermediate. Now, she is also participating in choir. Both programs have been an amazing learning experience she has come to love. Her participation in this program has helped to guide her decision on what college she would like to attend. Because she has had so many years playing multiple instruments and with the different programs available at Kahuku, I feel it has given her more excitement to continue her education. I hope the music program continues to encourage other students to further their education beyond high school as well!

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 7:27 AM

### **Name**

Alexis Coughlin

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I oppose the VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 8:37 AM

### **Name**

Jokaiwodr Kabua

### **Organization**

Radford High school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 9:48 AM

### **Name**

Skye-Marie Batungbacal

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.



11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 9:34 AM

### **Name**

Matthew Lane

### **Organization**

Cultivate

### **Position/Title**

Founder

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please do not cut funding for learning center's specifically the Lahainaluna Ag Learning Center as it will have a huge effect on the future of Ag Business in Lahaina Town.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 10:52 AM

### **Name**

Brian Tudor

### **Organization**

B.A.T. Surfboards

### **Position/Title**

owner

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

to whom it may concern, I respectfully oppose any expungement of any stem program or technical learning centers at the middle school and high school level here in Hawaii. This is not something that should even be considered as Waialua robotics program is one of the best in the nation if not on the planet. respectfully thank you, Brian Tudor.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 11:16 AM

### **Name**

Joshua Milligan

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 12:24 PM

### **Name**

Ryan Poe

### **Organization**

Ma Ka Hana Ka Ike

### **Position/Title**

School Garden Coordinator

### **Agenda Item**

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha,  
To whom it may concern,  
I ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that the students continue to have the amazing learning opportunities they currently experience and can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

November 1, 2024 at 12:47 PM

### Name

Dezmond Gilla

### Agenda Item

VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

### Written Testimony

#### Write Testimony

To the Honorable Committee,

I strongly oppose cuts to the arts programs in public schools.

Our society can only benefit from the Performing Arts allowing individuals to better problem-solve, think critically, work as a team, increase confidence, discipline, and better cope with high stress situations.

I have personally felt the positive effects in my life having been a student of Theater. My confidence, social skills, and ability to concentrate are all thanks to the teachers and material I studied in Performing Arts programs. I also credit my abilities to more easily adapt to changing circumstances, memorize large chunks of information with increased comprehension, hold myself accountable, and empathize on a broader scale to said studies.

Here are a links to other research showing how invaluable the arts are to us:

<https://sttimothys.org/titan-talk/why-visual-and-performing-arts-matter-in-school/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

<https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798\\_Integration\\_of\\_Performing\\_Arts\\_in\\_Education\\_A\\_Joyful\\_Retentive\\_and\\_Transformative\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372676798_Integration_of_Performing_Arts_in_Education_A_Joyful_Retentive_and_Transformative_Learning)

[https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America\\_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf](https://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America_The-Benefits-of-an-Arts-Education.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329015.pdf>

<https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/REAP%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618\\_Why\\_We\\_Need\\_Arts\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270412618_Why_We_Need_Arts_Education)

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/visual-artsperforming-arts-critical-to-student-success/>

<https://educationalendeavors.org/five-benefits-of-a-performing-arts-education/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2024/02/28/how-the-arts-can-help-all-students-in-the-united-states-graduate/>

<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-benefits-of-arts-education-for-k-12-students>

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>

[https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm\\_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw\\_wcB](https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/2014-06-09/how-children-benefit-music-education-schools?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz7uRBhDRARIsAFqjulkje3rS4yZ2EERQ005jiGBZhDXtAMNjfMRscevsm_O11BmOsneeWYaAjodEALw_wcB)

<https://americantheatreguild.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Benefits-of-Performing-Arts-Among-Youth.pdf>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-performing-arts-benefit-kids.html>

Please help our future students and ultimately our world reap the rewards that studying the Performing Arts provides!

11/01/2024

Sincerely,

Dezmond Gilla

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:08 PM

### **Name**

Marley Bautista

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi. My name is Marley Bautista and I would like to talk about how you shouldn't take away theatre. Theatre is an opportunity for kids, including me, to achieve their dreams/goals, get out their introverted side and make friends that like theatre as well. Some kids and I want to go to Hollywood to act in big movies to encourage others that are also in theatre and want to act in big movies that they can do the same. It's their passion, something they enjoy doing. Some actors like Jason Momoa, Auli'i Cravalho that went to Mililani High, Lauren Graham and much more. Taking away this opportunity will take away students learning opportunities, it won't make kids think they could achieve their goals, kids would be too afraid to branch out and people working in theater would lose their jobs. Theatre is also very entertaining for other theatre kids and kids who just enjoy watching theatre and taking theatre away from not only theatre kids but people who enjoy watching, it will also be disappointing for them. Please rethink your decision. Thank you for reading.

11/01/2024

## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 29, 2024 at 1:38 PM

### Name

Sesilili Kaufononga

### Organization

LahainaLuna

### Position/Title

Student

### Agenda Item

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

We are students of the Lahainaluna Agriculture Learning Center, specifically period 7 Small Animal Systems and we are against the Department of Education's budget proposal to cut funding for the learning centers (LC) around the state. Next year the DOE is proposing to defund the LCs' \$17,000 that each program uses to fund amazing projects, field trips, and provide employment opportunities for students. The following year SY2026-2027, the DOE proposes to defund the money that pays for half of each LC coordinator's teaching section.

Funding for the LCs will specifically support Lahainaluna LC goals of growing some of the plants that will be used by Lahaina homeowners to replant their yards after the Lahaina Fires. Losing funding will take away opportunities for us to fall in love with agriculture and will make it harder for us to learn the skill and gain the knowledge necessary for us to help our community become more food secure. Post-plantation life has resulted in our local economy being dependent on tourism, shifting our agriculture industry to support tourism and restaurants. For us to be able to continue to live on Maui and work and do what we love we need the extra support our LC provides to learn how to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

This year our LC funded a field trip to the Honokowai Valley to work with Maui Cultural Lands clearing invasive species from lo'i kalo. We learned a lot about native plants, the space we worked in, the people who came before us, and why it is important to care for our natural resources. Later in the year we will use LC money to travel to Kahoolawe with KIRC as a service learning experience that would otherwise cost \$200 per person. Around the same time, we will also be traveling to Oahu for the Hawaii FFA Convention. This is an amazing opportunity to compete with and learn from other ag students around the state. These are just a few of the learning experiences that our LC makes possible, without the LC funding we would not be able to travel as often.

Small Animal Systems is a level two course. Each year we continue to take courses in our LC we gain more knowledge and skills that we hope to demonstrate in a PBA project our senior year. Our LC PBAs have ranged from designing and building chicken tractors to quail coops and floriculture landscapes to fields of row crops. All of these projects require extra funding for repair and maintenance of tractors, vehicles, and small machines, as well as livestock supplies, seeds, and plant stock materials. Our production agriculture classes rely heavily on the LC funding to fund these projects.



11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Sesilili Kaufononga

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 1:38 PM

### **Name**

Devin Gabel

### **Organization**

Lahaina Luna Agriculture Learning center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

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11/01/2024

We students ask that you reject the DOE's proposal to cut LC funding so that we can continue to have the amazing learning opportunities we experience so that we can be better prepared to become agriculture entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration, Devin Gabel

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 6:05 PM

### **Name**

Mina Tanner

### **Organization**

Castle Performing Arts Center

### **Position/Title**

Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Good Evening,

I am a proud alumni of James B. Castle high school and the Castle Performing Arts Center. As a student who spent the majority of my high school at this location and in this arts program, I benefitted immeasurably from its resources and programs. Were it not for the excellent instruction, opportunities, and community built through this program, I would not be the person I am today and would likely not regard my Hawai'i public school experience as beneficial as I do. Learning centers benefit not just individuals, but families and entire communities through their outreach. I am shocked and disappointed that the Department of Education would even think of defunding these essential programs. If the people who made these decisions had ever set foot or truly spoken to anyone in these program, they wouldn't even think about removing this essential funding. In my program alone, CPAC and arts and business pathway students had higher test scores and grades on average than any other academy at our school. Additionally, these students were more likely to feel connected to their school and community through this program. Arts are already underfunded and underrepresented in America, and there is irrefutable research to prove how much students benefit from this well-rounded educational opportunity. I encourage anyone who believes in removing this resource to reach out to the programs effected. Just watching a single performance from CPAC shows the effort and dedication of so many students and how important this program is to them.

This is not the only program that will be drastically effected or even destroyed by this act. If you cut funding to these programs, students will lose these opportunities. These communities will be devastated. Those career fields become far less accessible. If you care about the future of STEM or agriculture, career paths that Hawai'i desperately needs, you need to continue to fund these programs. I plead with lawmakers to make the right choice and continue to provide keiki with valuable resources at their schools. Mahalo for your time.

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 9:15 PM

### **Name**

Alyssa Pang

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Opposition in decreasing the budget for creative arts in public schools.

NPAC and many other performing arts programs have made a positive impact on the children of the community. The program has personally helped many children and provide an outlet for their creativity. I think setting requirements and Enrollment minimums can be considered for budget allocation, but should still be made available. Thank you.

Alyssa Pang

11/01/2024

## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 7:50 AM

### **Name**

Nalani Enos

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Do not cut funds from these programs! They're absolutely worth it and provided the foundation my brother built his career upon. He's now traveling the country (US and Canada) touring for a musical. He wouldn't have even thought of that option if he wasn't exposed to it at a young age and continued it into his HS and college career.



## Foundations of Creative Media Syllabus

**ALOHA Kalaheo Mustang Ohana!** Welcome back to school! Below are the course expectations and school policies. Please review them carefully and **feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions or concerns.** During these unprecedented times, I ask for your cooperation and patience. My hope this school year is to make it a memorable experience for your students with your help! I know we will have a successful year.

This is an introductory multimedia course based on the **Common Core State Standards** to ensure a standards-based curriculum and education for all students. In addition, each student will achieve all **six General Learner Outcomes in the classroom:**

1. Being responsible for their learning
2. Working well with others
3. Engaging in complex thinking and problem-solving
4. Recognizing quality performance and producing quality products
5. Communicating effectively
6. Using a variety of technologies effectively and ethically

Digital Design is intended for students who plan to pursue Careers in the Cultural Arts, Media, and Entertainment Pathway. Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of media arts. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the following concepts will be covered: aesthetics, creativity, culture, current technology, customer service, legality/ethics, management, the impact of media, and safety.

If you are a Junior or a Senior, you also have the opportunity to participate in an internship. For more information about this, you can talk to me privately.

### Class Materials

Daily, you will need to be ready to learn and have:

- Chromebook/personal laptop/iPad
- Pen and/or pencil
- Notebook
- USB flash drive (8GB minimum) optional

### Assignments & Projects

Please be ready to learn in various formats, i.e., in-person, distance, self-directed, hands-on, etc. Please be aware that some assignments may be recordings of yourself through video and/or audio. This may also include virtual meetings online (if circumstances change throughout the school year), which may also be posted in Google Classroom. Students are expected to submit ALL classwork, homework, projects, etc. must be turned in ON TIME for full credit. ALL LATE ASSIGNMENTS will earn a maximum of 70%. The major projects are based on the following topics:

- Design Elements and Principles
- Visual Communication
- Typography
- Branding & Brand Identity
- Product Production
- Photography
- Videography
- Marketing & Media
- Web Design

The class resources are through Google Classroom. The programs we use are found on Adobe Creative Cloud and Canva.

### Grades

The percentage of total points available determines grades. There are two grade categories totaling 100%: Formative (30%) and Summative (70%). All grades will be posted on Infinite Campus throughout the year. Grading is done in two semesters. Grading will not "start over" at Quarter 2 or Quarter 4. Quarter 2 and Semester 1 grades will be the same. Quarter 4 and Semester 2 grades will be the same. The year grade is calculated as an average of the two-semester grades. A rolling grade book allows for more accurate weighting of final assessments for students to show mastery of the instructional content and standards. My grades are updated weekly by Sunday night.

The breakdown of grades is as follows:  
A = 90% and above      D = 60% - 69%  
B = 80% - 89%              F = below 59%  
C = 70% - 79%



Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign below acknowledging that both you and your student have reviewed this material.

I have read the course syllabus and agree to adhere to its rules and policies.

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student Name (Print)         | Student Signature         |
| Parent/Guardian Name (Print) | Parent/Guardian Signature |

### Classroom Expectations

#### RESPECT

- Please be respectful towards me, your classmates, and yourself throughout this learning process.
- Follow all school policies.
- Remember that everyone has a voice and is from different cultures. You may not agree with some things, but we must be open and understanding.
- Being on time for class is how I expect you to show respect to your classmates and me.

#### COMMUNICATION

- Please communicate with me if you have any problems, questions, or concerns. You can always send me an email. My room is always open to you.
- Only positive communication and language are allowed in the classroom. We will be giving each other feedback on multiple occasions. Keep in mind how many hours your classmates have worked on an assignment.
- "I wish my teacher knew" jar. This will be on my desk. I will be the only one who looks at these notes. I just ask you to put your name on the note. If there is something that you wish I knew, please leave it in there.

#### SAFETY

- Students must clean their work area before leaving class. All materials and equipment should be returned before leaving.
- Inside and Outside, this classroom is a safe space to share experiences. Art comes from personal experiences, so there will be times when you will be asked to reflect and visually create content based on past experiences. Know that this is an environment WHERE YOUR VOICE, OPINION, AND THOUGHTS MATTER. Each student has something to offer in this class.
- Some equipment will be used that requires us to use safety specific protocols. If you are a student, mistreat, or do not follow the safety protocol in using them for the rest of the school year and will be given an alternative assignment.

#### BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK

- Be a learner, not a finisher
- Take ownership of your education
- You will have the opportunity to enter some of your work into a state or national contest. Remember who and where you represent!

#### Classroom Policies

- Cell Phone Usage-Each day at the beginning of class you will turn in your cell phone. In this class, there will be moments when you are allowed to use your cell phone but it will be at the teacher's discretion.

- Absences - In the event of an excused absence (with an official re-admit slip), students are responsible for turning in any missed work done in and out of class. The student must communicate with me to find out what they missed during their absence. In this class, each class period builds on top of each other. If you miss multiple classes in a row, then you risk the chance of falling behind.
- Equipment usage is further clarified in the following Equipment Use Agreement. Please read, sign, and return the agreement. Students must have this paper returned to handle any equipment in this class.
- Plagiarism: Students caught plagiarizing will receive a zero for the assignment without the option for make-up.

#### Discipline Policies

- 1<sup>st</sup> consequence: silent warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> consequence: student conference
- 3<sup>rd</sup> consequence: contact with a counselor, administrator, or another adult.
- 4<sup>th</sup> consequence: referral to administrator
- 5<sup>th</sup> consequence: parent/teacher conference

#### Use of Video Material

We watch a variety of video materials in class that will be relevant to our course curriculum. However, some videos may include material with G, PG, and PG-13. Some television shows are not rated. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

#### Contest Awards

Any awards, certificates, and prize money won through contests entered by the students belong solely to the Mustang Media program unless the teacher deems otherwise.

There are several documents you must complete electronically. Please submit it by **Thursday, August 15, 2024**. I look forward to a successful, creative, and, most importantly, safe school year with you. To achieve these goals, our Kulaeana (responsibility) must understand and adhere to the classroom expectations and policies.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the class or your student's progress.



You can email me at mikayla.kloppel@k12.hi.us or find me: On an A-day schedule M201 On the B-day schedule in A103 & Afterschool



### Technology Responsible Use Form

(for digital devices, network, and internet services owned and leased by the Hawaii State Department of Education for its students)

Each student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) ("parent" or "parents") must review the Technology Responsible Use Guidelines for digital devices, network, and internet services owned or leased by the Hawaii State Department of Education for its students, known as "Technology Responsible Use Guidelines" or "TRUG," and sign this "Technology Responsible Use Form" or "TRUF" for access to digital devices, internet and network services, including online educational services.

STUDENTS who will be using Hawaii State Department of Education(HIDOE) owned or leased digital devices, network, and internet services:

- I have read the Technology Responsible Use Guidelines (RS 17-0051) in the separate document and agree to, and will abide by, its terms/guidelines stated therein, and as may be subsequently modified.

#### As a PARENT, I also agree that:

- I am responsible for monitoring my child's use of HIDOE-owned or leased digital devices outside of HIDOE property/school.
- HIDOE may bar access by students to certain material not deemed for educational purposes; however, I also understand it is impossible for HIDOE to restrict access to all controversial and inappropriate materials. Therefore, I will hold harmless HIDOE and its employees from any cause of action related to my child obtaining access to materials or software which may be deemed inappropriate.
- I have discussed the TRUG with my child and, therefore:
  - If available at the school, I agree that my child be assigned a HIDOE-owned or leased digital device;
  - I agree that my child be allowed access to HIDOE's internet/network services; and
  - I agree that my child be allowed access to the online educational services provided by the school.
- I understand that all software loaded on the device upon issuance to the assigned student is the property of the HIDOE. Copying this software to another device is not permitted and may violate copyright laws. Students/parents should not download or install any software on this device other than printer drivers for home printing or software specifically for access to a home network.
- By signing below, I, in consideration of HIDOE providing my child with HIDOE network and Internet access, agree to indemnify HIDOE for any losses, costs, or damages (including reasonable attorney fees) incurred by HIDOE relating to, or arising out of, any breach of these or other HIDOE rules by the student in using HIDOE-owned or leased digital devices, Network, and Internet. I shall assume responsibility for any damages to HIDOE-owned or leased digital devices while the student is using it, including paying for repairs.
- HIDOE assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long-distance charges, per-minute surcharges, and/or equipment on-line costs. Ordinary internet and network access and use will incur no such charges. Any such charges are the responsibility of the parent signing below.

This TRUF is valid for the student while attending Kalaheo High School unless rescinded by the parent or the TRUG has been revised. (school name)

|                           |                            |      |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| Student Signature         | Printed Name & Student ID# | Date |
| Parent/Guardian Signature | Printed Name               | Date |
| Parent/Guardian Signature | Printed Name               | Date |



It is imperative that all students work together to protect the equipment and use it in the correct and intended way. Violations of this trust will meet with consequences, up to and including the removal from the class. Damaged/lost equipment will be replaced by the student who damages/loses the equipment and/or the team, at the market value current at the time of damage/loss. Team members have options for stopping abusive behavior, i.e., reminding the offender of the rules, leaving the offender and returning to class to report the problem, sending a member of the team to get the media teacher, or asking a nearby teacher to help or call the media teacher. Students need to immediately report any equipment problems so that it can be repaired quickly for class use and any mishandling of equipment can be dealt with.

Students found to be negligent, purposefully misusing equipment, or in any way behaving in such a way that could lead to damage to the equipment or that endangers other team members will be suspended from equipment usage. In addition, there may be consequences to the student's grade. Students may also be disciplined for not returning all checked-out equipment by the due date and time.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and discussed this agreement, and I understand my responsibilities in regard to this Equipment Use Agreement. I am aware of the consequences for mishandling/abusing equipment and other irresponsible behavior. I understand I will not be permitted to use the classroom equipment until this document is signed and returned.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Equipment Checkout Policy

- Students must follow proper equipment checkout procedures with the teacher.
- Allow only members of your team to handle equipment.
- Sanitize and return equipment by the designated due date and time, and make sure it is accounted for with the teacher. Do not simply leave equipment in the classroom and assume it has been checked in. Make sure the teacher has officially checked back in the equipment.
- All equipment must be returned and sanitized before 8:00 a.m. the following school day.
- All equipment must be returned in the same condition as it was checked out and everything must be put properly in its place. Cords and cables must be properly coiled and secured.
- Failure to comply with checkout policies will result in loss of checkout privileges.

Remember to immediately report ANY problems with equipment. If you do not do so, and the next group reports problems, the damages/problems will be attributed to your group.

#### Form SP/VR

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                      |                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | State of Hawaii<br>Department of Education           | Student Publication/Audio/Video<br>Release Form |
| This form supersedes all previous Student Permission to Videotape/Record, Reproduce Work and Student Publication/Audio Release Forms.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                      |                                                 |
| Note: This form does not apply to the creation or use of digital or print media of students for research purposes, including post-secondary degree requirements. For more information visit: <a href="http://bit.ly/HIDOEdata-research">http://bit.ly/HIDOEdata-research</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                      |                                                 |
| In order to protect a student's rights to privacy as outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), parents/guardians or eligible students (those aged 18 or over) are being asked to give the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) permission to create or use digital or print media of the student's name, voice, likeness or images of student work for the purposes described in this form. |                                                      |                                                 |
| I hereby give my permission to HIDOE to create or use the media described above of my child (if parent/guardian) / me (if eligible student) or my child's / my work — which may include, but are not limited to, video and audio recordings, photographs, and images — for the following legitimate educational purposes:                                                                                                                                                        |                                                      |                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication on HIDOE websites or in print or other digital media (see back page for examples)</li> <li>• HIDOE staff professional development, including peer and advisory observations</li> <li>• HIDOE training, including but not limited to preparation programs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |                                                      |                                                 |
| I understand that the distribution of these media may include print, online, or digital media, and open-circuit broadcast, closed-circuit, or cable television transmission within or outside of the State of Hawaii.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                      |                                                 |
| I understand that there will be no compensation, financial or otherwise, by HIDOE for its use of these media, either for initial or subsequent transmission or playback.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                      |                                                 |
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| I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time without any negative consequences by submitting a written statement to my child's/my school. I understand that withdrawing consent will not affect my child's/my standing in school, nor any publication or work using these media which has already been produced.                                                                                                                                                   |                                                      |                                                 |
| Please check one:<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes, I agree to the provisions above and HIDOE has OR</b> my permission to create or use digital or print media of my child's/my name voice likeness or images of my child's/my work exclusively educational purpose stated below.<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No, HIDOE does not have</b>                                                                                                                                   |                                                      |                                                 |
| Form is valid for the purpose occurring on the date(s) as stated below:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                      |                                                 |
| Student's Name (Please Print)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student Name (Please Print) |                                                 |
| Kalaheo High School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                      |                                                 |
| School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Signature of Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student        |                                                 |
| Academy of Media & Design                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | SY2024-2025                                          |                                                 |
| Purpose or Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Date(s) of Activity                                  |                                                 |

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 2:19 PM

### **Name**

Barbara Shrader

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

It has come to my attention that the Dept. of Education has proposed the elimination of the Theatre Arts Program. I am writing in opposition to this proposal. As a parent of a theatre arts daughter who went through a program from elementary school through high school, I watched it benefit her tremendously in all areas of her life. As a mom with a teaching degree, I want to advocate for Hawaii's program to remain and even to have an increase in budget. These are some of the reasons:

1. Like athletics, it is a 'team' effort to put on a play. All aspects of theatre, not just acting, are of great benefit to the team. Students learn multiple 'firsts' in trade areas, like electrical and sound engineering, design, construction of sets, music/voice, dance, etc. These are important areas for them, to think in terms of future occupations. This also helps toward college applications in listing activities, and ability to work in teams, among other categories.
2. Being cast in plays will improve communication skills. Students have to practice script memorization, learning movement/choreography with others, all which increases their ability both verbally and non-verbally. This also develops cooperation and compromise: when a student doesn't get the role they hoped for but another, they learn to work in an atmosphere much like an adult in a work place.
3. Scripts do not only have to be memorized, but examined methodically with the director, in order to develop their character, help others develop theirs, and work together to shape the play with inflection and imagination, sharpening the students' skills for presentation of material that can be used in other classrooms when allowed. Reading comprehension increases within this context. And an added benefit is the respect learned and given to the teachers, and the gaining of invaluable listening skills.
4. Unlike just analyzing literature in a classroom, students develop critical thinking skills in a fun way, by analyzing characters in the scripts and solving problems in the overall arc of the story.

All of this goes towards enhancing student self-confidence, and adaptability, mental health and self-expression. The community that is built is tight and becomes like a family, lasting far beyond high school. In my experience, I have seen shy students become outgoing and self-confident, and students learn to be on time, responsible because it benefits themselves and others, develop communication skills, and even leadership skills; such qualities searched out by future employers.

I highly recommend you reconsider your stance on this program for the sake of the students. Theatre Arts are of an immense value to a school curriculum!

Thank you for your time.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 5:09 PM

### **Name**

Harrison Terstegge

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

The proposed measures would be highly detrimental to CPAC (Castle Performing Arts Center) to the point of potentially even killing the program. CPAC has provided the community with high quality theatrical performances for decades now, receiving international recognition as a public school performing arts program of the highest quality, with numerous performances receiving invitations to the prestigious Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Students that aspire to be actors and dancers alike from across the island flock to Castle High School specifically to join CPAC, which over decades has produced countless successful actors and dancers, industries that are notoriously difficult to break into, much less make a living.

Furthermore, the impact that CPAC has on the community cannot be understated. Thousands of people watch their productions every year, including friends, family, and those who support the arts. If it weren't for CPAC, performing arts on the Windward side and the island at large would see less new talent, less engaging productions, and less opportunities for the community to come together to enjoy these experiences together.

CPAC performances are powerful enough that they often make one forget that these are just teenagers performing. But they are, and we should relish in the fact that even the performers that have their sights set on goals that have nothing to do with the arts learn universal skills through CPAC that are becoming increasingly imperative in the 21st century. Collaboration, communication, coordination, compassion, community- these are all things that CPAC equips every student it touches with.

So why would we want to do anything to the detriment of such a successful program? CPAC fully aligns with not only the goals of the DOE, but distinguishes Castle High School from an ordinary high school with a decent football team to a place where great art is born, students are equipped with 21st century skills in an innovative way, and great talent is not only fostered but realized into artistic careers. It would be nothing short of a travesty and an utter failure of the education system to do anything other than give CPAC it's full support.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 8:42 PM

### **Name**

Erin Jordan Carlos Carlos

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I have many friends from the variety of learning centers we are provided. I love to see them be passionate about what they are best at and their want to continuously improve because of that drive these learning centers are able to bring out of them. For sure I know that these learning centers have given birth to many future performers, engineers, and people that will make sure they do their part in saving the Earth. These individual programs have provided my friends a home and safe place. I can't imagine a future where younger generations with that same passion and curiosity not be able to do what they love. These learning centers provide us opportunities to become better people and overall help us contribute to society in a way we feel is beneficial for everyone around us and ourselves.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:37 PM

### **Name**

Rachelle Amparo

### **Organization**

Kapolei High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

As a public school theater teacher I know the value of theater and its impact on students. I have seen students lives change for the better and turned around. Our school does not receive any of these theater learning center funds but I have worked with several students that have benefited from other schools that do. Please do not take away these extra curricular programs from our keiki.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 2:10 AM

### **Name**

Julie Matsumoto

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Julie Matsumoto, and I am a junior at Mililani High School. I'm reaching out to address the proposed budget cuts to Learning Center programs, which I believe are incredibly fallacious. I am writing to you on behalf of the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding from the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) concerning the realignment of resources in the state budget.

As someone who currently benefits immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how valuable they are to the educational achievement of both myself and others. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools across the State of Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless opportunities in STEM, Performing Arts, Agriculture, Business, and STEAM for students to enrich their experiences. These learning centers provide not only academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, personal growth, and international competition.

My involvement with the STEM Learning Center at Mililani High School allowed me to participate in Science Fair in my sophomore year. Through my research of possible topics and conversing with my peers, I developed an interest in studying veterinary medicine, which I intend to pursue in college. Prior to this, I had no interest in STEM-related fields whatsoever, so I can attest that the STEM Learning Center has in fact changed my life trajectory.

We cannot continue to fund other programs while making significant budget cuts to the Learning Centers. It is important to have a balance because of the growing need for scientific and technological innovations. The State of Hawaii has ranked 45th out of 50 states for educational achievement in 2024, scoring below average in progressive education and innovative education.

If these budget cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to achieve their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students statewide. It would also create disinterest in fields related to performing arts and STEM, which will harm our academic performance further.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student. Budgeting cuts would not allow these programs to continue operating at the same level they have been for decades. It is

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important that these Learning Centers can continue to provide opportunities and support to students for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Julie Matsumoto

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:32 AM

### **Name**

Ho'onani Kamai

### **Organization**

Farrington Performing Arts Center - FPAC

### **Position/Title**

Alumni/Former Performer

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Aloha DOE,

I am an alumni of WRFHS, class of 2018, and was present during the grand opening of our FPAC program.

I wish that I could've been a better student on my own, but I know that the difference between my education taking a dive, head-first, into the delineating plagues of my late-teens, was our FPAC teachers & fellow classmates.

Yes, I've grown to love and appreciate the arts, and I still carry that same love to this day, 6 years after my graduation. However, practically, I've also carried responsibility, integrity, empathy & truth-of-expression, all of which was ingrained into me through my participation in our Learning Program.

If the DOE would like schools to continue to set aside a place for students like me, I would implore the funding for it to continue. Truly, I definitely do not—and would not want to—know where I would be without FPAC. It's about being a PRO-active community, rather than a RE-active one!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 6:56 AM

### **Name**

Kathleen Geiger

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Dear Board Members,

I would like to express my opposition to the proposed plan to cut funding to the PCHS Band program (Learning Center). Programs like band add much value to our children's education. It teaches students skills such as, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership and social responsibility. Our students deserve the opportunity to explore music and school band is how we make it accessible to all children. If you've not seen a marching band performance or sat through a band concert I implore you to do so. You can see and feel just how proud these students are. Not only does it foster self confidence and encourage self expression, it adds so much added value to their education. There is added value to the community, too. I remember when I lived on the mainland and saw PCHS in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. It was so wonderful to see our state and community represented nationally. I could only image how proud the students, parents, community and state felt to see their children in such a valuable holiday tradition. These students are once again representing our community and state on their upcoming trip to Chicago. As much as we value our student athletes we should equally value our band members and programs. As a parent of a current band student I have only seen how band has positively influenced my son's education. Please see the added value that the arts provide our children and reconsider your proposed cuts.

Thank you.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:02 AM

### **Name**

Ashley Balauro

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Vice Principal

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:08 AM

### **Name**

Kawena Lauriano

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Aloha, I am writing in opposition to the proposed budget cuts for learning centers. These learning centers help students get hands-on experience and skills that they would not otherwise get in a traditional classroom.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:33 AM

### **Name**

Thomas James Windrath

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:04 AM

### **Name**

Manda Emery

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Hi good afternoon,

As a James B. Castle high school & CPAC Alumni, who now has a career in Entertainment, I STRONGLY oppose cutting the budget for the Castle Performing Arts Center. As a child who grew up in an unstable home, the theatre was the only place I found solace & community as with a lot of other students I grew up with. Having a cathartic outlet & a safe space to express is imperative. This program saves lives! Taking it away would be detrimental. Thank you.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Kadence Stephenson Aurio

### **Organization**

Radford High school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:02 AM

### **Name**

Alyvia Arner

### **Organization**

Radford High School

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:41 AM

### **Name**

Jason Yadao

### **Organization**

McKinley High School

### **Position/Title**

Teacher

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Please continue to support programs across the state.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

Jerrold Smart

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

We should never cut budget for schools performing art it is one the greatest avenues for kids to express them selfs

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:10 AM

### **Name**

Joe Doviak

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This \$17,000 annual budget per learning center has been in place for 40 years and would reduce student access to film production and theater classes, business internships and robotics competitions. As a stage lighting designer working in the live event industry we need these programs to stay in schools to be our next generation of stage hands and technicians of the arts.



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:33 PM

### **Name**

Juhan barnard

### **Organization**

Campbell High School learning Center

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I want to keep this program because the garden is super important, and we get to help out all of the culinary students.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:30 PM

### **Name**

Michael Tereschuk

### **Organization**

Iatse local 665

### **Position/Title**

Motion Picture Costumer

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I support educational programs that support learning the skills to enter the Film, Television, and Theatrical fields. It is very important to prepare students to participate in this craft. These are excellent Union jobs that would allow for these kids to have a successful career that would provide a good living and allow them to remain in Hawaii . Please continue this vital program!

Michael Tereschuk

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Joseph Mai

### **Organization**

McKinley High School 2024 Alumni

### **Position/Title**

McKinley High School 2024 Alumni

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Hi my name is Joseph Mai, a McKinley High School 2024 alumni. I am opposing the Department Of Education's Capital Improvement Projects Budget Request For Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027, as it would negatively affect the TMLC academy at McKinley High School. The TMLC academy stands for Tiger Media Learning Center, as it involves with learning about, how to use, and create media. Which would be learning how to draw, print, photoshop, act, film, edit, and how to communicate ideas through media. By decreasing their budget, it would significantly decrease the quality of learning for the students. As I too had benefited and grown as a person because of the TMLC academy. I didn't know what I had wanted to do in life, but TMLC gave me a direction that I had never thought of before. So I would like to have future generations to have the same opportunities as I had when I was student. Students are the future, they need quality surroundings, this will affect that quality. That is why I oppose Department Of Education's Capital Improvement Projects Budget Request For Fiscal Biennium 2025-2027. For the sake of the future of younger generations. Thank you for your time and patience.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:30 PM

### **Name**

Aniqua Mehdi

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Students needs these programs! Especially for those of us that are low-income and immigrants!

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 5:45 PM

### **Name**

Selene Ho

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

Education is very important and a necessity to help children thrive, because so many people in Hawaii attend public school, having state supported programs is what helps the students learn and have opportunities beyond the classroom curriculum.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

November 1, 2024 at 7:43 AM

### **Name**

Shiloh Canio

### **Organization**

Radford Highschool

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

IX. Department of Education's capital improvement projects budget request for fiscal biennium 2025-2027

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 28, 2024 at 6:53 AM

### **Name**

Hilton Raethel

### **Organization**

Healthcare Association of Hawaii

### **Position/Title**

President and CEO

### **Agenda Item**

X. End-of-year evaluation of the superintendent for the 2023-2024 school year

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

My name is Hilton R. Raethel, MPH, MHA, and I am President and CEO of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH). I am providing written testimony in strong support of the Superintendent of the Hawaii Board of Education, Keith Hayashi.

HAH has been in existence since 1939 and represents over 170 healthcare organizations in Hawaii, including all hospitals, long term care facilities, home health agencies, and hospices. We also represent assisted living facilities, and a variety of other healthcare related organizations.

Our members have identified workforce as the number one priority issue for the past few years. One of the largest shortage areas is for entry level positions such as Certified Nurse Assistants, Medical Assistants, Patient Service Representatives, and Phlebotomists. We also have shortages of doctors and nurses.

Certification for a number of entry level positions can be obtained through programs offered in Hawaii's public schools, and HAH and its members see our public schools as a rich source for these entry level positions for students not able or willing to move on to tertiary education after graduation from high school.

Some students participate in these entry level programs to enhance their readiness for undergraduate education, so the public high school health programs offer skills and training for a wide variety of students.

HAH and its members, in coordination with principals and academy leads, have developed a number of programs, designed for public high schools, to attract and train high school students for a career in healthcare. We have also developed glide paths for career growth for each of these professions. These glide paths offer the opportunity for individuals to transition from entry level positions to higher level and higher paying positions. These glide paths allow the individual to progress in their career at their own pace, as opportunities and life circumstances allow.

Superintendent Hayashi is a very strong and active supporter of these programs. He and his team actively engage in conversations and initiatives that strengthen and further develop the work of the health academies and programs that have developed across the state. He and his team are actively working with us and our members to provide more resources for these training programs, to expose middle school students to the opportunities available in the health academies and other health programs, and to ensure that the schools have the available classrooms, equipment and

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resources to engage and train students. Whether students are planning to pursue higher education straight out of high school or not, Superintendent Hayashi is committed to providing as many opportunities and resources as possible to public school students across the state.

Superintendent Hayashi is a dedicated leader who is committed to the public high school system across the state of Hawaii, and we are privileged to be able to work with such a talented and enthusiastic leader as we work together to provide opportunities for Hawaii's public school students, and meet the needs of Hawaii's healthcare industry.

Hilton R. Raethel, MPH, MHA  
President and CEO  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 3:10 PM

### **Name**

Sage Ridep

### **Agenda Item**

XI. Action on findings and recommendations of Investigative Committee (a permitted interaction group pursuant to paragraph 92-2.5(b)(1), Hawaii Revised Statutes) investigation concerning performance metrics for the superintendent evaluation

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I recently heard that the Board of Education is planning to defund the Performing Arts program, and I want to express why I strongly oppose this decision. The Performing Arts has significantly impacted me and many others. It teaches students how to express themselves creatively and develop essential problem-solving skills by facing the various challenges that arise on stage.

Moreover, it fosters teamwork and collaboration, as students learn to work together toward a common goal. Through theater, students can reflect on what they have learned and apply it to their lives. The Performing Arts also provides insight into different cultures, allowing students to appreciate the beauty found in their music, dance, and storytelling.

Most importantly, the Performing Arts create a sense of community, bringing people together and fostering shared experiences. The friendships formed during productions often last a lifetime. Therefore, the Performing Arts hold a special place in many people's hearts and should not be taken away.

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 31, 2024 at 7:45 AM

### Name

Meredith Speicher

### Agenda Item

XII. Superintendent evaluation process for the 2024-2025 school year

### Position

Comments only

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

I am writing with extreme disappointment in the leadership of Superintendent Keith Hayashi. He continues to make horrible decisions. To list a few, he has not used funding and exorbitant amount of funds have been returned, unused. He is proposing to cut programs that help our students and families learn about future careers for students, get experience, and learn about future pathways. These programs also keep our students engaged, learning and thriving. His awful decisions regarding locally grown foods and the huge progress that so many dedicated advocates have been working so hard to achieve FOR YEARS. Having volunteered for the Aina in Schools program with Kokua Hawaii Foundation, I followed my children from Kindergarten through elementary school with amazing curriculum and learning . I got to see our students really learn and make life choices that have a huge impact on their health and awareness of nutrition and agriculture. It also hits common core standards while letting the students have fun when they are learning. Imagine! In Intermediate school, my students got to experience band, music, theater, and the arts - this is helping them in so many ways, it is something that really helps produce leaders. Superintendent Hayashi is proposing to get rid of many of our programs that have shown success. If it is successful, why eliminate it? If it has partners who also help and build the program beyond what the DOE can provide, you still think it should be cut?

The other horrible situation he let happen is the bus situation. The lack of transparency and the real failure of getting youth to school by not having transportation, and also not letting parents know there will be no transportation until a couple of days before school starts. I see how his decisions impact my own kids at their school, and I also see it in my profession. I see youth in some areas NOT attending school because there is not enough busses and there are no safe routes to walk to school. Truancy is up. And it is not because the students simply are cutting class. It is because of his poor decisions and lack of follow through. What has happened to address the lack of drivers and busses? For working families, it is so difficult to be told, just a couple of days before school starts, that your children will not have transportation to get to school. Or you are in a lottery, and if you got it this time, you may not the next semester. Everything this superintendent does seems to be wrong, yet there appears to be no repercussions for these horrible decisions that are going to cost our future. The future of our state. With the current budget that is proposed, his leadership has determined that the very programs that have helped our youth be able to grow and have a future that includes a diversity of professions - from agriculture to the arts to engineering to robotics - have to go. All of these are not 'nice to have' programs, these shape our future leaders in these career fields. We need people to go for a diversity of career options, to understand what options are out there, build their experience and knowledge, and become future leaders. Not to mention the support schools and after school programs have for our working families. Why build up these programs to only cut them once partnership have been created to support these great learning centers and we have seen the positive results? He is the wrong choice for leading such an impactful agency. Please help us all understand why he remains in this position and if he continues, what you will do to be sure that we do not fail our students and the future of our state. Thank you. Meredith Speicher

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 12:07 PM

### **Name**

Fenton Kukahiko

### **Agenda Item**

XII. Superintendent evaluation process for the 2024-2025 school year

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

Education is an investment in the future of your constituents. If we do not invest, we will not get returns. For decades Aotearoa has invested in their future through film, television, writing, acting, music, etc. it's investments have given the economic stability and autonomy because it created a significant GDP in a society structured exactly as Hawaii is structured. It elevates and utilizes culture while contributing to the advancement and modernization of the industry. We are not a society that can create a GDP from many things, but they are a proof of concept that this industry is one of the most non intrusive and sustainable industries available to our society. Please consider increasing our investment and never reduce it. We are only giving up our opportunity to be less dependent on outside resources. We have been growing stories in Hawaii for centuries. Let's invest heavily in our children , the elevation of our culture and the future of our society.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 7:56 PM

### **Name**

George Reyes III

### **Organization**

Nanakuli performing arts program

### **Position/Title**

Parent of Nanakuli performing arts performance

### **Agenda Item**

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

This is a place where all our children come and feel free and also express who they are! My child came from being so shy and having no self confidence until she joined Npac. If you take this program or any of the learning centers away this would be big devastation to our communities. Especially with all vilonce that been going on this will take away all outlets to safe our growing Keiki! Please don't do this to our Keiki they love and adore what they do.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 29, 2024 at 8:18 PM

### **Name**

Kuulei Mcwhirt

### **Organization**

Nanakuli performing arts

### **Position/Title**

Concerned parent of a cast member

### **Agenda Item**

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### **Position**

Comments only

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

This will take away a lot of these children's confidence and will to perform! What will our children in the communities have when this what they love? My baby girl was the most shy and not confident in herself until she joined Npac. With all the violence going on in the communities where will our children turn to? This has made them so willing and excited to push forward. Know that we have a lot of children that are not fortunate in all communities and for them to know that this there safe zone and outlet. Please support our children in all Performing arts communities!

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## October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting

### Date and Time Submitted

October 30, 2024 at 11:25 PM

### Name

Irene Leger

### Organization

KHIS

### Position/Title

C3 journey Coordinator

### Agenda Item

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### Position

Oppose

## Written Testimony

### Write Testimony

Aloha,

I Oppose the Compensation adjustments for Department of Education leadership employees (deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents) for the school year 2024-2025.

The reasoning given is "Fair and competitive salaries are essential to attract and retain skilled executives and the mission and vision." Compensation adjustments and salary increases need to be given to teachers, not Superintendents. Have you lost any superintendents because of salary? Is there a current shortage of Superintendents? The superintendent's current salary is 3 times the amount of a teacher, and this increase will make their pay 4 times the amount of a teacher's salary. This reasoning of Fair & Competitive salaries is never thought of when thinking about teachers and giving them a raise or a compensation adjustment.

Besides, the DS and AS Evaluations, What data do you have that shows that These superintendents deserve a raise? Is there any new student data that shows that they have made significant changes to our current failing system?

This is a "Public Servant" position, and Shame on you for choosing to prioritize the salary of the superintendents over the salary of a teacher, and the needs of the students of Hawaii.

Mahalo, Irene Leger

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 8:40 AM

### **Name**

jack kojima

### **Organization**

Mililani High School

### **Position/Title**

student

### **Agenda Item**

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

if we were to take away funding from the STEM programs, then we would be taking away relationships and friendships from students.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 9:12 AM

### **Name**

Reef Oudraad

### **Organization**

Central Theater Arts Academy Learning Center or Mililani Science Learning Center or Mililani High School

### **Agenda Item**

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### **Position**

Oppose

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I hope you're all doing well. My name is Reef Oudraad, and I'm a sophomore at Mililani Highschool. I'm reaching out to address the proposed cuts to the Learning Centers program, which I believe are incredibly misguided. I am writing to you on behalf of both the Central Theatre Arts Academy Learning Center and the Mililani STEM Learning Center regarding the impending funding cuts that will significantly impact our educational programs. I am in strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the LEARNING CENTERS program (Attachment A, Row 77, REF #8901, Program ID 16770) related to the realignment of resources in the department's base budget.

As someone who [has benefitted / currently benefits] immensely from the Learning Centers, I cannot stress enough how vital they are to my education. Our learning center programs, and those of other schools in Hawaii, have been in operation since the 1990s and have provided countless numbers of students unique, non-classroom learning opportunities. This program provides not just academic learning experiences, but also specialized instruction, hands-on learning, internships, industry standard equipment, certifications, and a variety of college & career opportunities.

Throughout elementary school I was on the robotics team. I had fun and learned a lot in critical thinking and how to really push myself to find an answer to a problem. This work ethic carried through too many aspects of my life helping me to become an honor roll student athlete.

If these funding cuts go through, we risk losing an invaluable resource that has empowered countless others to reach their potential and pursue their goals. The loss of the Learning Centers would mean significantly fewer opportunities for growth, creativity, and personal development for students at our schools.

I urge you to reconsider these cuts. We need to invest in our education and in the futures of every student - please ensure that the Learning Centers continue to be a beacon of hope and support for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Reef Oudraad

reefoudraad@gmail.com



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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 11:12 AM

### **Name**

Noah May

### **Organization**

Radford high school

### **Position/Title**

Student

### **Agenda Item**

XIII. Salary adjustments for deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, and complex area superintendents

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

The Construction class is very important to a lot of students at Radford and a lot of my friends would be every sad if they cut the funding for that class.

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 10:33 AM

### **Name**

Dustin Gosnell

### **Agenda Item**

XV. Announcements

### **Position**

Oppose

### **Written Testimony**

#### **Write Testimony**

I have a seen students perform in Performance Art Center, if the budget cuts happen, students can express their feelings through dance and singing, and also might ruined their dream of dancing and singing in front people in high school and so on

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 30, 2024 at 4:23 PM

### **Name**

Malulani Bohnet

### **Organization**

Kahuku Music

### **Position/Title**

Parent

### **Agenda Item**

XV. Announcements

### **Position**

Comments only

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

To whom it may concern,

The Kahuku Music program has made such a positive impact in the lives of 2 of my 3 children. One in the choir program while the other is in band. Both programs have helped my children grow. They have learned important team building skills while learning the fundamentals of being part of a team. Both programs have had the opportunity to travel which is amazing and both my children came back with a sense of accomplishment but also pride. I feel the the music program is beneficial to Kahuku High and Intermediate it makes a huge impact on a lot of students it's a place where they feel like they belong.

Mahalo,

Malulani Bohnet

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## **October 31, 2024, General Business Meeting**

### **Date and Time Submitted**

October 31, 2024 at 10:31 AM

### **Name**

Micah Kalima-Keohohina

### **Organization**

Radford high

### **Position/Title**

Agriculture

### **Agenda Item**

XV. Announcements

### **Position**

Support

## **Written Testimony**

### **Write Testimony**

I am writing to support the preservation of the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center, a unique and invaluable resource for our students and community. This center provides a safe and engaging space where students immerse themselves in Polynesian culture, connecting with traditions that enrich their lives and their understanding of our shared heritage.

Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about cultural practices but also engage in traditional and modern agriculture, developing skills that extend beyond the classroom. The center fosters respect for the land and deepens cultural knowledge, promoting values of responsibility, stewardship, and collaboration.

Protecting the Radford Rams Cultural Learning Center is crucial for empowering students with knowledge of their heritage, practical skills, and a meaningful connection to their culture. Please support this invaluable learning resource for current and future generations.



BOE Hawaii <boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## 10/31/24 General Meeting Testimonial Video

1 message

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**Mara Kaizawa Hiramoto** <mara.kaizawa\_hiramoto@k12.hi.us>  
To: BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Oct 31, 2024 at 12:37 PM

Aloha,

I am with President William McKinley High School's Tiger Media Learning Center and would like to submit testimony to oppose 10/31/24's General Meeting Agenda Item VIII. Department of Education's operating budget request for fiscal biennium. Our testimony is in the form of a video, and I wasn't sure where or how to submit a video testimonial.

So I am hoping that I can email you the link of our video testimonial: [10/31/24 BOE General Mtg LC Testimony Video](#)

Thank you for your consideration,  
Mara Kaizawa Hiramoto  
Tiger Media Learning Center Coordinator  
President William McKinley High School

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