

01/17/2025

January 16, 2025, General Business Meeting

Name

Shayne Greenland

Organization

Ilima Intermediate School

Position/Title

Principal

Agenda Item

IV. Finance and Infrastructure Committee oral report on December 12, 2024, meeting

Position

Oppose

Written Testimony**Write Testimony**

January 14, 2025

Hawai'i Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Dear Members of the Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposal to raise fees for school meals, student activities, and summer school, which will be discussed this Thursday, January 16. Given the current economic challenges, now is not the time to increase financial burdens on our families.

In my time as principal, I have witnessed firsthand the heartbreaking reality many of our students face. I have seen students waiting by the trash bins, hoping to receive uneaten portions of their classmates' meals. Others beg their peers for a bite, or simply go without food. These are not isolated incidents, but a daily reminder of the struggles many of our families endure. This is unacceptable, and we must address it urgently.

Recent reports highlight that one in three households with children in Hawai'i are struggling to put food on the table. For many students, school meals are the most reliable source of nutrition they receive each day. Increasing meal fees would only exacerbate the financial strain on these families, potentially impacting students' health, well-being, and academic performance.

Rather than raising fees, I urge the Board to consider implementing universal free school meals. This approach would ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals, fostering a more equitable and supportive learning environment. Universal free meals not only reduce the stigma associated with free or reduced-price meals but also enhance students' ability to focus and succeed academically.

I understand the financial challenges the Board faces, but the well-being of our students must remain a top priority. Providing universal free school meals is an investment in their future and in the future of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I hope the Board will make the compassionate choice to support our students and families during these challenging times.

01/17/2025

Sincerely,

01/17/2025

January 16, 2025, General Business Meeting

Name

Justin Hughey

Agenda Item

IV. Finance and Infrastructure Committee oral report on December 12, 2024, meeting

Position

Comments only

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Aloha Chair Takumi and members of the Board of Education

Agenda Item: VI. Department of Education change to leadership reporting structure, in relation to the Strategic Plan
Desired Outcome 3.2.2, Action Item 2

The Strategic plan does not address the loss of roughly 200 million dollars annually if the federal funding ends. President Trump campaigned on ending the Federal Department of Education. Senator Mike Rounds of South Dakota already submitted the bill. It could take only 50 votes in budget reconciliation. Trump's cabinet nomination for Office of Management and Budget is Russell Vought. He is a Project 2025 contributor who plans to violate federal law by ignoring the Impoundment Control Act by not spend money appropriated by Congress. When he had the same job during Trump's first term, he played a key role in holding up funding to Ukraine and then defied congressional subpoena about it. Therefore, he could use this strategy of impoundment to withhold USDOE funding to the states.

What is the Superintendents contingency plan in case we don't receive 200 million federal dollars next August for the following school year? Teachers had to make contingency plans in regards to covid. The Superintendent should have a contingency plan since republicans are committed to higher tax cuts for the hoarding economic royalists, at the expense of our keiki.

Is the Superintendent addressing these finical issues now with the Governor and legislature? This state is well positioned financially to solve our historical funding problems during this session. Trumps proposed 5 trillion dollar tax cut will do the same thing it has done to every Republican President since Hoover, sending us into a recess or worse. You have the opportunity now to be proactive about our historical funding problems but you don't have a lot of time.

Our keiki deserves leadership that is willing to address the current and forthcoming funding problems before our current economy falls into recession.

Kind Regards,

Justin Hughey

Special Education Teacher

Kahului Elementary

Democratic Party of Hawaii State Central Committee Education Caucus Rep.

TO: Hawai'i Board of Education
FROM: HE'E Coalition, Deborah Bond-Upson, Interim Director
Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i, Deborah Bond-Upson, President
DATE: January 14, 2025
RE: Testimony for General Business Meeting

HE'E is a coalition of organizations and individuals supporting excellence in education here in Hawai'i. Over the past 10 years, HE'E has testified to the BOE numerous times, often on the topic of the need for effective education accountability systems in the DOE. We are most encouraged by Superintendent Hayashi's request of the Council of Great City Schools to review and suggest changes to benefit our students, schools, teachers, families, and outcomes.

Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i is a parent membership organization, a chapter of the national PPS of Jackson, MS. Our mission is to hear and represent the needs of Hawai'i families and students for quality education, to support teachers, schools, and our state department of education. We do this through workshops, focus groups, surveys, advocacy, meeting with district personnel, promoting the district and schools through media interviews and social media. In the past two years we have been most appreciative of Superintendent Hayashi's willingness to meet with us and his receptivity to our views and messages from families. We conducted research with other districts who innovated with digital learning and family communications (Chicago, Fulton Cty GA, Palm Beach, FL, SC state, SD state and with developers of applications and presented a 60 slide deck to the Superintendent with our suggestions for systems integration, parent portal and messaging apps for family engagement, and Learning Object Repository for sharing Hawaii-made, OER, and licensed instruction resources. CGCS recommendations are consonant with our research and suggestions.

Both HE'E and PPS-Hawai'i's board believe CGCS suggestions are insightful, but they are not new. Our 2023-29 Strategic Plan built on three priorities: High-Quality Learning for All, High-Quality Educator Workforce In All Schools, and Effective and Efficient Operations at All Levels states that we will achieve most of the CGCS points.

Further, as far back as 2004's Act 51 passage by the legislature, some of CGCS's points have been made repeatedly. We are noting this in order to clarify that these are stubborn challenges which are likely going to take significant educational efforts and funds to achieve. We offer to help in this. Act 51 established the important weighted student formula that has enabled Hawai'i DOE to be ranked above other states and districts in financial equity. Other positive points were made, but some have not been achieved in the past 20 years.

Variations of Act 51 points 2, 11, and 12 appear in each strategic plan and in the CGCS suggestions without successful achievement. Points 4 and 13 have not been successfully achieved perhaps due to lack of integrated systems and new usages of communications technologies needed to engage families and community members today. Act 51's

empowerment of principals and schools which was and is laudable in most respects has inhibited district level innovation and distribution of a coherent locally developed curriculum and shared digital Learning Object Repository for the use and customization of all schools.

ACT 15 Initiatives:

- (1) Establishing a weighted student formula;
- (2) Providing additional information technology;
- (3) Empowering principals through a Hawaii principals academy and other means;
- (4) Strengthening community involvement through school community councils and parent-community networking centers;
- (5) Providing more mathematics textbooks;
- (6) Lowering class size in kindergarten, grade one, and grade two;
- (7) Providing full-time, year-round, high school student activity coordinators;
- (8) Providing support for students who need additional help to succeed in school;
- (9) Establishing a national board certification incentive program for teachers;
- (10) Enhancing teacher education;
- (11) Reducing the bureaucracy that hampers the effectiveness of the department of education;
- (12) Improving the educational accountability system; and
- (13) Requiring board of education members to hold community meetings in their districts.

Council of Great City Schools Review

We are most gratified that Superintendent Hayashi reached out to request the research by the CGCS.

CGCS recommendations:

- 1) Establish, implement, and monitor a systemic framework balancing complex area/school autonomy ...
- 2) Implement an extensive data management strategy to consolidate and streamline ...
- 3) Establish a comprehensive, multi-year program to develop and implement key performance indicators (KPIs) ...
- 4) Review and streamline HIDOE's administrative structure and workflows...
- 5) Leverage state-of-the-art technology to automate routine tasks, improve communication, and track progress..
- 6) Charge the deputy superintendent of Academics (et al_... with defining what high quality, rigorous, standards-based instruction looks like
- 7) All levels of the organization (e.g., HIDOE staff, CAS staff, school staff, teachers, and support staff) should use student data and root cause analyses
- 8) Establish SMART goals for improving student outcomes...
- 9) Create and invest in a research, evaluation, and strategic planning branch...
- 10) Move towards a common HIDOE-wide formative assessment ...
- 11) Implement the recommended organizational change strategies...
- 12) Reduce the number of direct reports to the Superintendent ...

CGCS suggests that the district provide a coherent set of quality instructional examples and locally-crafted instructional curriculum, integrated data and communications systems, district-wide educational resources such as a digital LOR, and the authority to measure and report effectiveness of implementation by schools.

We heartily agree and hope that CGCS credibility helps the BOE and the legislature to get the resources and resolve required to achieve district curricular and systems responsibility and authority. This adjustment to school/district authority need not damage the schools' freedom to customize, revise, and localize as desired.

CGCS suggestion that HI DOE streamline bureaucracy and integrate systems to move beyond silos has been recommended by many of us and seemingly by the strategic plan previously. But again, it is welcome to see the in-depth recognition of the problems we face now.

We believe their suggestions are sound, but we notice that, as with our strategic plan, the list does not include suggestions as to how to engage families in ways that work for today's economy and communications models -- unless "point 2- data management" includes finally giving parents an easy one click portal to their students attendance and work, and "point 5- leverage technology to improve communications" focuses on giving teacher/parent communications a major step forward, and "point 7- use of student data and root cause analyses" include focusing on family realities and needs related to "root causes". Community and family engagement need redesign to provide the support and interaction that our schools, teachers, and students need.

We cannot afford the cost to our students, teachers and families of departments in silos and ineffective, lacking, and sometimes duplicative technology systems. We are aware that these are tough problems for a complex system. We imagine that funding will be needed to advance and integrate technology systems currently behind the times. Schools and community members may need conversation and examples to understand and accept a change in management dynamics that better leverages technology, systems, and communications for the benefit of all.

We offer to support the BOE and the DOE in these important advances, to advocate for funding with the legislature and executive office, to support community and family meetings, to communicate with other groups, and other ways in which we might assist.

We thank the Board of Education for this opportunity to testify.

GBM

January 16, 2025

Susan Pcola Davis

VI. Looking forward to your successful implementation of the new Organizational alignment of the Deputy and Assistant Superintendent structure.