



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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State of Hawaii  
Board of Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

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Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA) supports the Board of Education's plan to provide "big picture" guidance to the Hawaii State Department of Education for the reopening of schools in the 2020-21 school year. The HGEA represents over 7,700 employees in the DOE and the Public Charter Schools in bargaining units 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 13.

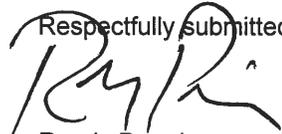
Enclosed is a copy of the letter sent yesterday to Superintendent Christina Kishimoto demanding that the DOE engage in full and meaningful consultation with HGEA regarding plans for the reopening of schools and return of students, and to bargain over any related changes to employees' terms and conditions of employment prior to implementing any changes.

Although HGEA field staff have been meeting with DOE leadership on a weekly basis since the pandemic began to discuss COVID-19 related issues, our staff and members continue to experience frustration with the lack of clear and consistent communication at all levels of the tri-level system, getting answers to our questions, and seeking the reassurance that the safety and health of students and staff is their top priority.

Unlike the other public sector unions, our members are employed in dozens of varying disciplines, including but not limited to cafeteria managers, head custodians, educational assistants, account clerks, school health assistants, engineers, clinical psychologists, athletic trainers and school administrators. Depending on their discipline, they have raised specific concerns and issues that require unique needs to be met in order to perform their duties in the "new" normal, whether it be in cafeterias, health rooms, gymnasiums, administration offices, or special education settings. To date, the DOE has provided little guidance for these specific disciplines.

We are especially concerned about the Superintendent's comment that they are simply providing the "guard rails" in terms of guidelines for reopening. As several BOE members pointed out in yesterday's Board meeting, the principals are seeking clearer guidance and direction from the State level as the burden of reopening their campuses and ensuring the health and safety of their staff, faculty and students fall on them. Prior to this pandemic, principals already had a lot on their plate. During the pandemic, they navigated through uncharted waters having to extend Spring Break, close their campuses, host Grab and Go food distribution sites, plan virtual graduation ceremonies, and create digital learning opportunities. Our educational officers need greater support from their leadership and we believe they deserve nothing less. With the recall for Vice Principals scheduled for July 13, 2020, there is no time to waste.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the BOE's effort to provide the DOE with guidance and its expectations.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Randy Perreira  
Executive Director