State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

July 9, 2020

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA) strongly recommends the BOE carefully review the DOE's comprehensive plan for the reopening of public schools and charter schools for SY 2020-2021 and evaluate whether the DOE is truly ready to reopen schools on August 4, 2020.

With less than a month before the reopening, there are still many important details which need to be worked out to ensure the safety and health of students, employees and their families.

The only guidance provided to school administrators prior to the last BOE general meeting was a one-page document entitled, “Guidance for Reopening Schools.” Since your Board Resolution directing the DOE to prepare for the reopening, the school principals received a 30-page Principals Handbook (Version 1) consisting of numerous links to guidance, many of which were still under construction or being developed. On behalf of the principals, HGEA submitted feedback to Version 1 of the handbook and only received a response from the DOE this week with “work in progress” as the answer to several of the general questions that were raised. Their response is attached to our testimony for your reference.

In the meantime, the DOE issued Principals Handbook (Version 2), along with several other manuals including a Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan Health & Safety Handbook and the OSSS School Reopening Guidance Manual. In addition, we understand the DOE has updated the Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan which has not been provided to the HGEA for consultation. Rather than ease the burden of school administrators, the plethora of manuals has done the exact opposite as each principal now has to pore over multiple documents filled with redundancies and even conflicting guidance. This is not consistent with the BOE’s directive for the Superintendent to issue clear protocols and comprehensive and cohesive guidance to all public schools by July 1st.
On Sunday, June 28th, the principals were informed that the HSTA and the BOE mutually agreed to conditions and terms for the reopening. The media coverage signaled this as the “green light” to reopen schools even though so many unanswered questions remain. However, teachers are not the only employees that schools need to operate. It requires staff in the school office, cafeteria, security, classroom support, special services, school health services, athletics and custodial staff; all of which needs to be coordinated by a well-informed school administrator. All employees are equally important and should be treated fairly and equitably. Attached to this testimony are concerns shared by some of our HGEA members such as athletic health care trainers, speech language pathologists, school safety and security officers, educational assistants, school health assistants, and educational specialists.

The HGEA meets regularly with the DOE and has provided dozens of questions and concerns from hundreds of our affected members related to the reopening of schools. These include, but are not limited to, the lack of school personnel to allow for the social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfecting of campuses, the uncertainty of funding for personal protective equipment and supplies for each school, the lack of resources for training and support for the new models of instruction, and the lack of clarity on the contingency plans should someone at the school test positive for COVID-19. If you were a school employee, would you feel confident about returning to work if these questions and concerns remain unanswered? Many of these concerns have yet to be addressed by the DOE.

Until we get clear and concise answers, we are not in a position to bargain over changes to employees' terms and conditions of employment. While we support the reopening of schools, we are not convinced that the DOE is prepared to safely open on August 4th.

In your BOE resolution, you urged school communities to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness. We have no doubt that school staff and their communities have acted in this manner. We cannot say the same for the leadership running the other two levels of the DOE's tri-level system. Thank you for the opportunity to share our continued concerns regarding the reopening of schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

Attachments
OFFICE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

July 7, 2020

Mr. Randy Perreira
Executive Director
Hawaii Government Employees Association
888 Mililani Street #401
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Response to Feedback on Principal Handbook (Version 1, July 2020)

Dear Mr. Perreira:

This is in response to your request for information regarding the aforementioned. Enclosed is the responses to the feedback on the Principal Handbook (Version 1, July 2020).

If you have any questions, please contact Jarnett Lono at (808) 441-8453 or via email at jarnett.lono@k12.hi.us.

Sincerely,

Jarnett Lono
Personnel Director
Employee Relations Branch

c: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent
   Phyllis Unebasami, Deputy Superintendent
   Cynthia A. Covell, Assistant Superintendent
   Heidi Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent
   Randall Tanaka, Assistant Superintendent
Consultation Feedback on Principals Handbook

Overall Comments
1. There are technical problems with some of the links. Work in Progress
2. Workload of School Administrators will/has increased because of all the preparation and planning the execution of this handbook involves Acknowledged
3. Suggestion of putting bookmark links on the Table of Contents Resolved
4. Suggestion of putting a list of Points of Contact as an Appendix Resolved
5. The handbook was revised from the draft provided to HGEA Work in Progress
6. A schedule management flowchart needs to accompany this handbook. Principals are not clear about what happens and by when? Work in Progress
7. If there are ongoing consultations with HSTA (and UPW), Principals need to know and cannot fully plan. They have publicly posted their proposals. (e.g. consensus on models, synchronous instruction via virtual online instruction) Work in Progress
8. This is setting principals up for significant liability. There is no way they can guarantee the safety of their staff, students and families. (Example: an elementary school whose enrollment of 700 students with 75% falling in the face to face requirement) Acknowledged
9. More time is needed – solid 4 weeks; reopen for students after Labor Day. Instructional days can be achieved through distance learning prior to that. Acknowledged
10. Not enough personnel to do what the handbook says (especially if people received accommodations or on leave and vacancies are not filled). Acknowledged
11. Starting “half-days” may be a challenge for schools for scheduling and food service. Acknowledged

Page 8 – ADA Accommodations
1. Will the requests continue to be processed by CRCB? Yes. The Equity Specialist in each Complex Area will continue to process accommodation requests based upon a disability that falls under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have questions or concerns regarding a particular reasonable accommodation request, the Civil Rights Compliance Specialist for ADA/504 is Krysti Sukita, who may be reached at 808-745-4882 or by email at krysti.sukita@k12.hi.us.
2. Due to the paperwork and documentation involved, this may take months for accommodations to be processed. In most cases, it is important to obtain information regarding the reasonable accommodation request from the employee’s doctor. If the doctor responds in a timely manner, and the employee is willing to engage in the interactive process in a good faith effort to arrive at a negotiated reasonable accommodation based upon the essential functions of their job, the process should go smoothly. Interim accommodations may be provided during the process.
3. This should not be left to the discretion of the principals. It should be an interactive process between the employee and the employer.
4. These accommodations will impact operations and resources (funding, personnel). The majority of accommodations can be provided with little to no cost, however some accommodations will incur additional costs and will require thoughtful arrangements with the employee.
Page 9 – Additional Adjustments

1. Is there a specific number of students recommended in an area? Refer to response to page 15-Social and Physical Distancing.
2. Why K-2 for full face to face instruction? See note on page 11. It states, “Priority must be given to PreK-2 students for face-to-face instruction. Given their maturity level and limited literacy and social skills, these students are the least equipped to learn independently.”
3. Will there be funding for additional classrooms to be created and staffed? If so, where will that funding come from? The Department strongly advocates allocating more public dollars to our schools from the legislature.
4. If teachers’ consensus is needed, how do we get it when they are 10-month employees and not currently working? By giving hope, acting with kindness and working towards togetherness.

Page 14 – Symptom Screening

1. Who is expected to do this? It states any designated adult. Principals and their teams determine this, based on the school’s staffing, student population, and unique school needs.
2. A lot of this responsibility will fall on the SHA. There is only one SHA on a campus, and he/she oversees the health room. The SHA can be part of the screening process. Schools will need to designate other staff members to be involved with general symptoms screening.
3. What if HSTA doesn’t agree to having teachers designated to do this? HSTA and its members have the right to the grievance procedure.
4. This conflicts with page 3 of the OSSS Manual – This handbook states “2 symptoms” and the manual states “1 system” The guidance has since changed to “any symptom” of illness.
5. We need help screening and monitoring the washing of hands – some classrooms don’t have an extra set of eyes. The expectation is to do the best that each teacher/adult can do to enforce the hygiene practice of washing hands frequently. Schools must ensure that there are ample supplies of soap and/or sanitizers to wash hands.

Page 15 – Social and Physical Distancing

1. Where is the documentation from DOH/CDC stipulating the guidelines for 3’ feet between seats, including group tables, if students are facing the same direction? This is from the American Academy of Pediatrics website:
   a. Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic,” according to the guidance.
   b. Schools should weigh the pros and cons of enforcing 6 feet of distancing. If it is not feasible without limiting the number of students, other risk-mitigation strategies may be more favorable.
   c. Elementary students should wear face coverings if the risk of touching their mouth or nose is not greater than the benefit of reducing the spread of COVID-19. When possible, spacing desks 3 to 6 feet apart and using cohort classes and outdoor space, is recommended.
   d. Physical distancing may have a bigger impact on reducing the risk of COVID-19 among secondary school students. When feasible, use face coverings when closer than 6 feet apart, avoid close proximity (and go outdoors if possible and spread out) during activities like singing and exercising, and consider cohorting classes.
2. If a 6’ distance is not feasible, there should be additional safety requirements (face shields, sneeze guards, plexi-glass barriers, etc. 
TBD: OFO is having a meeting with different offices (OTM, OSSS, OITS) to go over PPE’s for different categories of workers. This meeting will be held either 7/6 or 7/7
3. Where will funding come from for supplies and equipment necessary to comply with the social and physical distancing measures?
TBD
4. Need further clarity on masks. Unclear when and where to wear (inside v. outside). Parents will question why masks outside and not inside.
   a. Face coverings must be worn when outside the classroom, especially when physical distancing is difficult.
   b. Exceptions for face coverings apply to those for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical condition, or other considerations.
   c. In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a “cohort,” including students and teacher(s), it is not recommended that students wear a mask. Facial recognition and expressions are very important social cues in a child’s development. A classroom full of mask-wearing students may cause unhealthy anxiety for students. However, masks should be worn when physical distancing (keeping 6 feet apart) is not possible, or when students face each other and interact in similar ways.
   d. Parents/legal guardians will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks.
5. States staff are responsible to bring and properly maintain masks. Some of the CBAs state the Employer is supposed to provide and replace such items. Staff will be provided masks and will be responsible to properly maintain their masks. In accordance with the applicable CBAs, whenever the Employer requires that employees wear protective clothing or use of safety equipment and tools, the Employer shall provide and replace such items.
6. There is guidance for Grades PreK-2 and High School. More guidance is needed for Grades 3-12.
7. How do we deal with student insubordination such as the refusal to wear masks? Should hold higher weight of consequences. Refer to Chapter 19 guidance.
8. States that parents will responsible for providing masks for students. Will Superintendent include this in her press release?

Page 16 – Ventilation
1. Extremely hot to open doors and keep a/c off; e.g. because of the push for a/c in classrooms, many classroom windows were fitted with plexiglass and cannot open. 
Windows with plexiglass can be removed and possibly reused, either by custodial staff or FMB. 
Passive ventilation (tradewinds) should be used whenever possible.
2. If A/C is on, what happens when a kid sneezes? Information forthcoming.

Page 16 - Visitors on Campus (added to new version)
Principals and their designees shall have the authority to restrict access to the campus for those individuals exhibiting any symptoms of illness.
How will this be done? Does law enforcement need to be contacted if individuals are not in compliance?
Agree. Principals may use their discretion to restrict access to campus and respectfully request the individual to remove him/herself voluntarily.
Page 17 - Health Room and Services
When a student becomes ill, the student should be sent to the Health Room. If there is no School Health Assistant on campus, the student should be sent to the designated staff member. When schools open in August, schools will have a School Health Assistant (SHA) overseeing the health room (unless the principal is unable to hire a SHA).
- The student’s parent or guardian should be called to pick up the student.
- The student should be placed in a supervised, isolated area until he/she is picked up, especially if the student is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not have the student wait at the main office.
- Any student sent home due to illness should be excluded from school until symptom-free for at least 24 hours (ideally 72 hours) without the use of medication.
Who are the “designated staff member” that can supervise the student if they are not to wait at the main office, is it the vp or principal? Each school will determine the staffing to supervise a sick student while waiting to be picked up by their parent/guardian.

Page 17 - Daily Cleaning of Facilities Protocol (added to new version)
The cleaning schedule for school facilities should adhere to guidance from the CDC and the state Department of Health as available. School facilities should be cleaned daily and high-touch areas, such as door knobs, light switches, counters, desks and chairs, railings, and water fountains, should be disinfected frequently throughout the day. Proper personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and disposable gloves, should be worn at all times during the preparation, cleaning, and disinfection of school facilities. Cleaning protocols are included in the OFO Cleaning and Disinfecting training.
This information is inconsistent from the custodial training during which it was said all high touch surfaces are cleaned at least once a day. Here it says “frequently throughout the day.” This will take a lot of time for custodians to do and teachers will want this to be done between classes. With seven periods every day, it’s impossible to schedule custodians to do this for all 40+ classes. There is a limit to how much cleaning custodians can do. Unconventional strategies like having students take a paper towel and a few squirts of cleaner and wipe down their own desks before starting class may be effective if we have enough supplies. Let the custodians focus on high touch surfaces like doorknobs and bathrooms.

Page 17 – Health Room and Services
Any students sent home due to illness should be excluded from school until symptom-free for at least 24 hours (ideally 72 hours) without the use of medication.
Is it 24 or 72 hours? Would this include COVID related symptoms? Who is responsible for monitoring these students and their exclusion from school and release to return? Are we requiring students to be cleared with a doctor’s note to return to school? The minimum time would be 24 hours of being symptom-free without the use of medication for a student who is sick. With an overabundance of caution during this pandemic, 72 hours of being symptom-free would provide added protection to others at school. Symptoms are not specific to COVID-19, but to any illness. No DOE employee is qualified to recognize, screen, or diagnose specifically for COVID-19. Parents are responsible to monitor their child while he/she is home sick. And parents are responsible to determine when it is safe to send their child back to school. We are NOT requiring students to be cleared with a doctor’s note in order to return to school.
Page 17 – Daily Cleaning of Facilities
1. Who will tape floors and hang up signs?
   Everyone is encouraged to practice proper social distancing. Each school is unique, thus, the school’s administrator will determine areas where taping and signage is required.
2. Who will pay for the sanitizing stations? Need clearer guidelines as well as funding for stations, especially for “open campuses” if the goal is to have a station at every entry point. TBD
3. Should a/c in health room be turned off at all time or just when student in the health room exhibits symptoms? TBD

Page 20 - Learning Assessments
During the first two weeks of SY 2020-21, schools will assess all students from kindergarten through grade 12 to determine the students’ readiness to meet the curricular standards of their current grade level. Schools may implement one of two options.
One option is for schools to utilize the Hawaii Multi-Tiered System of Support (HMTSS) to screen students to identify targeted needs.
The English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics universal screening will:
● Be administered at the start of the school year (Fall);
● Be aligned to the Hawaii Common Core; and
● Provide a measure of growth with screening also scheduled for mid-year (Winter) and year-end (Spring).
Schools will monitor student progress to inform instructional design for intervention and differentiation.
(Please see our HIDOE link to HMTSS guide for best practices and considerations for student supports.)
The other option is for schools to administer school-developed tests to assess student needs. All grade-levels and course departments will begin their formative assessment cycle during the first two weeks of school.
● The school-developed pre-tests will be aligned to the Hawaii Common Core.
● The pre-assessments will be used as an initial diagnostic to establish baseline instructional goals and personalization.
● Grade-levels and departments will administer 5-10 formative assessments for each summative assessment to be used to inform quarterly grade determination.
This option may be used for other content areas or at schools that do not currently use a universal screener.
This whole section on learning assessments is micromanaging schools. Requiring all teachers to administer 5-10 formative assessments for each summative is too prescriptive and violates the academic freedom of teachers. Is there any research that supports 5-10 formative assessments for each summative. Are all teachers, social studies, science, CTE, Hawaiian Dance, Team Sports, media, etc., expected to give an assessment too?

The pre-tests aligned with Hawaii Common Core don't apply for social studies, science, and elective teachers. Will HMTSS training be provided by the State level for all schools and those implementing? I recommend removing all grey text.

Page 22 - Technology Devices for Students (added in the new handbook)
Link to Digital Transformation for Learning Plan 2020-21) doesn’t work
Schools to the greatest extent possible should be assigning one device per student to use for the school year. Classroom sets, such as laptop carts, can be labeled with the name of the student. Not all schools have enough devices and some students have not returned the devices loaned in March.

The HIDOE Digital Transformation for Learning Plan 2020-21 reflects our equity focus for SY 2020-21 - equity of access to technology, pushing digital supports into communities, ohana help desk, and expansion of HIDOE’s distance learning platform. Need more guidance on internet access for families – will those “buses” outfitted with wifi/internet continue to go out communities who may not have strong or stable internet?

Page 22 - Student Transportation
1. The June 23rd memo contradicts the process that urges principals to complete their school model by early July 2020. The memo states that school administrators can begin to consider general education transportation solutions for 2020 BUT it depends on the availability of bus drivers and general funds. Thus, in the end the bus company is dictating the model for schools. Transportation will never dictate educational plans and objectives. Principals should feel free to decide on a school model at their leisure. OFO will do its best to provide whatever transportation supports a school requires, except that those supports will be constrained by available resources.
2. Can principals get a copy of the procedures with bus service providers in case parents inquire? Schools will receive hard and soft copies of transportation's standard operating procedures for SY 2020-2021.
3. Need more guidance and a memo to parents regarding safety of their children using student transportation. Principals should include this information with the schedule pick up. OFO will provide a parent guidance memo that schools can issue to parents.

Page 22 - After-School Programs
School administrators should continue to consider the health and safety of staff, service providers, families and students and provide timely communication to the out-of-school-time programs and its participants.
A principal cannot be held responsible for the health and safety of contract providers outside of the school day; it’s out of our scope of duties and responsibilities.

Page 23 - Music Performances and Competitions
Link to the guidelines doesn't work Resolved.

Page 23 - Student Discipline
Chapter 19 remains in effect whether schooling is done in person, with a blended model, or virtually.
1. If a Chapter 19 infraction occurs during virtual schooling, teachers are expected to address the incident and provide the appropriate discipline and follow-up support. Shouldn’t higher class offenses involve administrators? If a higher class offense, such as a Class A and/or Class B, is reported to a school administrator, he/she shall conduct an investigation and/or contact police.
2. Should a student need to be removed from group work in a virtual setting, education for this student can continue via learning packets or in an individualized virtual setting.
Online/virtual learning should not be used as a means to remove a student with behavioral challenges out of the class. Further, it should also not be used in lieu of suspension. To clarify, we will reword this section to read: If a student needs to be removed from a virtual group work session due to misbehavior, this student shall receive alternative educational activities. These alternative educational activities can be delivered through packets and/or through an individual virtual setting.

3. How will parents be informed of these changes? Parents and/or legal guardians shall be notified of a change in a student’s educational setting via a phone call, letter, email, or conference. If a student’s removal from an educational setting is due to a Chapter 19 suspension or crisis removal, parents/or legal guardians shall be notified via a phone call or conference and through the Chapter 19 Confidential Notification of Findings and Discipline form or the Chapter 19 Confidential Crisis Removal Notification form.

Who will implement an "individualized virtual setting" when the teacher is busy teaching class? Are the VPs doing this? Individual virtual setting instruction may be delivered by any DOE employee who in their scope of duties and responsibilities may provide direct instruction to students.

The whole verbiage about not using virtual learning as a means to remove a student with behavioral challenges out of class is contradicting the previous sentence about an individualized virtual setting. - .

Please see the changes above

Page 23 - Student Transportation Memo

1. Face Coverings
   Although students will be required to wear face masks to school, they will not be refused bus service for failing to wear one at the bus stop. We will issue a supply of face masks to each bus driver for emergencies. Bus drivers will not refuse service if a child fails to wear the mask on the bus, but they will submit referrals to the school administrator for appropriate disciplinary action.
   What action is appropriate in Chapter 19 regarding wearing masks?
   If wearing masks is a requirement for students, those who do not comply shall be disciplined under Chapter 19 as this is a Class D offense (school rule).

2. Illness
   Students who appear to be ill will not be refused bus service. However, bus drivers will be required to submit referrals to the school administrator for follow up if unaccompanied by an adult.
   This puts administrator (and everyone) in harm's way to allow a student who is ill on campus when this can be prevented. What follow up is expected of the school administrator? Is this treated as a behavior referral?
   Information is forthcoming.

3. Shuttle Services
   School administrators may be asked to secure additional adult supervision for longer periods before school begins and after school ends due to shuttling options.
Who will supervise the students? VPs and principal will be busy keeping kids 6 feet apart and conducting visual screening of adults and students. STSB hopes to avoid the need to shuttle students. It will only be done under extreme circumstances and only for as long that it is deemed necessary. We will consult with principals on supervision if needed.

4. Who will be processing these transportation reimbursements?
   We are issuing reimbursements to parents right now.

Page 24 - School Food Service Memo
All students in attendance either on campus or via distance learning is eligible to pick up their meals during the meal service times that are established at their homeschool.

Who will supervise this if the VPs and principal are supervising the students on campus?
Schools should have all students go to the cafeteria to pick up their meals. The meal service should be supervised by the staff that normally supervises this function.

Schools are to purchase (utilizing school funds) equipment to create barriers using Plexiglass for protection at the point-of-sale desk, meal deposits, and cafeteria serving lines. Schools that have sneeze guards in place on their serving lines do not need to purchase additional protection.

Will schools receive funds for this and who is installing this? Facilities said they are not responsible for installing plexiglass.

The school is responsible to procure acrylic or clear plastic curtains. A work order may be placed with FMB to install the dividers.

In order to effectively protect student health and safety, principals of schools that are scheduled to reopen on August 4, 2020, are urged to wrap up their proposed Fall 2020 school model on or about July 13, 2020.

A recommended deadline is dictated by a memo regarding school food services. CASs are telling principals different deadlines for school models.

Principals Handbook (Version 2, July 2020)
My thoughts:

On the Drop Off/Arrivals section, they should consider adding guidance on parents et cetera coming onto campus to drop off their kid. Many parents will walk their child to the classroom door, which is probably not a good idea. Pick up is not addressed anywhere in the handbook that I saw. Will that also be staggered? I have definitely seen parents up through second grade waiting outside their child’s classroom to pick them up.

Class cohorts: Consider adding that siblings/housemates of children in the same class should be in the same class, if they’re in the same grade (so if Emma and Makana are classmates and they both have siblings in 5th grade, those children should also be classmates). Also same-grade siblings (e.g., twins) should be in the same class unless there’s a strong reason why not.

Are staff working with those children also part of the cohort? What does that mean for classroom aides or others who work in multiple classrooms? What about substitute teachers?

Distancing: is 3 feet enough for un-masked singing? What about singing in non-choir class situations? Is that being discouraged?

Cleaning Schedule: Who is to be responsible for this cleaning of items?

If we’re going to note that non-traveler household members need not quarantine, then we should also note that others should not visit the household.

Wait. If a student or staff member tests positive, then we’re just going to have them quarantine, and not change anything else at the school? That is not consistent with treating a classroom as a cohort or family and does not seem like a prudent policy.

Elbow bumps are a bad idea if people are sneezing into their elbows. How about ankle bumps instead?

The Services Delivery Model talks about Special Education services being provided in the Gen Ed classroom. How does this intersect with the class as cohort paradigm? This is a similar concern for related service providers (and possibly classroom aides).

Please let me know if you need any clarification or have any other questions.

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From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:36 AM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <doecovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: OSSS Reopening Guide

To Whom it May Concern

Thank you for the opportunity to give input for the opening of the 2020/21 school year. These are my concerns:

1. HGEA employees were not given opportunities to give input and vote on the type of school year that our school will implement as did the teachers. They are meeting to discuss and vote on if the students will come face to face full time or multiple options for partial face to face and online learning.

2. In the manual, it stated that Face shield should not be necessary when working with students with special needs and/or disabilities. I disagree, as a speech language pathologist, this will be a vital tool. I need to have some protection when working with my students. I am often not able to maintain social distancing from my students and they need to see my face and mouth during services. Face shields are necessary and should be provided by the employer.

3. In the manual, it stated that the staff is responsible for bringing and supplying their own masks. The employer should provide masks. If they are necessary on campus, they should be provided.

4. This was not in the manual but was on the news. Teachers are to be reimbursed for cleaning supplies. I do not believe that it is the staff’s responsibility to find and provide supplies. It is very difficult to find all necessary supplies at stores. The employer should be responsible for providing all staff with adequate cleaning supplies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to give input.

Speech Language Pathologist
Hi,

We are coming across questions related to staff procedures and interventions during the reopening. Specifically, what happens if staff feels symptoms, tests positive, etc. Do we take sick leave, workers comp, vacation, etc? This document is very student centered, but we cannot begin to help students return to learning if we don't know our own procedures. My unit has direct contact with patients so there is the likelihood that we will be a first responder on campus at some point. We are the athletic trainers for the DOE. Basically, and this is fairly consistent with all covid directives, is they are bottom up. Wear a mask, wash your hands. Easy. What about the what ifs in this picture? From the top down. What if I test positive? What if a traced personal contact tests positive?

Page nine, 3rd bullet is the closest we get to any of these questions. If a student tests positive, the DOH will determine the quarantine. Therefore, we understand that a student may be sent home for a number of days. Do they still get homework? If we get sent home for a number of days, from a union standpoint, what is the procedure? Injured on the job vs personal contacts? This document, on page eight relating to students says "7 days after illness onset" or "24 hours post resolution" for basic flu-like symptoms...but according to who? No doctor's note required I'm assuming. Would it be more or less vague if it just said individual, rather than sometimes saying student, sometimes saying student or staff, never saying staff specifically? If a staff member feels ill after lunch, do we interpret this document to mean that we isolate them in a room same as a student, do they go directly home in their own car if they have? Will these all be school to school decisions?

Mahalo and keep up the good work!

Aloha,

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From: [name]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:20 AM
To: docovid-19@hgea.org <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: DOE Draft School Reopening Manual Feedback

Aloha,

Thank you for listening to and voicing our questions and concerns about the DOE Draft School Reopening Manual.

As a DOE employee who works in a windowless office with no door connected to the outside, I am concerned about the "Ventilation" section of the manual. How will the DOE ensure that ventilation systems are thoroughly keeping us safe? Are they going to test the quality of the air and its flow? What happens if it turns out that the air is not sufficiently ventilated? Although I am in an office with just two coworkers, as far as I understand the air ducts are connected to several other classrooms and the library. Does that put me at risk? I am capable of doing around 90% of my work from home where I have zero risk of infection. Will the DOE have a work-from-home option?

Thanks,

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Unit 3

From: [name]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:38 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: Concerns for reopening schools

The re-opening schools is too soon.
1. Massive amount of readings in protocols to absorb over two days, feels rushed and not thought out thoroughly 2. COVID-19 has not flatten at all yet 3. Opening our islands for incoming from outer states, tourists as the same time as schools will lead to confusion and disarray of mass testing.
4. Schools will have grounds for parents to file suits if their child gets the virus 5. We are all being put at risk.

Suggestion:
Allow another month or two to fix the protocols after seeing how opening our islands to out of states and tourist then see when to open doors to students or the other way around. Giving more time on this will ease the anxieties of where and when contracting the virus. Giving more time will ease the pressure of voting on protocols in two days or just to have conversations. I do not support face to face teaching at this point, too high of a risk with the lack of testing. The safest way is to keep everyone home and tele-teach.
From: 
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 3:30 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <dococovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: EA Concerns

I know that the teachers will be getting Face-shields, what about the EA’s that work with the students? Are we not valuable too. We have concerns too with this covid-19. Some of us need to work 1 on 1 with the students. We can’t always be 6" apart, especially when they need to be changed, fed, or interfere when something happens and watching them wild they do their work. Thank you for any help with these concerns. 
EA Elem.

From: 
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 4:20 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <dococovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: Re: OSSS School Reopening Guidance

Aloha!

As a parent of an AWESOME Grade 1 student, I am petrified with the guidance that the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) has laid out for the reopening of our public schools. First of all, I find these guidelines impractical and completely ridiculous! For example, in the section of "Wear a Face Covering or Mask" of the School Reopening Guidance Manual it reads "it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask." In addition, this section adds "it is not recommended for children to wear masks while playing at recess since wearing masks may be dangerous on the playground."

However, in an article by TJ Horgan posted on KITV News' facebook page, entitled "Department of Health: Masks in classrooms are not recommended," Dr Bruce Anderson of the Hawaii Department of Health stated "when you move out of that bubble (the classroom) say to lunch or a playground then a mask would be advised." Where is the compliance by HIDOE with Dr. Anderson’s recommendations? Again, HSTA and DOE in their infinite ignorance hurriedly completed a substandard plan to reopen our island state’s public schools. Thus, we cannot allow our HGEA members, more importantly our keiki to become Guinea pigs.

I recommend that HIDOE initiate a “track system.” For example, my son’s school has about 800 students. If a track system is implemented, the entire student body and staff are divided into different tracks. If uses a four-track system, then at any one time 2 of the 4 tracks are attending school while the other 2 tracks are on vacation. So instead of 800 students on campus there will only be 400 students. Having a smaller school footprint would stop the spread of this dreadful virus as well as provide a safe environment for my son and all of Hawaii public school students to learn.

Mahaio,

HGEA Unit #3
From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 5:00 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: School opening guidance manual

I would first like to start off with saying a big MAHALO to all of you at HGEA who are giving up your time and standing up to protect all of your members during this stressful and uncertain times! You are truly appreciated!

After reading over the OSSS School Reopening Guidance Manual I needed some time to process all of that information as it was a lot.

I am a Student Services Coordinator Clerk and though most of the manual doesn't deal with my position directly, my fear is that I will be asked to do things outside of my job description that I will not feel comfortable with. There are a lot of new COVID-19 services that will need to be delivered per the manual. I'm afraid that the delivery of these services may fall on me...an Office Assistant. My concern is how will this be clarified? Will it be clarified or will I have no say when asked to take on these responsibilities?

Also, I am currently in an office with my Student Services Coordinator. Our office is big enough for the both of us to social distance, but last school year, our office was designated as the “meeting room” where all SSTs, ELIGS, and IEP meetings take place. Sometimes having over 10 people in our office for meetings, Pre COVID-19, that was not a problem, but now in the situation we’re in, I fear that there is a chance that meetings could continue in our office, thus putting myself and my SSC at risk. I would like some clear guidance and clarification on how those types of meetings will commence once the school year starts. What will the protocols be and will there still be an option to continue to conduct meetings via telecommunications or will the DOE expect all to go back to in-person meetings. I know this could also be per Principals discretion, but I feel a clear, across the board direction from the DOE for all schools would be great!

We as members just want to be assured that we are going to be safe so that we can keep our families safe, not be taken advantage of and will be protected through all of this uncertainty.

Again, my deepest appreciation to all of you who are helping to protect all of us!

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 5:43 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: JPO

I haven’t seen anyone address JPO. Are we in contact with HPD about the program? I help run the program with another coworker. How will that be delt with? Will students be allowed to open doors for drop off and pick up? What about equipment? As in disinfecting? Do they wear mask? Social distancing?

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 6:57 PM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: Health Room Question

I am a School Health Assistant II and need more clarification regarding sending students home. It seems every SHA has different answers from Admin saying to send home if they are not feeling well even without a fever. Some schools say if they have symptoms plus a fever. For instance, I was told by another SHA they were told to send home even with a mild cough without fever.

I think we all need to be on the same page on how we handle sending students home during this pandemic. I called DOH and they keep telling me to go and speak to my Admin. I think we all need to have a clear answer on how we are going to handle the next few months. For instance, sending students home with one or two symptoms with fever or without fever.

Please help to clarify this. I would really appreciate it!

Thank you,
Aloha,

I would first like to thank all who are involved with the reopening process and procedures manual. This manual is full of important information, guidelines and resources that we all need to feel safe and secure.

With that said I have a few questions.

1) Will there be school buses available to transport students to school?

2) If there will be bus service, will there be mixed age groups per bus? School buses usually have multiple age groups (elementary, middle and High school) being transported at the same time.

3) There are multiple points of entry especially at the High School level. How are we going to ensure that all students are being check daily for symptoms before entering our campus?

4) Will there be High School sports and how will social distancing be addressed in athletics?

Thank you

Hi,

I have a couple of questions regarding the opening of the school year. 1) Will admin be enforcing the "stay at home when sick" for students and staff? I am asking because on numerous occasions before Covid-19 I have encountered (I'm sure I'm not the only one) sick students and staff coming to school and when sent home especially with flu like symptoms return the very next day only to be sent home again because of fever or other symptoms. How can we be sure that our own well being is being protected? 2) If we contract Covid-19 from another student or staff will we be able to file workman's comp or will our recovery come out of our sick leave? What if we don't have enough sick leave to cover our entire recovery period?

Thank You.

Good morning,

With all the talk of opening school in a safe manner for teachers and staff. Nothing has been said about security personnel and what effects that will have on our profession. No one is talking about how to protect the very staff that will be among the groups of students from the time students come on campus to the time they leave our campus. This is always the case, security is always left out. Without our security personnel on property to give direct and calm to students and teacher it would be chaos. Give us credit for the job we do.

Mahalo,

Safety and Security

[School]
From: [Email Address]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 9:22 AM
To: HGEA DOE COVID-19 <docovid-19@hgea.org>
Subject: Concerns for Re-Opening

To Whom It May Concern-

After receiving the email with the OSSS Document attached and taking the time to read the document, I have many valid concerns as a Principal. I would like to know where was this document all along? Why was it not distributed along with all the other many documents that were sent out since March? It is unacceptable and unreasonable to expect that we will be able to open and meet the criteria and safety measures stated in that document. I can with certainty say that it is almost an impossible task and I don’t think with the severe lack of communication that Principals should be held accountable, it should be the DOE or Superintendent Kishimoto. There is so much concern with pleasing the teacher’s union and not enough concern that the principals that have to develop the plans and we were on the front line from the very beginning working an extreme amount of unpaid hours to put together a new distance system with basically no guidance from Superintendent Kishimoto in a very short amount of time.

I apologize for the tone of this email as I know my frustration should not be directed at the union, but I feel more and more stressed lately. On another note, if the Governor keeps saying how important it is to open schools for the economy, then more value, respect, and consideration is needed for the ones that are being held responsible to put it all together for the State. In addition to all of this, how can furloughs even be considered for educators if we are as important as everyone says to start improving the economy? That is taking advantage of hard working people who always go above and beyond to ensure that the children of Hawaii are well educated, safe, and become well rounded contributing citizens after. I don’t think anyone feels that that they have go above and beyond, but it is because we truly care about our students.

In the 20 years that I have been in the DOE, I have never felt more disrespected and disappointed in the way educators and administrators are being treated. Knowing that this is an unprecedented situation that has never been experienced, the expectation to accomplish an impossible task in one month is causing high stress and anxiety among principals expected to create these plans that deal with not just education, but extreme measures of health and safety which is definitely not a principal’s area of expertise. What is going to happen if principal’s start going out on stress leave or physically get sick from the high stress? What happens at school’s like mine with no vice principal and teachers have been home all this time and have no idea how to take over if the principal is out long term? Please have the right people hear our concerns, it will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

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Begin forwarded message:

From: [Email Address]
Date: July 1, 2020 at 9:56:45 AM HST
To: docovid-19@hgea.org
Subject: Feedback

What are the department’s criteria (if any) for testing students in an exposed “cohort” or a school should there be widespread exposure to an infected individual or individuals?

What are the department’s criteria (if any) for excluding all students in an infected “cohort” from school, and for closing a school should there be widespread infection?

Leaving the criteria TBD on a case-by-case basis may lead to arbitrary and capricious decision-making on the part of Principals, Complex Area Supts, etc.

Include a procedure for employees to file for workers compensation benefits in the event of injury arising out of and in the course of their employment, or by disease proximately caused by or resulting from the nature of their employment.

Include a procedure for employees to anonymously report violations of the supplemental agreement to an independent, internal inspector general for summary judgment and resolution, or referral to ICHEC for civil or criminal prosecution.