Hawaii State Teachers Association
Member-Submitted Testimony

The Hawaii State Teachers Association compiled testimony from educators across the state with various concerns about the Hawaii State Department of Education’s coronavirus policies and procedures. They asked for anonymity so they could speak freely about the many problems they encounter as they struggle to keep themselves, their coworkers, and students safe.

We have categorized their testimony in three sections:

- **Special education**;
- **Telework**; and
- **Reasons to keep schools closed: lack of communication and transparency; inadequate and insufficient PPE; too many students on campuses; and more.**

**Special Education**

1. Why are FSC teachers and staff forced to be in the classroom with FSC students? FSC students are not mandated to wear masks. All FSC teachers and staff have been risking their lives with students not wearing masks... while gen ed teachers and students are not in schools? Why is this okay?

2. I work in a fully self contained special education classroom. Right now, I have kids that are in school face to face as well as kids that have chosen to do 100% distance learning. It is a challenge to provide for both of these groups of students at the same time. In a preschool classroom, it is almost impossible to do social distancing. You cannot effectively teach and take care of 3-5 year olds from being 6 ft away. Many of them need assistance to complete many of the daily routine tasks, both academic and non-academic related. Many of them need assistance with toileting, feeding and there is no way to help them with that by staying 6 ft
away. My students don’t always wear masks; they need constant reminders to put their mask on, or to pull it up because it ends up down on their chin.

While I understand that children with special needs have different learning needs, I do not feel it is fair to put all of the teachers, staff, and other students on campus at risk during a PANDEMIC just to make sure these students receive their minutes and services on their IEPs. Since when are minutes on an IEP more important than the health and safety of everyone (teachers, staff and students)? I have never felt more disappointed and undervalued during my 18 years as a teacher. I am in that high risk category as well and I am scared every single day that I go to work, not only for me but for my students and staff as well.

I feel it is unfair that just because we work with special education students, we are being forced to work with students in school face to face while the gen ed teachers are able to work with their students 100% virtually. Having the sped students and teachers be the exception makes no sense; especially during a PANDEMIC. If it was deemed unsafe for all of the gen ed students to be in school face to face even on a blended rotation, etc then that should also apply to our sped students as well.

3. I teach special education preschool, and I have been doing distance learning since we went back. My students are all very capable of distance learning, and are making progress, but I am being told that we have to call parents and ask if they WANT to send their child to school. My question is, why is it up to what the parents want? All of my parents would say yes, but data shows my students can learn safely from home. I’m very concerned to bring them in person, especially for times like nap time where they would not wear masks, and bring blankets and stuffed animals from home. I feel extremely uncomfortable putting my students into a classroom when they cannot social distance, and my ONE EA and I would just spend the whole day keeping them separate and sanitizing. We can teach them much more via distance learning than by simply managing them in the classroom. I really hope you are all still fighting for us SPED teachers who are at the mercy of parents and admin, with no consistency from school to school! Thank you!

4. I am currently teaching in a school where we have students that are unable to wear face masks or face shields. Our staff now wears scrubs as other PPE’s would be torn because of student behaviors. We have no onsite custodian so all the cleaning during the day is left to the teachers/BT/EA/OA and other staff, who are not officially trained in this area, and also trying to do our daily jobs. Our students come on buses that have people in almost every seat of the bus. Finally, we have a
student that will be coming back to school that has a known behavior of spitting. He
does not wear a mask, and again most of the other students do not either. He has
50 plus occurrences of this behavior a day, and this is a huge safety risk for all
people in this room. This is not a safe situation for any of the people in this school,
especially with this behavior of spitting.

5. I am providing testimony with regards to the discussion item VI, B: Update on
metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education’s comprehensive
plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student
access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation
supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress.

I kindly ask that you really look at the metrics for when it is safe for face-to-face
instruction, establishment of contact tracing for students, faculty, staff, and families
of students, clear guidance for when it is safe for students or staff to return to
school following a COVID case, and clear communication between staff and
administration about steps that are needed to ensure that all are safe.

I worry about the inadequate amounts of PPE provided for teachers. I have not
received PPE aside from a face shield. My grade level was discouraged from
purchasing additional PPE for students. My EA, one of my student’s skills trainers,
my students, and I are constantly cleaning and washing our hands, but I know that
the materials that we need to ensure that the areas are clean and safe will run out
quickly. This worries me, because I want to make sure that all in our school are
safe and healthy.

As a SPED resource teacher, I have students in-person, students that virtually and
synchronously join my class, and students who are participating in the Acellus
program for 100% Distance Learning whose IEPs I still need to address. It is
challenging to manage all of the different schedules and services that my students
require. I do not feel that I am able to best support any student or group of
students because of the different schedules. Special Education teachers have
been asked to do so many types of paperwork to address the effects of school
closures on student learning, contingency plans for the event of school closures,
and other purposes. These requests from the DOE outside of the classroom make
it difficult to focus on planning for the students. During a time where teachers’
mental health is even more critical, we are pushing Special Education teachers
even harder and closer to the point of burnout. Even more so, I feel like I am
unable to spend the time I need to take care of my family and responsibilities at
home. I worry that this will push more Special Education teachers to leave the profession.

In addition to addressing all of our students’ needs with the varying schedules and the paperwork that are required outside of our work with the students, I have had to worry about the health and safety of the students and staff in my classroom. I have a student whose disability causes him/her to have behaviors that cause him/her to become physical. During typical circumstances, I would not have an issue with this. However, because of the current circumstances, I worry about the health and safety of staff members that come into contact with this student. I am also worried about my contact with a student whose household family members have had COVID with not much guidance for administration or teachers as to how to deal with this situation.

Being a Special Education teacher also limits my ability to telework since we have students who have opted for in-person instruction since they are considered being a part of a vulnerable population. My family has suggested that I take leave this year since I was recently tenured, and they worry about my health and safety going to school and coming into contact with a possible connection to someone who could have had COVID. I have family members that I am unable to see, because I am isolating myself since I come into such close contact with students and staff. I am unable to spend my limited time with grandparents, because I fear risking their health.

Again, I kindly ask that you look at the procedures in place and truly understand what teachers are going through right now, particularly since Special Education students and other vulnerable populations are currently receiving in-person instruction on campus. Please also think about whether it is wise for us to even have in-person instruction when there are not adequate resources to keep people safe, we are pushing Special Education teachers at the expense of their physical and mental health, and guidance and procedures are unclear.

6. I am a special education teacher with students coming for in-person instruction. As much as I love helping them, I am exposed to many people during the school day. Some of the students come with aides and then we have occupational therapists (OT), counseling and other service providers coming in and out of my room. These students have parents that are exposed to many people daily. The service providers travel and hang out with friends on days off. Students are not required to wear masks so I am uneasy all day. These are factors I have no control over and I
should not be put in a situation where I have to worry constantly. General education teachers can relax in their rooms and take their masks off while they safely teach students online.

7. It is very difficult to have social distancing with special education students. Many of them do not know what it means and therefore cannot social distance. They take their masks off constantly and sneeze on us and on other students. Twice today my co-teacher was directly sneezed on. It is also difficult to social distance from disruptive students with behavioral issues, some of whom need restraint or at least hands held. It is very challenging and somewhat scary.

8. I am a special education teacher. I have been teaching face-to-face since August 17. While the school is taking measures to stay safe, it is not equitable that my general education counterparts are not teaching face-to-face with the same risks. Why am I not protected by DOE as they are?

I am doing my part in being safe such as all that is required in addition to taking a surge Covid test (which came out negative) to ensure I do not infect others on campus as well as at home with my elderly parents. In addition, I have taken the flu vaccine to prevent other illnesses. I did this taking off from school using my own sick/personal time.

My grievance is not directed at the school per se. The family of one child that I serve has the gall to complain (baselessly) that I am not taking safety measures in addition to other unfounded accusations. I am a 17-year seasoned special education teacher. Good grief do they think I am careless and reckless? Then why am I even required to work face-to-face while other thousands are not?

9. Our special ed department has invited students back on campus, but they don’t teach them or help them, they send them to their regular classes, even though all of the classes are on Google Classroom. We also have a block schedule which we never got to choose, and the student sits in class for 75 minutes, while we are teaching online for the rest of the students. What concerns me is that the students could make better use of their time getting that one-on-one with their special ed teachers, but they are not. We are trying to do both but if the student is doing ok on google classroom, they really don’t need to be on campus, that’s why we fought for virtual school, for everyone’s safety!

10. I am an elementary FSC SPED teacher currently teaching in a face-to-face arrangement. I service students ranging from grades K-5 whose needs make it
impossible to maintain social distancing throughout the day. Additionally, my students have 1:1 supports who also cannot maintain social distancing from their client(s) throughout the day. My colleagues and I do our best to wear personally provided PPE, in a classroom with air purifiers that I have purchased, sanitizing toys with a self-made UVC lightbox, sanitizing our hands with self-provided hand sanitizer spray (for portability), and moving between homemade PVC barriers (between student spaces) that I have also furnished. We are doing our best to protect the health of each other and our families.

That being said, there are so many factors outside of our control. The DOE health guidance that allows for students to be sent home for signs of illness does not prevent students from returning to school the following day. I have sent multiple students home on several occasions for displaying signs of illness (e.g., coughing, running nose, sore throat, fever). Currently, only the 24-hour "fever-free without medication" policy has served to hold a student out for the next day. All other students returned to class the following day. I have had students come to school and report that a parent/household member would not be able to pick them up because they have a sore throat and diarrhea. There are no protections for staff and/or students when families do not make health and safety decisions that serve the greater good. It is disheartening and disempowering to know that the child who is displaying signs of illness that could possibly be more than allergies, will be back the next day. We are attempting to extinguish a brushfire with a watering can.

11. I had originally planned to stay in Hawai’i for at least another 5 years, until I am 65, even after retirement. Last year, due to an autoimmune disease, I asked to change teaching assignments out of the FSC classroom after my doctor had told me it was not a good environment. But when we returned to the classroom in July, I was shocked to learn that although the general education students were to learn remotely, as a resource teacher, I would be working with students in-person on a regular basis 2-3 times per week. After speaking to my principal I realized that in spite of the state-wide "lock-down", I would still be expected to to work with students.

I had a panic attack when I had a room with 5 students, and 5 adults, including a substitute who kept invading my personal space, and leaving the room, and a teacher who refused to wear her mask and complete confusion over what was expected from our administration. I had been hospitalized in the past for pneumonia for 3 weeks, including a week in ICU, transfusions, physical therapy, being unable to walk, difficulty breathing, and spinal taps.
Because I was unable to work remotely, I have decided reluctantly that my health and safety would be an unnecessary risk to continue to work in person, in spite of increasing cases and shortages in hospitals. I am obese, and over 60 and having had respiratory and immune disease in the past, I simply don't feel safe. This is a serious financial hardship for me, because I have had to apply to liquidate my retirement account until I can obtain another job (remote teaching, hopefully). I will likely have to leave Hawai‘i and live with my daughter until I can find another job.

Covid is to blame, and I know that's nobody's fault. but IF I had been able to simply teach remotely, I would never have been forced to resign five years ahead of schedule!

12. I am a special education teacher at my school. I love to teach the students I have and am willing to go above and beyond to ensure that my students are getting the supports they need at home and during the school day. Currently, I am teaching students face-to-face and I am high risk. I am expecting my first child in the spring and have to teach face-to-face because this is the only option that was directed from people above administration to support the students. Although I know it's best to have my students in my classroom, I know that I need to take care of my health of myself and my future child.

Not having the option to telework because my students are still coming to school face-to-face has been a struggle with me. I am fearful not only for the health of myself and my baby, but also for my family who are an older generation with underlying health conditions. If we are allowing some teachers to work from home, why can't all teachers work from home? I feel like this is an unfair opportunity for myself and for my colleagues that are fearful everyday because of their loved ones they are exposing.

Since we started a little over a month ago, my colleague has been exposed to COVID and I had to quarantine fearing if I caught COVID from work. I was placed on a two-week quarantine not knowing how this will affect myself, my students and others. With no other guidance from people above my administration, I am going back to work in my classroom that is exposed to many different family members fearing that I won't be as lucky as I was this past incident. I love teaching, but why do we need to be placed on the frontlines without proper education on the virus and not adequate resources to ensure that we will not bring home this virus to our loved ones? Please consider allowing ALL teachers to telework. This will provide
teachers more of an ease of mind knowing that they can solely concentrate on teaching and do not have a risk of catching this virus.

Mahalo for reading my story!

13. Why are FSC teachers and staff forced to be in the classroom with FSC students? FSC students are not mandated to wear masks. All FSC teachers and staff have been risking their lives with students not wearing masks... while gen ed teachers and students are not in schools? Why is this okay?

14. I have been reporting to campus for face-to-face instruction because I am a Special Education Teacher. I am also tasked with providing Distance Learning to my students whose parents chose not to come to campus. When I asked my principal if disadvantaged students were also given the opportunity for face-to-face instruction, he said no, only SPED students report to campus because about 80% of our students would fall into a disadvantaged category.

Not only am I a SPED teacher, but I am also teach children who are deaf. My students need to see my mouth and have clear visual and auditory signals. If I wear a shield, it distorts my voice and has a glare. A cloth mask covers my mouth. The window masks fog up and distorts my voice as well. So, I usually pull down my mask EVERY TIME I SPEAK to my face to face student as well as my students online. Preschoolers in general need close contact. I do wear amplification for my students, but it helps if my mask is removed. I applied for telework last week Thursday, and have not received a reply as of today.

There were two student Covid+ cases at my school. The two preschool classrooms next to me have been vacant since last week, however, my principal explained at our staff meeting last week, that he is following CDC guidelines, so the whole school does not need to shut down, and the only people who need to quarantine have been contacted by him or the VP.

I have been emailing my principal and custodian about the soap dispenser in my classroom since March 15, 2020. I've mentioned that the soap does not lather and does not always squirt out soap (maybe the first person gets soap, but not anyone after that). The dispenser gets checked, but I email again restating the problem. I just got a new soap dispenser in my classroom today.

SPED teachers at my school have not been provided with "extra" time to work on Distance Learning Plans, Contingency Plans, and Covid Impact Plans. When gen
ed teachers were given time to plan (before students returned to school), we were
told to work on these requirements.

15. Even if social distancing and hygiene protocols are followed, it only takes one
individual to infect the staff and students in a fully self contained environment. As a
teacher that works in the classroom delivering face-to-face instruction, my staff and
I are constantly putting ourselves at risk on a daily basis. We are putting trust in
that parents and families won't send their children to school when he or she are not
feeling well. We are confronted with the possibility that outside of work; myself or
my staff may get infected and potentially bring it to the classroom. There may be
times where a student is having a challenging day and wearing a face mask or
respecting social distancing becomes an afterthought. It becomes an
uncomfortable predicament when I want to provide the best education for my
students, but in the back of my mind there is an ongoing paranoia of putting myself,
my family, and loved one's health at risk. If you view the circumstances from
outside the box, is it fair for us when other teachers have the opportunity to
telework from the safety of their own homes? It's not fair.

16. Our Fully Self Contained (FSC) students and teachers are not safe on campus.
Instead of being given high risk Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as a
haz-mat suit, they were provided instead with long-sleeved t-shirts. No commodes
on campus have lids, so with every flush detrius (waste) enters the air and lands
around and on the floor. Mandating that adults be on campus for 7-hour workdays
under these clearly unsafe toileting conditions instead of teleworking is appalling.

17. FSC students, social emotional needs students, ELL students, and students whose
parents indicate limited WiFi access, are all on campus. Even with this limited
population it is clearly impossible to enforce social distancing, mask wearing, and
sanitation to DOH recommended standards. Custodians can in no way cleaning
classrooms as indicated by the Superintendent and DOH guidelines. They simply
cannot keep up and no new custodians have been hired. FSC students are
crammed on SPED busses with no social distancing or mask wearing enforcement.
FSC classroom, to use an example, has so many students and adults it’s
impossible to social distance and many students require 1 to 1 support that
requires close contact. This is in a room of medically fragile students with the most
underlying conditions in a student population. Leadership is fully aware but nothing
is being done, because what can be done if the DOE ignores DOH to push the
agenda of schools reopening? No telework requests have been approved and
there are no substitutes, so if a teacher is out sick they are still expected to conduct
classes. There is no communication when students or staff are ill and go in for testing from anyone except word of mouth between teachers. There are all these written guidelines on COVID-19 response and on campus protocols, but administration has made it clear they are recommendations and not required, because there is no way we have the resources to actually do any of it effectively. SPED students are not getting their IEP’s implemented as that is clearly impossible but the DOE is still mandating they must be. DOE has mandated all SPED students must have an IEP meeting before the end of the first quarter. In that meeting you are supposed to write an IEP to meet the student’s needs as if in a traditional school setting, then discuss a distance learning plan for how much of that IEP can be implemented in a distance learning environment, identify the amount of campus face-to-face time needed to make sure the IEP is being fully implemented, and do it all to compliance standards with extremely limited access to data on the students while still teaching both in person and online. At the same time, teachers are being told by administration they should be able to fully implement the IEP remotely, WHAT!!! None of the MOU is being followed or implemented, it is not even being acknowledged. Staff morale is the lowest I have ever seen, because when they need the most support, all they get is, “Suck it up and be a team player, it’s for the kids and if hospitals and day cares can do it, you will too.” Oh yeah, and “You’re lucky you have a job and not waiting for unemployment.” Bully tactics are being used instead of demonstrating competent leadership developing and implementing the policies we need in place to teach, because what, teachers are expendable? Does learning happen without teachers? Needless to say we are watching the BOE and superintendent’s discussions, these discussions have been devastating, for dedicated professionals giving their all, to listen to. The misrepresentations and outright lying to push the agenda of schools fully reopening when we are clearly not ready is a slap in the face of the professionals on the front line every day trying to hold this together. Gov appoints the BOE and they hire the superintendent, with such blatant ethical misconduct and incompetent leadership being displayed for all to see, with no apparent system of accountability, what impact do you think that is having at the classroom level? Does leadership not realize that is where learning takes place? Thank you for bringing the truth to light as I believe the only way this changes is through educating the public on what the real life impact on their child’s education meant to prepare them to pursue their life passions has come to. If there is a consensus on what needs to happen for schools to reopen, then let’s get it done and stop playing the stick your head in the sand game. If we agree we can’t meet that standard at the moment, then let’s get our distance learning act together and again not play stick your head in the sand. We can do this!!!
18. I am concerned about some of my fellow SPED teachers. We are having students coming back to campus for a variety of reasons; internet connectivity, unable to focus at home or in the cafeteria. So the students that can not focus or need more one-to-one assistance are usually our SPED population. These students are being put into their regularly scheduled classes. It seems that a lot of these students are in the resource classroom. The issue becomes that some of the resource classrooms are small, so that it is difficult to socially distance in there with one let alone 2 or 3 or 4.

19. On August 17 we welcomed our students back to school with all participating in virtual instruction except special education students that the special education department deemed as vulnerable and unable to participate in online instruction effectively. Although our department met with administration to determine students who would be coming to campus, there was no clear guidance on how we determined this. We made up the guidance we were to follow given the vague details provided from the state to determine which students would come to campus. This turned out to be that each special ed teacher had a different amount of students coming to school in person. Some sped teachers had no students on campus.

We were provided with a definite answer that students would start school on the 17 on the 13! Therefore we had two days to prep and make sure we had our procedures in order. The sped teachers made up the procedures of how the students would enter campus, who would check temperature, how we clean and sanitized everything daily. There was no guidance from the administration team at all. When I asked if there would be any in place soon, my answer was we have nothing yet, keep doing what you’re doing. The administration has no clue what we are doing each day! Nothing is written down! Staff temperature is not checked by anyone, not even contracted providers. I have many service providers for my students coming in and out of the room everyday with no precautions taken before they even walk on campus. My classroom bubble is constantly being popped because other teachers are coming in to say hi or walking by. There is no such thing as an ohana bubble.

Also, despite conversations to change the caseloads so that each teacher was given a different platform to teach to, our caseload remained the same. Therefore, we had a mixture of in-person students, virtual students, and Acellus-only students to teach to. The special education teachers are the only teachers expected to do
this on campus where the gen ed teacher either get all virtual students or only Acellus participating students. The Acellus teachers are only “coordinating” the learning and not even teaching! The general education teachers are not even teaching virtually all day according to their schedules!

On top of the uneven job duties expected of us, I have been denied the opportunity to bring my son to school with me because “I have students in my room during the day.” Every other teacher who does not have students in their room was allowed to bring their child and they have gotten approved to telework! I do not have either of these options. Now I have to pay for child care out of my own pocket so that my son has a safe place to go during the day.

My son has a 504 plan and needs to be monitored consistently throughout the day to keep him on task, and the only option I was given by his team is to have his teacher check in with him more. I need a physical body there! He is not in college, and hasn’t even developed the capacity to be able to monitor his own schedule and learning yet! Why the DOE is expecting all the students whose parents have to work to be able to do this!?!?

20. Our school has been servicing all SPED students who did not choose 100% Distance Learning since schools reopening.

Despite Herculean efforts on the part of the teachers, support staff and admin, these children are incapable of social distancing or consistently wearing masks. The teachers are beginning to feel very uncomfortable and are worried about contagion among the students themselves and teachers taking it home to their own families. Admin decided, as was his prerogative per CAS and School Superintendent, that ALL of the SPED students will be serviced at home beginning next week due to the ever-increasing Covid cases on the Big Island. West Hawai’i’s DES was outraged accusing us of denying FAPE even though very thorough, detailed, specific Distance Learning Plans based on hard data and individualized for each student were shared with parents ensuring that FAPE would be delivered in a virtual setting. The DES complained to the CAS and other ‘higher-ups’, hence the reason admin. Is currently in a ‘hand-slapping’ meeting with all of them. This particular DES maintains that in-person instruction “CAN” be done safely, yet he has yet to provide any guidelines, PPE or even visit our campus to see what is happening. The teachers want more than anything to continue in-person instruction and fully realize that these students learn better in this
manner, but the safety issue is paramount at this time. They are threatening to take leave if this situation is not rectified.

21. I teach K-3 FSC and in first quarter all my parents agreed that it would be safer for the kids to learn from home. Now, coming up on the second quarter most of the parents are wanting the kids to be in person for school. It is hard for the students to learn online although I do not agree that it is safe for them to come to school. None of the students in my class are able to wear masks or face shields due to sensory differences. All of these students have behaviors such as eloping, putting items in their mouth, and various behavior concerns. None of these behavior concerns can be dealt with 6 feet away, and I do not feel comfortable asking my EA to put them self at risk by getting so close and dealing with so many bodily fluids with these children. Most of these students need physical prompting for blowing their nose washing their hands and most schoolwork. The kids will definitely try to pull off our mask and face shield during a behavior making it hard to keep everyone safe in the classroom. I am so scared that we will go from having all online classes to having 10 people in one room together. I don't understand how the rules for the rest of the community can be between one person or five people and then rules for the sped classroom are so vague or nonexistent. No academic teaching will be able to work if we are constantly worried about the Covid safety as well as behavior safety of all students and teachers. The teachers and EA are going to have to choose between the student safety or their own, and that is so wrong. As a teacher it’s very scary to think that my classroom rules and procedures will be a direct result of peoples health because I have to balance academic teaching, safety of students and adults, as well as trying to sanitize every single thing that is touched. I feel like my safety as a teacher has no value with the current guidelines. I’m not comfortable teaching students due being an at risk person for getting Covid I now feel like I’m being forced to share this medical information When parents or admin says sped kids need to be in school and it’s "parent decision if they come." Why do parents get to determine my level of safety without any data or concern for my health. I know that we’re worried about sped students regressing but living a healthy life should be more important than academic gains at this moment in time. The entire world is going through this. Not just our school, state, or country. All the other students are learning online and I feel our sped students should follow the same schedule for online class and eventually returning.

22. I am a special education preschool teacher. I currently have 5 students coming to campus to participate in face-to-face learning. None of my students wear masks, none of my students understand social distancing. I have students who are unable
to wipe their own butts, so that falls on me. I have students who can’t wipe their own mucus, so that falls on me. I have students who don’t yet cough or sneeze into their elbow, so there is spray dispersed all over the classroom. There is not a lot a teacher can do when a child sneezes and snot shoots out of their nose, down onto their shirt or onto whatever book or toy they are playing with, then reaches up to wipe it with their hand. If I witness it then of course I clean it up the best I can, but if I don’t witness it then I find that bodily fluid around my classroom throughout the day. It’s wiped on chairs, tables, the floor, our toys, our bean bags, wherever the student finds.

Masks: I have students who will not look at me or talk to me if I have a mask or face shield on. I have students who run and hide because they are afraid, I have students who are so infatuated with it that they want to touch my face and “take a turn” wearing it. I also know that with my face covered I am unable to be understood by my students. All of my students struggle with speech and language, they all have speech and language goals in their IEP’s. How am I supposed to model correct language if my students can’t understand me or can’t see my mouth when I am saying letter sounds? I am not able to do my job to the best of my ability when wearing a mask because communication is not clear and I am not able to do my job to the best of my ability by not wearing my mask because I am not following social guidelines and I am possibly exposing my students, their families and myself and my family to COVID-19.

Why are special education students who are unable to wear masks, social distance or take care of their own bodily needs coming to school? Why am I and my EA being asked to risk our lives and the lives of our families, when general education teachers are being excused from student interaction? Am I less important? Is my life worth less?

23. Being a sped teacher it is impossible to stay 6 feet away and expect these students to keep their masks on. They are high risk and I am high risk why don't we have the same safety precautions as regular education teachers?

24. There should absolutely be NO students on campus. Special needs students are the most vulnerable population as many are unable to wear their masks properly, unable to put their masks on, unable to articulate when they do not feel well, and do not understand the importance of social distancing. Many also require assistance with their daily living skills such as feeding and toileting. 6 feet distancing is not possible when working with this population as many require hands
on instruction. Being in such proximity to these students for 6 hours a day without proper protective equipment puts staff working with students at risk daily. All these reasons put the student, other students, any adult staff responsible for their care throughout the school day, and their families at risk.

There also exists inequity in roles, responsibilities and duties amongst teachers during this time. Special education teachers and paraprofessionals are required to work face-to-face with these students. Putting themselves and their families at increased risk with no additional compensation or consideration. Some special education teachers are being tasked with providing face-to-face and distance learning simultaneously all day long with just a 45-minute prep period. Their choices are to only prep for the 45 minutes and be unprepared or work outside of their contractual hours.

Sanitation of classrooms occupied by students during the school day is non-existent. These classes are being sanitized by teachers and paraprofessionals. Custodians and room cleaners are not sanitizing tables, chairs and any other high traffic areas in the classroom. Students are consuming lunch in the class and teachers and paraprofessionals are doing the cleaning after the meals.

Families continue to send their children to school ill, with coughs, sneezing and vomiting. The response always is they didn't do it this morning. All the while putting everyone their child came into contact with at risk.

There has already been one unfortunate death in our public school system. How many more is the BOE and the DOE willing to be responsible for? Will necessary mental health services be provided to those that require it at no cost due to the unfortunate illnesses and deaths of our students, friends, family and coworkers?

Please take the necessary precautions now before we lose anyone else to this pandemic.

25. I am a special educator with a mixture of FSC and inclusion students, mind you, no EA or assistance whatsoever. Only three out of seven of my SPED kids are allowed to come in 2x a week for a short 2 hours. Within those two hours, I’m spending my time getting them to do their work. If I’m lucky, I’ll get one task done. This “lockdown” is not allowing these kids (especially the SPED kids) to get the education they deserve! Something needs to be done. I am mentally and physically drained. Can we just follow the social distancing protocols and get these kids back
in school?!?! Can we get more clear/set guidance instead of leaving it up to the principals?!?! We need more consistency!

26. Aloha,

I am a FSC PREK SPED teacher. I believe in all students, 100% distance learning, and having the option to telework. I have one student coming face to face, and thankfully the rest is DL. I also believe it is unfair how some of us have to see students F2F, while others don't, including other FSC teachers. Couple weeks ago I experienced my first ever emotional breakdown, which could've been prevented if all of us was doing full DL learning and given the option to telework.

*August 24th: Stress and anxiety because my student was coming F2F.

*September 2nd: Student got sick and was sent home early. Temperature was rising, he's been sneezing, putting his head down, extra whiny, and just seemed miserable. Dad seemed irritated and made comments as if I was just trying to send him home for nothing. Given the pandemic we are in, I wished he was more understanding. This caused a lot of unnecessary stress - could've been prevented we were doing 100% DL.

September 3rd: We received an email in the afternoon about an employee testing positive for COVID-19. Stress and anxiety was through the roof. I broke down and cried. I could not see returning to work. I felt it was not safe. I broke down a few times that night, and had to call in a sub for Friday. I've never felt so stressed and was scared. I was emotional through the whole weekend. I could not relax and enjoy the long weekend with my family. This broke me. Could've been prevented if we were given the option to telework.

*September 8th: spoke to my principal about my emotional breakdown. She was VERY supportive and understanding. I also spoke to my doctor. My student returned back to school. He was absent 9/03 and 9/04 due to a FEVER. Again, dad played it off as if it was nothing.

Since then, I've had breakdowns and still feel the same way about having a student F2F and not be given the option to telework.

Hearing of the Dole staff member who died from COVID broke my heart. It made me think, could that death have been prevented if we were given the option to telework and not forced back to work.
I appreciate all that HSTA has been doing for us teachers. I just seen this morning that HSTA's prohibited practice complaints are on hold pending further negotiations. Honestly, this is my thoughts:

*What's the point of these complaints, and now it is on hold. By the time anything goes through, it'll be too late, Christmas break will be over, and all of us teachers who HAVE to see student's F2F - NOTHING will change for us.

Bottom line, FACING LAWSUITS IS MORE OF A CONCERN THAN OUR LIVES AND SAFETY.

Mahalo for reading.

27. Dear Board of Education,

My life is just as important as a general education teacher’s life. Why do I have to risk my life every day just because I am a special education teacher? I would gladly give up the $10,000 differential to keep me and my family safe from Covid 19. My school has already had a staff member test positive. It is not safe for teachers to be on campus, and forcing us to report to school when children are at home is a violation of our contract.

My principal emailed teachers on 8/25/2020 and told us that telework may be granted only during distance learning for the following conditions: "If DOH or your physician recommends you to self-quarantine due to possible exposure. If an employee is awaiting Covid-19 test results after coming into contact with another person confirmed to have tested positive." This is not what Dr. Kishimoto said on the news, but this is what we are being told. Telework is not a real option for teachers at my school.

There is no enhanced sanitization taking place in my classroom. My trash gets emptied that’s it. I’m worried that I could catch covid when using the teacher’s restroom that is shared by several employees and cleaned only once a day. My educational assistant and I wipe down our classroom twice a day. The homeless come on our campus after school. Yesterday outside my classroom there was a metal food can, cigarette butt, and KY Jelly box. My campus is not clean and it is not safe.
Every morning I wake up exhausted. I am not sleeping well. Every night I fall asleep thinking about work and Covid, I dream about work and covid, and every morning I wake up thinking about work and Covid.

I’ve spent hundreds of dollars of my own money buying KN95 masks, face shields, and scrubs. Only after the Hsta press conference did my principal distribute KN95 masks to some of the sped staff and later she distributed disposable hospital gowns after sped teachers started asking for them.

Special education teachers open their doors to their students every morning looking like they are going to do surgery wearing a face mask, face shield, gloves, and surgical gown. Teachers are not front line workers or first responders. Honor our contract and keep us safe. Special education students can be educated through distance learning during this pandemic.

Telework

1. Teachers applying for telework at my school have reported the principal has stated that he feels telework is for those teachers who need to quarantine due to a COVID exposure or are awaiting COVID test results due possible covid exposure. He feels telework is not for teachers who just feel unsafe on campus. Meanwhile, other schools in our complex have approved telework for teachers for many other reasons.

2. At my school within Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt complex, we are only allowed to telework if we have COVID or have been exposed. The state/district does not care about teachers’ lives. We can only work from home once we are already sick. The whole purpose of telework is to combat the infection. We’ve already had COVID at our school. Someone in a high traffic building had it. That means most people on campus have walked through a potential exposure. The incompetent DOH states that exposure is within 6 feet for 15 minutes. Although the science says you can get it much quicker, the state chooses to disregard health and safety. I am highly suspicious of the claim that the DOH handles every DOE COVID case. I doubt they did any contact tracing. I believe that task was left up to my principal. Moreover, there was no secondary contact tracing. People who were in close proximity to the individual who had COVID were sent home. However, those who are in close proximity to the people who were in close proximity to the individual who had COVID have not been notified. What it comes down to is this: the state failed to
plan and never considered the safety and health of the employees nor students. They don’t respect the people. They’d have us die in order to keep the economy afloat (not our responsibility). The DOH and DOE are dangerous, corrupt, disorganized, and indifferent. Leaders, especially Kishimoto, should step down.

3. I would just like to share that at my school in Central District, there is a policy to deny all telework requests by teachers. The reason that is given is that they want teachers in their classrooms just in case a student decides to stop by with questions. I, for one, do not feel comfortable with person-to-person contact. Also there is so much talk about teacher bubbles and how they are safe, to me this is ridiculous. I come in contact with no fewer than four different teachers a day and only one of them wears their mask. I don’t know who these people are around throughout the day and night and feel that by being forced to work from school is putting the health and welfare of my family at risk. I can do the same job I am doing now from the safety of my home.

4. It has been strongly implied that the principals of our complex will not grant permission to telework. My own children are struggling academically. My senior is taking three difficult classes (a college course, AP Biology and 4th yr Japanese.) At the same time, she is trying to get my kindergartener onto her own three separate meetings throughout the day. I was hoping to either telework or bring my kindergartener to work with me but I know it will not be granted if I ask. I took two days off this week to try to get my children into a better routine but taught from home so my own students wouldn’t fall behind. If bringing my child to work or teleworking is not granted soon, then I will be forced to take a leave for the sake of my own children’s education. I really don’t want to do that. There are few subs out there and even fewer that could keep up with remote teaching.

5. The principal has started a “pilot” teleworking program which allows only one day per week of telework. She requires us to be in person even when there are no students. For staff meetings that are virtual, for one day for no reason. We still have resource students coming in in person who are fully capable of online learning. Great teachers have resigned. We have unqualified substitutes instead.

6. It is unfair and unjust that we are not given the option to telework with no questions asked from the DOE. Why do we have to apply for telework? Applying implies that you are being considered. The coronavirus doesn’t “consider” anyone before it infects them, so why is the DOE playing God in this scenario? Why are we asking for something so basic as to do our same work in a remote location? If kids aren’t
in school, nobody should be. An employee at Dole Middle just died from COVID-19...do we need any more casualties to prove this is necessary?!?!

7. As district resource teachers, we submitted our documents to telework as we are non-classroom teachers but provide lots of support to teachers and schools via Webex. As we are in different Webex meetings all day, it makes it difficult to participate in meetings appropriately while wearing a mask and being distracted by the other Webex meetings in the room and of course the confidentiality piece! Our DES approved only two days of telework and did not give reason for not approving all five days but said if there are additional days that you may need to work from home to let her know.

I don’t understand why she did not approve all five days as we also noted that if there was reason to work in the office, then we would go in and I feel that’s the most sensible thing to do as we are all professionals and trying to deliver support effectively and in our own homes without a mask and in a confidential space.

8. Our principal was ready and willing to allow telework. He approved the teacher paperwork but when the paperwork went up to be approved by the CAS, she said under no circumstances should anyone be given telework and cited that that was a directive from Superintendent Kishimoto. Telework is NOT something for teachers, we were told. So yes, we are “allowed to apply for telework” as Superintendent Kishimoto keeps saying, but that application comes with the understanding that it will not be approved. How is that right? At a time where the state is asking private businesses to allow telework to help stop the spread yet refuses to allow that for their own employees. I have no face-to-face interactions with students, staff, or anyone else on campus. I have not had face-to-face interactions this whole time we have been open! There is absolutely no reason that I cannot fulfill my duties from home.

9. I requested to telework on September 8 after hearing a synervoice message informing us that we have two Covid cases on our campus. My request was denied because my principal says that it would cause dissention amongst our staff. He says that SPED teachers aren't able to telework because their students are still coming in so not fair. Honestly, I'd like to teach from home so it minimizes any potential contact, I still must use a community bathroom and microwave. Feel like the telework option is a teaser. How come the district RTs can telework from home yet the teachers in the trenches aren't allowed to?
10. Teachers in our district are required to report to campus despite the stay at home order. We are not allowed to telework. Reasons I need to telework:

1) We've never had our own classrooms at the multi-track school. And with all four tracks on duty, our teams of teachers have been forced to share ONE classroom between six people. In just our building alone, there are over thirty staff members on at any one time, in which we must share limited toilets, one fridge, and one microwave. How is this safe? How is it that most private and public organizations are allowed to telework but public school teachers must report to campus when we can do the exact same jobs from the safety of our own homes?

2) My ten-year-old daughter is a public school student who is participating in 100% distance learning. Neither my husband nor I have family in Hawaii. My daughter has been shuffled through at least four different houses since school started because we have no child care. There are no childcare providers in my area!

And even if there was a place I could take her to -- can I afford childcare week after week? The last time I put her in childcare was summer break (we had no other choice), and on the last day of summer camp we were notified that she was exposed to another student who was positive with COVID-19. Do we even want to chance another exposure at another childcare provider? No!!

One time we were stuck with no child care and I was forced to bring my child onto campus with me so that I could work at school. A school employee ratted me out to the administration and I was reprimanded for bringing in my child to work. I asked for other options after sharing my situation and I was told that the only thing that I could do was to take COVID family leave -- which meant I was not allowed to telework, that I would need a sub, and I would take home 2/3 pay.

If this goes on any longer, I may be forced to quit my teaching position because I have no other choice but to stay home with my daughter. Please -- teaching remotely has been stressful enough -- but no teacher should need to worry about child care for his/her child.

11. I am humbly asking for the BOE to please right the wrong the DOE and my principal has made in not letting me telework. I am a Special Education Teacher, and my school would rather me take up to 50 instructional days away from my students using EFMLEA leave instead of letting me telework. I am a mom of 2 DOE students, and I cannot leave my girls home alone everyday, because it is simply
not safe to do this. My administrators have refused to let me telework or even bring my daughters to my empty classroom. I have questioned their decision and they blame our CAS. I asked other teachers in my district about telework, and their schools are allowing telework, so it is not a CAS decision. They don’t want to own up to their completely unfair decisions.

There is so much inconsistency with everything, and principals are left to their own devices when making impactful decisions. I really hope that the BOE can enact a telework policy for those of us that work at schools where our administrators do not value us as people with families that we need to care for.

I do not want to have to take 50 instructional days away from teaching our most vulnerable students because I cannot telework for no good reason.

The morale at my school is in the negative because we are given zero flexibility to do our jobs, and this will ultimately cause many of us to burn out to the point of not being able to do our jobs effectively anymore.

Please help us. We need our voices to be heard and solutions made to allow us to do our jobs effectively in a safe environment and also be able to support our own families who need us the most now as well.

12. While I don’t feel unsafe at my campus, I am incredibly disappointed with the lack of flexibility for granting telework. To me it seems like nothing other than obstinacy on the part of my administration.

It is disappointing that teachers who are also parents are allowed to neither bring their children to work nor telework, so they are caught in an impossible situation. Towing some unclear line about telework shows a lack of care and empathy for the struggles parents who both teach and have young children face. Also, it makes no sense if we are truly putting students first, as many teachers who could otherwise work from home when the necessity arises are being forced to take sick or personal days instead when they could be offering instruction. It baffles the mind.

Furthermore, the fact that some schools currently allow telework while others do not engenders in staff the feeling that they are not trusted to do their job from home. This seems absurd, as admin can pop in at any time to classes if they are worried about teacher performance (something that I have invited my admin to do). Because of all this, I am left scratching my head at the categorical denial at my
campus of telework requests—especially as telework becomes the new normal across states and professions.

13. I submitted my telework request weeks ago and have not gotten a response. I think it included a portion for the complex area superintendent to sign, she must be busy. However, when the DOE asks me to do something, they expect it done in a timely manner... ironic don’t you think?

14. Two weeks ago, I got a cold, but felt I could not take a day off and keep up with my online teaching. I contacted my principal, who knew I was working around 14-hour days, and requested permission to telework until my cold went away.

My principal explained to me that according to the rules, I would have to take a sick day from my allotted 12 covid days, or come to work.

I was strongly encouraged to come to work because there was so much to do. My principal believed it was unlikely I had covid because I had no cough. My vice principal encouraged me to try not to show symptoms so I would "not stress parents out unnecessarily."

I realize now it was selfish to go into work, but at the time, I felt too overstretched to take a day off.

I tried my best to stay away from others while I was there, but when you’re so busy, sometimes little things slip your mind. My coworker who was working on the opposite side of the classroom, caught my cold. I’m not sure where I slipped up over the three days I was sick.

I did get a covid test, I found out later it was negative. Thank God. I learned my lesson.

15. IN SUPPORT OF TEACHERS’ OPTION TO TELEWORK:

I am a resource teacher at my school with no students. Our school has a majority Micronesian population and are in the red zone. I have 3 high risk people in my family, including myself. Therefore, I requested telework but was denied by my principal. He stated that even though I met all the criteria and he can find no reason to deny it, he said he wouldn't approve it because he was denying everyone.
Would you please answer this question: WHY is it that the whole DOE state office on 22nd Ave is on telework until June 2021 but teachers at school campuses, even those that have no students, don't have this option? If it's safe for teachers who have to share the same bathroom and office spaces at schools, WHY is it that Dr. Kishimoto and our government officials are teleworking? Is it because the DOE doesn't trust us to be professionals? Trust that I feel I've earned after 30 years and a stellar career. Want your employees to trust you? SHOW YOU TRUST THEM. Employees who do feel trusted are higher performers and exert extra effort, going above and beyond role expectations.

In addition, teachers are concluding that the DOE doesn't value our health and safety. There are huge rifts between administrators and teachers. We basically feel on our own, to fend for ourselves. How do you think that impacts teachers' willingness to give back to a profession that doesn't care about them? However, when it comes to government officials and the superintendent herself, "it's safer for them to telework"? Maybe they should walk the walk instead of just talk the talk. The DOE is sending a clear message to teachers on trust and what value we hold.

16. I have underlying conditions in my health that puts me in risk, according to my rheumatologist and immunologist doctors. A letter was given to my principal. Admin already knows my condition. Since the start of school so many things play into risking my health besides COVID-19 (For example, teachers have to burn mosquito punks because no one cleaned up the pools of water after the first lockdown. Now the mosquitoes are out of control. My asthma, not only due to stress, has given me problems every evening since the opening of school due to the mosquito punk burning. Plus the allergies I have make my condition worse.) but COVID being the main focus. I was denied telework by my principal. She told me a story of someone who got laid off because of requesting telework. That teacher supposedly left to take the 14-day leave and was then released from our school, according to my principal. Although we have careful people in school, not all middle schools are. Especially the emotionally disturbed ones. There is clear disregard of any rules by these students who cannot follow rules. One of them is truly at risk of not only getting COVID but also could be a super spreader if given the chance. Admin cannot do anything about it other than to nicely say please keep a six feet distance. Of course none of them listen. We are now all tired and the year just started. No one realizes all the work we had to do on top of our regular job. I cannot even function after school. My wife luckily understands and
has taken steps in trying to help me. No one cares and I am not complaining about my job because I fear harm from admin and others in the school.

17. I spoke to my principal about teleworking, stating that with my high-risk parents and young children at home I was concerned for our health and safety. She told me that was not a valid reason for telework. She also told me that if I’m not feeling safe coming to school I should take some days off. I told her I was concerned with the inconsistent education my students would be getting from substitutes. She told me that didn’t matter. The next day she called to offer me counseling services - seemingly to replace the telework option.

18. Although recently given approval for telework, the tone and attitude of admin was not supportive. I was warned “I better not get complaints about you” and “this is not for child care” even though my admin and I had spoken in length about my health and safety concerns as the reasons for my request. When I first brought it up as an option 3 weeks before I got approval, the comment from admin was “well, if the DOE is providing this option then it is a tool available to use” but it changed as principal meetings were held, conversations with the CAS were had, and communication about telework increased in general. I get that I became a nuisance and an outlier, not a team player, in my opinion.

19. I just wanted to share that although we are eligible for telework, there is an application process and we are required to monitor students on campus several hours a month. These students come to work on campus because they don’t have connectivity at home or are failing classes. Students are seated to maintain social distancing but we still see students moving around and interacting with others. When students ask teachers or EAs for assistance with their work, it is very difficult to help 6 ft away so sometimes the distance is not maintained. There is a sense of worry because no matter how much we try to follow safety measures, there is still potential for exposure when students and teachers are gathered in one place for hours.

Requiring teachers to be on campus without the choice of telework in some schools adds more stress and anxiety to teachers who are already drowning in work. Only teachers understand the amount of work and time distance learning requires. Hours and hours of planning, chasing students for work, contacting parents, grading work online, responding to endless student emails and teaching virtually all day is exhausting. I don’t think the decisions that are continuing to be made are supporting our teachers who are already burning out.
20. I have a coworker who works across the hallway, who may have had a secondary exposure to Covid19. He and his wife were awaiting test results-I said, “Maybe you should telework since all of our lessons are online and there are no students coming to us physically.” When he asked admin. he was encouraged by 2 people to come in to school and lock his door. What about when he would need to use the bathroom- a common space- what if there was an accidental transmission to the janitor that cleans his high touch areas each day? What is the purpose of endangering lives when this person could telework and do the amazing job they are already doing online? Being overly cautious will save lives- being too tight with telework restrictions will inevitably cause more transmissions with the end statement of “I feel so bad I should have just stayed home, maybe they wouldn’t have died?” Please continue distance learning - there’s been no change in the danger level in our community, the risk is still high. This is a cluster epidemic and without enough contact tracers to do their job for the general population- we definitely do not have contact tracers designated for the schools. The death of the Dole Middle School office worker is a prime example- even Kishimoto was shocked at the slow reaction by the Dept. Of Health. That is one school- imagine if all the schools opened and even just one teacher at each school somehow contracted COVID-19. There are not enough Dept of Health contact tracers to support to contain, isolate, and communicate to all of the possibly exposed people in order to stop a cluster. It will get out of control quickly. If the virus spreads quickly in a school? What’s the plan if we have a sub shortage? We still don’t have enough answers because this a global pandemic - please research the 1918 flu pandemic- it lasted from the spring of 1918 until the summer of 1919 ...1.5 years and then it ran its course without a vaccine...they used disinfectants, masks, distancing guideline just like us. PLEASE look at the comparison they did of two cities: Philadelphia and St. Louis... mortality rate was 8x higher in Philadelphia because they didn’t believe how deadly it was- so they opened schools, theaters, had a parade...200,000 people were sickened in 10 days-and thousands died. This not a joke, this is in our historical articles- this is a horrendous possible reality if we do not learn from the past.

21. Teachers are being denied telework because the principal wants "all teachers on campus" while at the same time approving other teachers' telework? Why don't approve a request for one, and then approve the request from another? One teacher has two school-aged children and was denied telework. She now has to bring those two children to campus because she cannot leave them at home alone. On our campus, it seems like you can wear a mask if you feel like it but if you don't,
you don't have to. We have already had three positive covid cases connected to our school, so why not approve telework or require ALL staff to wear a mask?

22. A person in my household recently tested positive for COVID. The Hawaii State Department of Health recommends that anyone who has been directly exposed to COVID is required to quarantine for at least 14 days. With that being said, when I shared this with my administrator I was asked to provide a note from the doctor that advised me and my family to quarantine for 14 days in order for me to adhere to the DOH guidelines. To obtain this documentation added onto my stress of going back and forth with my PCP, explaining to him why I needed to provide a doctor’s note when it is already DOH guidelines to quarantine for 14 days after direct exposure to COVID. I was already stressing about how to adapt to living in my house with someone who is COVID positive, making sure this person is taken care of without getting myself sick, on top of readjusting to working from home.

I spoke with some other colleagues from different schools and it was shared with me that as an employee of the Hawaii Department of Education, we need to provide documentation in order to quarantine for 14 days after direct exposure to COVID. With this knowledge, I feel absolutely uncomfortable physically reporting to work at my school. How are my colleagues supposed to know for sure if any of us has been directly exposed to COVID? Are all of my coworkers responsible enough to get tested after being around someone who tested positive? How many of my coworkers are scared to even get tested because of the social stigma, so they don't tell anyone they've been exposed to COVID and just keep showing up to work anyway, putting everyone at risk? A few of my coworkers could easily be walking around campus carrying the virus, be asymptomatic, and pass it onto someone who has an underlying health condition. I think it is absolutely unfair that we as educators have to jump through all of these hoops to be granted to telework. I was given a 10-page packet to complete for teleworking and to know that some of these requests get declined after going through this lengthy process is infuriating! Why are these requests getting declined? Why are educators forced to come physically to work during a global pandemic? If someone doesn't feel comfortable physically reporting to work for whatever reason and has the capabilities to work from home, they should be allowed to!

I really do not feel that teachers are supported enough in the State of Hawaii. I highly suggest that more action be taken to protect our educators if we want to put an end to the teacher shortage. What educators have gone through during this
pandemic is ridiculous. Allow all educators to work from home if they want to and are able to.

23. We are not allowed to telework at all. Except for some special circumstances. Many teachers are calling in sick and I am growing concerned as no one is telling us what is going on. For example, the counselor is teleworking all this week. My classroom is not cleaned weekly let alone daily. I had termite poop literally right next to both my doors for about two weeks and it was just cleaned yesterday. My carpet has never been cleaned and there are spiderwebs in front of my desk and my student desks. Yet, our principal continues to lie to us and ensures us that our floors are swept daily, carpets are vacuumed daily, desks are wiped daily, and classrooms are completely sanitized with a fogger (daily). I have never seen any of those things happen. In fact some days I cannot even find custodians and my trash is not emptied.

24. I requested telework but was told that it would be best for me to talk to my doctor to be reassured that I am safe at work. Even though masks are not always worn in the office. My doctor did not agree and advocated for me to telework. I turned in that doctor note to my principal over a week ago and have not heard anything after.

My husband entered quarantine this week, after being exposed to a positive covid person. I have not had physical contact with him since he was required to quarantine by the DOH, in a quarantine hotel, but have been in my home where he was before he left for a quarantine hotel. Of course I do not want to be a concern to my office mates, but upon letting my principal know, I was told to report to work as normal and to just work alone as much as possible or if I wanted to be home I would need to request for “covid leave.” I am on day two of taking sick leave but also working at home. I would rather work at home to be safe but have no choice but to report to work or take a sick day and work at home.

My admin is bringing more students on campus almost daily. Teachers have students in their classrooms and it is a huge liability concern that there is one student and one teacher in a classroom alone. It is a safety issue for the teacher and the student. We had no prior faculty meetings about this, I have just seen admin emails to notify teachers what date the student would start being in their classrooms. Also I know that some of the students being brought to campus are considered vulnerable because they are not turning in work or showing up to classes, but have not been given intervention steps for teachers or counselors to work on with students, before they are brought to school.
25. Our principal has done a blanket denial of all requests for telework. I know of two other schools in our complex area that have allowed telework. My neighbor who lives directly across the street from me, who works at one of these schools, is currently teleworking. My request is due to my multi-generational family. The only way that I am able to continue to teach is due to the fact that my mother and father are able to monitor my elementary aged children in distance learning. I am worried about my high risk father who would most likely die if infected with Covid19. The request is not for childcare, but for the protection of my parents. Our principal has stated that "telework for childcare is not approved by the DOE." I am not sure if that is true after Dr. Kishimoto stated that principals were able to make the determination about telework.

26. I was denied my request to telework even with a doctor's note saying that I fell into at least one of the following categories. The note then listed the categories. This note was taken from the CDC which many care providers are using for telework requests. My principal told me I had to tell him specifically which condition I fell under. I replied that I did not feel I had to disclose my personal health formation and that even my care provider questioned why he had to know which category. My principal then requested I proceed with ADA accommodations and again I declined because I did not want to disclose my personal health information.

27. Continue virtual learning to prevent risk of exposure to asthmatics like myself and my son. Virtual learning and the option to telework are critical as we enter the flu season and possible reopening of the island.

28. Teachers at my school are not allowed to telecommute for any reason: concern about the health & safety of family, the need to be home for children, or for mild-illness. None of these reasons. All requests that I know of have been denied. This puts people at risk for illness --teachers will come in b/c it is easier than trying to do sub plans in this environment. Not being able to care for children and/or sensitive family adds stress that can lead to depression and anxiety. Not being treated like professionals makes us miserable. Morale is very low at my school.

On top of not being allowed to telecommute, teachers are not allowed to bring their children to school. The administration’s standpoint has been, too bad you must work it out. Regardless of their zero exceptions stance, there was a substitute teacher working at our school with a child working at a desk in the classroom. I don't understand how that is approved for a sub, but not for a teacher.
We were told that if there was a COVID case on campus, the school would shut down for two weeks (that's what I remember) for cleaning. However, when this did actually happen admin made no plans to notify staff or plan for remote teaching to ensure safety. In fact, we did not know about the case until we were forwarded an email that had been sent to parents.

Teachers have received very short notice of students coming into classrooms. There is no oversight or assistance for teachers that are teaching online, while trying to ensure a student in the classroom is following safety procedures. It's not clear if students are receiving safety orientation before entering teacher classrooms.

Thank you for reading/listening

29. I requested telework not only for health reasons, but for the following reasons as well. Teleworking would assist me in meeting the goals and needs of teaching at my school and benefit the DOE in several ways. Currently, I am the English Department Head and this requires me to plan for meetings, assist teachers in various ways, and organize PLCs. Also, as an ILT member, I work on a team whose purpose is school wide improvement and implementation which includes scheduling, professional development input, and designing school wide structures. In addition, I teach Advanced Placement Language and Composition which entails hours of college level content planning for the curriculum to be transferred to online instruction. If I was to get sick and require a sub, there is not another teacher on the campus that would be able to do this. Lastly, I am part of a team that is implementing the Success For All Curriculum in 9th grade English which has not been done in the state of Hawaii. This is a cooperative learning program that is also required to be transferred online and takes hours of preparation to create lessons and a cooperative learning structure using technology. My responsibilities, planning, student outreach etc., take hours of more time than I thought it would. I only requested two days to help me get everything I needed to get done. Therefore teleworking will enable me to use this extra time saved for learning and implementing new technology, planning content lessons, giving feedback to students, and working with school leaders to improve the DOE. I was denied while others in the school were allowed to. I'm not sure why.

30. I hope this letter finds everyone well and in good health. I am writing to you today to provide information concerning the lack of reasonable decision making at my
school concerning the requests for telework. There are teachers on my campus who have requested telework for a variety of reasons. Personal health issues such as severe asthma, current cancer treatments, and other important health factors are only some of the reasons why teachers have requested the opportunity to work from home. ALL of these requests have been denied by my administration. The reason? Administration has shared that it is vital that teachers report to our worksite so that we can provide an education and support our students. There is not one single student on our campus. All teaching and support provided to our students are being done 100% online. No clear explanation has been given as to why teachers cannot provide the same education and support from home. Dr. Kishimoto has stated that it is important for teachers to report to our worksites so that our administration can provide their teachers with support. To date, I have received little to no support from my administration. Indeed, any support that has been provided has been done 100% online. It is interesting to note that I have not seen my principal in person for weeks.

In addition to health-related requests for telework, many teachers on my campus have children at home who are too young to care for themselves. It is a tremendous hardship for teachers who have significant others who are also deemed as “essential” and are required to be at their worksite as well. My administration has continued to deny ALL of these requests and have made no attempts to support these teachers. We all know that teachers do not make enough money to pay for childcare. In addition, finding reliable childcare that ensures the health of all involved is very difficult to find during a pandemic.

Construction of our bathrooms has also just started. We are certainly grateful that after many years, our students will have renovated bathrooms where the doors will lock and no one can see them while they are taking care of their bathroom business. However, the sound is deafening. It is expected that the noise will worsen as the project commences. Teachers who are in very close proximity to the construction have also requested telework. ALL of these requests have also been denied. It appears that it makes more sense to move the teacher, their belongings, and other materials to a stuffy and hot room instead of allowing them to work from home.

I am writing this letter in support of teachers who are requesting telework. Ironically, I am not one of them. I prefer to report to work as I do not have any health issues nor do I need childcare. However, if a situation should arise where I would need telework, I’d like the assurance to know that I would be granted the
opportunity to do so. The quality of an education or support that a student would receive from their teacher would not change simply because a teacher would be working from home..only the location would.

31. A 6th Grade teacher in the 3rd trimester of her pregnancy was denied the ability to telework from home because pregnancy and caring for an infant is not considered "covid related."

32. I've submitted a request for telework, and I know of other teachers at my school who have submitted requests. Our requests are being ignored. I am not granted my own classroom, but must share a classroom with another teacher because I am a special education teacher doing inclusion. So, I have to share things (like the phone) with my co-teacher. We are unnecessarily exposed to each other all day long. Also, virtual teaching is very different from classroom teaching. When both of us are on virtual meetings, the students hear the other teacher in the background and are distracted. If we are on the same meeting, only one of us can be unmuted at a time, or there are extreme audio problems. If the other teacher is on a meeting and I am completing work (like designing instruction or writing an IEP), I am hearing her lead a class virtually, and it is extremely distracting. I've started sitting outside the classroom on a bench to do my quiet work so that I can focus. I've had skin cancer, so it's not ideal for me to work outside unnecessarily. My prep work (creating specially designed instruction, analyzing student data, writing IEPs and other legal documents) is very complex and detailed. It requires intense concentration. In addition to requesting telework, I've also requested an alternate room to work in to alleviate my co-teacher and I constantly exposing each other and these other problems that interfere with us teaching, but that request was also ignored.

33. For 28 years I've lived to teach -- I don't want to die BECAUSE I teach! I'm 62, a cancer survivor, immunocompromised w/ scarred lungs; I'm extremely vulnerable to Covid-19, and was denied telework yesterday. I was denied telework even though other teachers at other schools who ARE NOT AT HIGH RISK FOR INFECTION were granted telework, and EVEN THOUGH MY PULMONOLOGIST INDICATED "YOU ARE AT INCREASED RISK FOR RESPIRATORY COMPLICATIONS IF YOU CONTRACT COVID-19, THE CONDITION IS PERMANENT, YOU NEED TO AVOID CONTRACTING COVID-19."

The HIDOE Equity Specialist (who is teleworking from his home) actually wrote, "TELEWORK HAS BEEN DEEMED TO BE AN INAPPROPRIATE REASONABLE
ACCOMMODATION." My choice now is retire early...or expose myself to DEATH. How unjust is this? Why do less vulnerable teachers get protected with telework while someone like me has to risk death? 28yrs dedicated teaching & I'm left to die because of the arbitrariness of the DOE. FORCED TO RETIRE!

34. The Honorable Catherine Payne, Chairperson, Board of Education

This is my 3rd time submitting testimony. I am a high school history teacher and can honestly say before this pandemic I have only testified once in my life. Now I can make sure to tell my students that I practice what I preach when it comes to the 1st amendment.

I feel like I have to make my voice heard over and over again but yet it falls on deaf ears. I am hoping this time that a decision will be made that will allow teachers the choice to telework.

I listened to Superintendent Kishimoto flat out lie and play pass the buck at the last board meeting. When asked about telework she lied and said it was up to the principals. No it is not. The principals are being told by their CAS that telework will be denied. Our principals will approve it only to be denied by the CAS. This is therefore not up to the principal as the superintendent says but a top down directive that is being followed.

I have attended several virtual meetings where district staff and social workers are obviously working from home. I have submitted 3 times for telework at my school and was only approved for two days during one week but besides that was told no the other times.

Our school community is a hot spot for cases. I do not feel safe going into that hotspot just to show that I am physically at school when I could be safe at my house. I sit in my empty classroom where I am forced to report to for no good reason. I can do the same exact job at my home with better internet. I do not need to be in my classroom at all.

We just had a school staff pass away last week from one of our feeder schools. I can’t help but wonder if she asked for telework.

I again ask that teachers be allowed the option for telework. I understand some teachers may want to go into their classrooms to teach. We should have the choice to telework and not be unilaterally denied.
Superintendent Kishimoto needs to make a decision on telework because she is the leader. A poor leader will just pass the buck. This is what she is doing. Please stop micromanaging us and allow us to be the professionals we are in the place we feel safe.

35. Dear Board Members:

I am a classroom teacher and public school parent writing to you with concerns over (1) the negative impacts faced by the families of teachers who haven’t been allowed to telework, (2) the liability created by a lack of written guidance for the safe reopening of in-person schooling, and (3) the burden placed on Hawaii’s parents, students, and teachers by the Acellus program.

**Telework**

Despite the fact that I am a professional with a dedicated home office and better internet, equipment, and supplies at home than at school it has been telegraphed to me in no uncertain terms that telework requests are frowned upon. While I am pleased HSTA is collecting data on telework requests and denials, I fear their report will not reveal a true picture of the severity of the telework issue as many teachers at my school would apply if we did not think it would put us in a negative light, and that is just one school. I understand telework is supposed to be decided on one’s ability to do one’s job as well or better from home. While I personally can meet this standard and could offer proof, it is still my understanding I would be doing my career a disservice if I even apply. I don’t even believe that is the appropriate standard to apply under the current unprecedented circumstances. That is not the standard Gov. Ige and Sup. Kishimoto asked Hawaii’s other employers to apply. In their joint press conference of August 7, 2020 they requested flexibility from Hawaii employers in light of distance learning schedules. In announcing the new stay at home, work from home order of August 25, 2020, Mayor Kirk Caldwell claimed if you can work from home, you should. It is too bad telework flexibility is not being widely offered to the very teachers who are bending over backwards, working more hours than ever, to create a high-quality distance learning experience for Hawaii’s students.

I love being a teacher, but like many teacher-parents a big part of the draw of a 10-month classroom position is it aligns well with parenthood— both the schedule and the knowing how to educate children. Twice now I have come home to my 4th grader in tears over a distance learning issue my mom couldn’t help her with but
would have taken me only a moment to navigate with my child. When I’m in my classroom trying to focus on writing lessons I often find myself thinking of the danger I’m putting my high-risk mom in by having her watch my child, but what choice do I have? This seems crazy to me! Why can’t I teach over Zoom from my home office while my child attends Google Meet from her bedroom? She knows not to interrupt live lessons and to wait for an appropriate time to ask for occasional help accessing an assignment online or getting a snack. Instead, I risk my mom’s health (her actual life as one of her doctor’s reminded me during a recent telehealth appointment) and leave my daughter in tears over something I could have helped her with in, literally, one minute. Don’t the students of teachers matter too? Don’t the families of teachers matter too? They keep reminding us teachers about self-care and the importance of “putting our own oxygen mask on first.” Telework (without jumping through hoops or risking my career) would put me in a far better position to be able to help my students academically and emotionally.

The only reasons I can imagine for creating barriers to telework or denying telework requests (other than just not trusting teachers or an outdated notion of productivity) is (1) it may frustrate parents whose own employers will not offer flexibility or, (2) perhaps the higher ups have considered general education teachers being on-campus may be the only thing keeping special education teachers (many of whom are teaching face to face) from quitting their jobs. I sympathize with people who have jobs that cannot be done from home (my partner is one of them), but that should not be a reason for denying flexibility for folks whose jobs can be done just as easily by telecommuting. In fact, I already am telecommuting, meeting my students in Zoom and my colleagues in WebEx, I just happen to be telecommuting from my classroom on campus. Special education teachers have already been put at higher risk by meeting with students face-to-face, but maybe it’s tolerable when they see gen ed teachers on campus all day too? Maybe an empty campus would push the inequity too far and special ed teachers would walk off the job en masse? Something should be done about the working conditions of special ed teachers but, again, creating barriers to telework or denying it is not the answer.

Liability

HIDOE and DOH have yet to release a comprehensive plan for safely reopening schools to in-person learning. While it is my understanding it will be published soon, even if the new guidance is adequate, it will again leave every school scrambling. Another consideration is while guidance must offer concrete metrics
and guidelines, it must also be responsive to local conditions in near real time. I fear inadequate or static guidance, or an inability to implement the guidance with fidelity will open HIDOE (and potentially the state) up to liability. As reported by Education Week on September 3, 2020, “[t]hough largely missing from mainstream news coverage, liability remains an issue of significant uncertainty for school districts that’s certain to factor into their decisions about whether or not to reopen for in-person learning, even on a partial basis... In the end, the legal experts say, there is no surefire way [for school districts] to avoid a liability claim due to COVID-19, but there are some general steps districts can take now to minimize the chances of a successful claim. Most of them are based on common sense and careful documentation that they are following all applicable health guidelines and have established clear procedures for responding to an outbreak... they should be in regular contact with their local health agencies to adjust their standard of care in line with what those groups recommend, and in response to the most up-to-date information on transmission rates in their community.” Full article here: https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/09/03/schools-may-get-sued-over-covid-19-7.html. I think we all know there has been a breakdown at DOH and a disconnect between DOH and DOE. Failure to work towards guidelines and more collaboration, transparency, and responsiveness going forward risks the physical health of Hawaii’s citizens as well as the fiscal health of the state.

**Acellus**

I am sure many folks have submitted testimony documenting the many inappropriate lessons found on Acellus, as well as its shortcomings as a curriculum. I will not go into those issues here as I trust they have already been sufficiently covered. I see Acellus more from a parent point of view as I don’t work with it as a teacher, but my child’s school does use it. I cannot imagine how stressed I would feel as a parent if my child were in 100% Acellus, as many students are. My daughter’s school uses Acellus to supplement teacher-led instruction and teacher-created content in Google Classroom. Even at that, it adds an extra school block to our day as I do not want my child to work on Acellus unless I am there to use their inappropriate lessons as a teachable moment. Now we have to find time in the evenings of already over scheduled days to work on Acellus once I’m home from work. At least I am a teacher so I feel confident in my ability to spot and re-teach the problem lessons. I don’t know who vetted Acellus, but it makes me physically ill thinking about the amount of money that was paid for this program (paid out of state to an entity of questionable ethics) when Hawaii’s teachers were ready, willing, and able to develop and deliver high-quality, culturally
relevant and accurate curriculum. It is particularly sad as I know many of us teachers are up at night thinking of losing our jobs by October 2 (to my understanding the last day we can be dropped from our contract) or having our pay cut with a furlough in November.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Concerned Parent & Teacher

36. I was informed by numerous colleagues not to bother submitting the teleworking paperwork because none of the teachers are being permitted to work remotely. I prefer to work from home because there are still inherent health risks coming to campus, and it is unnecessary to put staff at risk, particularly when all students are 100% distance learning at this time. Thank you for advocating on our behalf.

37. I am 55 years old and would prefer to telework as it is an option. I also care for my mother at times who is 78 years old with an underlying heart condition.

I have to say our principal has gone over and beyond to provide for the faculty and staff with safety, flexibility and support. However, I have not submitted my paperwork to telework and instead use my personal or sick leave when I choose to work from home. Personally, I get a lot more done at home. I choose to do this because our school's culture is such that it is difficult to bring up teleworking because everyone is "committed" to the school and there is an "unspoken expectation" that you should be on campus. I have to say my time commitment now goes beyond the normal school work day more so than when students were on campus. Providing learning online takes more hours and weekend time to make it work.

My responsibilities can be done from home and I have the necessary resources and privacy there. As a school counselor I am also serving as an online learning "monitor" for those on Acellus which requires a certain extent of planning in addition to my responsibilities as a school counselor, Student Council advisor and being on our school's support team. Our school's culture is such that it is difficult to say "no" to these additional responsibilities placed on us especially when many students who need counseling are not on campus. Additionally, everyone is supporting the school by taking on different responsibilities. I love my job but if at all possible, I would want to telework. However, I don't want to deal with that "unspoken expectation" that I should be on campus because every single faculty
member is there. I also don't want to deal with the aftermath of coming back to work at the school having to face everyone who "stuck it out" being on campus all this time. I'm sure many teachers on campus feel the same way.

38. I live with 3 other teachers. Together we teach and are responsible for over 400 students this semester alone. During this pandemic, when a disease that can incapacitate people of all ages, when it has been deemed prudent that student’s stay home for safety, it baffles me that teachers are not only expected, but mandated to report to school. In a country where only essential work is mandated to report, teachers are essential, but can complete work adequately as professionals from home. If a single one of my roommates get sick, statistically the chances all roommates are infected is higher than most illnesses. When one of my roommates has a condition that has already landed 3 members in critical condition due to contracting COVID-19, it stands to reason that if any of us contract this disease, upwards of 400 students are at risk to lose out on education and learning. In a system that so clearly does not care for its educators as it does its students, at least that risk alone should be reason enough for telework.

On top of that, it amazes me as an educator when those in charge forget what it is to accommodate, be socio and emotionally responsive, and care for all those in their care. This is something bred into us as educators and it saddens me that this is forgotten and not extended to those doing the teaching. I commute to work everyday, do my best to see as few people as possible, and quite frankly teach with a slight nagging fear at the back of my mind that perhaps today is the day I’m not careful and I am the reason my house and loved ones contract a potentially deadly disease. That is not an ideal working situation. That is not allowing me to be the champion educator my students need. I have heard administrators say they do not see the fear in this and it is safe at work, but I simply turn it around and ask how did they forget so easily what it is to see the viewpoints of all and the value all viewpoints like we do our students.

In the Spring I taught from home. I felt safe, I felt appreciated, and I did my job well for it. I gave lessons, I graded, gave feedback. I have taught from home already, and having done it from school can attest that there is nothing at school that helps me teach better than at home. I am a professional, I am paid to do my job. I only hope that those in charge can finally realize in order for my to do that job, I need to feel heard and I need to feel safe in my working environment. I was hired as a professional and I hope that expectation would be extended in the time of a pandemic. If administrators think I am not capable of teaching adequately or being
professional from home, then they simply should not have hired me in the first place. I am an educator and I would like to be respected as such.

39. I applied for telework and was denied because 1 student in 1 period was scheduled for in-person learning. Other teachers at my school have slightly greater in-person numbers. Otherwise, we work in mostly empty classrooms.

Teachers with in-person students were advised to treat in-person students as online students since we were required to teach remote and in-person students simultaneously. This is not aligned with meeting student needs based on IEPs or 504s; however, it is a passive acknowledgement that teaching remote and in-person simultaneously cannot be done effectively without greatly reducing the teacher’s effectiveness to meet the needs of both groups. By advising teachers to treat in-person as remote students, the school acknowledges that doing both is a near impossible task that adds great pressure and requirements on teachers.

The requirements of in-person teaching is different than remote teaching. Both are set in different environments and under different conditions. They are not the same. It requires a shift in behaviors, mindset, and tone when the teacher moves from remote to in-person and back to remote in order to meet with all students attending the same period. Stepping away from remote teaching is akin to stepping away from the room. The teacher’s face disappearing from the screen signals to remote students that the teacher left the virtual room. The teacher cannot monitor the chat room, video cams, or students’ work when working with in-person students. Likewise, when the teacher leaves the in-person student to remote teach, it is as if the teacher denies acknowledging the student is present within the classroom. The only way this works is if another teacher is assigned to assist and support in-person students instead of having one teacher fill both teaching roles. If in-person students were at greater risk and in need of support more than their peers, then they deserve to have a teacher present at all times instead of a teacher whose attention is divided between two learning environments and conditions.

However, it’s absurd to have a student in-person, someone you cannot safely approach within 6 feet, and to provide services under the assumption that it can be done in the same way before Covid-19 when social distancing policies did not exist. The most at risk students need the one-to-one close support that puts teacher and student within 3 feet or closer throughout class time. The teacher will need to lean over to look at the student’s work, to get close enough to point in order to assist the student, and more. Yet, I have heard some students are having
a hard time keeping masks on their faces. They dropped the mask below their noses and mouths in class despite teachers’ reminders, warnings, and reprimands. They take off their masks and lay them on their desks until reminded to put the masks back on. Despite teachers’ complaints, administrators are reluctant to enforce masks rules with the same heavy hand they would administer consequences for other dress code violations. Whoa to the student who walks onto campus wearing spaghetti straps or to the student whose shirt is too big and hangs off the shoulders. These students would be corralled into the office and hid away until appropriately attired. While those dress code violations do not violate the health and safety of educators, they are handled with a swifter response and heavier hand than mask violators who jeopardize the health of teachers, especially those with underlying medical conditions. While the goal is to teach all students and provide effective instruction, schools need to consider at what cost to the educator. It is demoralizing when you feel that having a student in-person takes priority at all cost over the health and welfare of yourself or fellow teachers. Schools need to enforce safety standards, or if reluctant to enforce standards, do not have students attend in-person at all.

I would like to add I was also denied telework because I was told I needed to be on campus so administrators and the IT specialist can assist me with remote learning. However, I have not required assistance from administrators or the IT specialist that required in-person interactions. No administrators or IT have visited my classroom for the purpose of assisting me with remote teaching or accessing technology, programs, or other tools that may be used for remote teaching.

My problems and concerns with remote teaching do not stem from my lack of know-how, but the greater workload and demand that has been placed on teachers. We have become teachers and tech support— running a virtual class while acting as a call center for every students’ misstep and misunderstanding when navigating learning through technology. Add internet reliability (or unreliability), lag time, and other technology failures, teachers are spending as much time providing tech support so students can access learning as much as, if not more than, providing instruction.

Then there are students who fail to show up to class and/or complete assignments. My breaks, lunches, and lesson planning time are spent reaching out to students, parents, or any other family member who answer my call, email, or messaging program. Likewise, I’m answering endless emails and messaging to clarify schedules, assignments, and how-to instructions to parents and students. I have
received parent phone calls and messages during class time, having to stop instruction so I can address questions to include how to join a Google Meet or how to get the wi-fi to work at home (I have no clue).

Despite the increased demands and workload placed upon me, everything I do is in a mostly empty classroom. It seems there’s a lack of trust in teachers as professionals. Forcing teachers to work in empty classrooms implies teachers do not work or will not work unless they are on the premise, inside a classroom. It also seems a point of control to have teachers working in classrooms under the excuse to teach 1-2 at risk students. If there were really a concern for these students, the school would provide a separate teacher or aid who can be “present” for the student during an entire class period. In addition, the school would enforce a zero tolerance mask policy to protect those who work in close proximity to students. By not providing a teacher or aid dedicated to in-person students and by not enforcing the mask policy, it seems the school is using the concept of in-person students as a way to hold teachers hostage— making them be physically present for a job that could be done remotely.

40. With Hawaii’s numbers just starting to go down, reopening schools would put us right back to another stay at home order, if not worse because of the multi-generational households in Hawaii. There are now confirmed reports that children are not only susceptible to getting CoVid but that they can be super spreaders by bringing it back to their family members and other adults.

When I hear about how teachers do not want to go back to work and are in an uproar about being essential workers, I am furious! That cannot be further from the truth. The difference between our line of work and other essential workers is that we are with our customers in a confined space for 7 hours who are not capable of wearing masks all day, nor are they able to keep their hands out of their mouths and noses before touching everything in sight. They want hugs and carpet time. Then they go home and play with their neighbors and come back the next day to be confined to a small space that cannot possibly keep everybody 6 feet apart all day nor can we keep all the areas clean because there are not enough cleaning supplies and not enough time to do it in.

We need to keep distance learning for at least another quarter to ensure that numbers are under control, especially if we reopen up to tourism again. Schools should also allow teachers to telework. I’ve only been allowed to do it because of the stay at home order but once that’s lifted I will need to report back to campus. I
do a better job at home than I do on campus because I’m not stressed with worrying about who’s been in my room and who’s not wearing masks and what I need to sanitize. I am also not interrupted with colleagues dropping in to ask about something that turns into at least a 20 minute conversation or having to spend time to get ready. I can be ready for work in less than half an hour and continue working without having to worry about being the last one on campus. If I can do the same quality, if not better quality of work at home than on campus, then I should be given that opportunity. I am a professional, not someone who wants to stay home so I can goof off. I care about the quality of my work and my students. I want to work from home because I can focus on my work and not about keeping distance or cleaning desk tops and chairs.

Please allow teachers to work from home. Allow more time to pass and numbers to be under control before bringing students and staff back on campus. We cannot afford to lose another life because we don’t have all the things we need to safely reopen.

41. This whole experience has been a nightmare for many. My GL partner and I have been working nonstop. We are constantly working on our slides and lessons for the next day. I put in a request for telework because I have asthma, high blood pressure, and I am over 50 years old. Pulmonary Fibrosis runs in my family. My principal asked our CAS, and she denied my request. She said I can take a family leave if I’m concerned. We have already had 2 confirmed cases, and honestly, I’m worried when our kids come back. I feel that teachers should be able to choose to work from home or school. My home complex is resurfacing our garages, so I would rather be at school. However, I feel safer at home, and would like to have that option. Other state workers have been home for months. Why do we have to fill out so many forms? I honestly haven’t even had the time to fill it out again. I'm so worried about my Special Ed teacher friends. If it's unsafe for regular Ed, it should be the same for our SpEd teachers. I love and appreciate HSTA.

42. COVID-19 caused me to lose my home and I was forced to move to a less expensive part of the island over an hour away from my job site. Being able to telework would relieve great stress and anxiety. I hope to move closer to work soon but options are limited. Simply having a choice would make a huge impact in my life. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony.

43. I am a current High School Teacher who was denied telework. The reason that they provided me was that "all teachers must report to work to be able to support
student learning in the event students show up in person for support." Isn't the purpose of students staying home is to prevent the spreading of the virus and to avoid large gatherings? The State & the DOE does not have the best interest for its teachers. It is making the "Rules" fit their needs and their needs only. In addition, there have been rumors of COVID-19 in our FSC class. Students that are in the FSC setting have been on campus throughout this school year. Admin has not mentioned it to the staff. I feel the administration does not have the health and safety of its teachers as a priority. Its main purpose is to prevent due process nothing else.

44. To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to inform you of the tragic decision making by the leadership in the KMR complex area. I am an experienced mathematics teacher from the mainland. I have been here in Oahu for just over two years. Because we moved here, we do not have a family support system in place. When the schools announced that they would be completely distance learning, I was frantic to find a solution so that my children were cared for and I could effectively teach my 8th grade Algebra 1 classes. Unfortunately, asking aunts, uncles, or grandparents to watch my children while I go into the classroom to teach remotely is not an option. I offered an option where I could head home after the instructional time completed so that my wife could go into work at night and my children were not left home alone. This option was denied. I then applied for full telework. I was verbally told by my principal, Katherine Balatico, that both she and the CAS Linell Dilworth would both deny telework because I needed it for child care issues. True to her word, when I applied for telework, it was denied. The only option left was for me to take the COVID leave.

If it is the mandate that all educational decisions be made for what is in the best interest of the kids, how is denying telework and forcing students to be given a long term substitute as apposed to a certified teacher in the best interest of the students?

On the day before my leave was supposed to start, please note that notice of leave was given several weeks prior, I was accosted in my classroom. The principal and assistant principal entered my classroom and yelled at me about how I didn’t have a clear plan for how a substitute was supposed to effectively run a digital classroom. This is a question I had been asking my administration for weeks with no answer.
I have been forced to look for employment outside of the Hawaii Department of Education because of this. I cannot handle the fact that I am being forced to abandon my classroom kids because I do not have a support system for my own children. It is a shame because I love what I do and I care deeply for my students, but under the leadership currently in place, there does not appear to be any path to allowing me to do what I love, teach mathematics.

I was really hurt and disturbed by the “Supervisor’s Comments” that my principal recently entered on my Telework request form. My Principal disapproved my request to work from home during the virtual teaching phase we are in, using reasoning that I dispute and feel is inaccurate and unfounded. I don’t want to appear presumptuous but I have been Teacher of the year, District Teacher of the Year, and achieved National Board Certification. I have been rated Highly Effective for the last 5 (6 if admin finishes posting for last year) school years. I have been extremely active in my data teams and departments throughout my years at school and try to help others in any way I can. I worked together with my co-teacher during the 4th quarter of last year daily virtually to prepare rigorous and engaging lessons for our students. I carry the highest caseload of any of the special education teachers in my department every year and complete my duties with the highest fidelity. To be told that I “need to be on campus to ensure quality work is provided over quantity of work provided. This would entail supervision and frequent feedback” was insulting. These comments are harassment and are indicative of the hostile work environment that has been in place.

I submitted this request for telework to protect my health and the health of my family. I have been so concerned with being exposed to covid at school that I recently took a covid test. Gratefully it came back negative. My age, weight, and diabetes put me in a high-risk category, and I feel that I am able to more than adequately perform my duties as a teacher/special education teacher from home as I am already performing these duties virtually from school. There is no requirement for me to be in-person for especially with no students on campus until the end of the 1st Quarter. I have attended every meeting, office hours, and informal questioning session either by phone or by virtual meeting to date.

This decision now not only affects my moral, but potentially my health. I have heard from my several of my colleagues that they were also disapproved for telework – all with the same harassing remarks in the “Supervisors Comments”. As the cases
rise on our island and specifically in our town, I feel my Principal’s decisions are “not in DOE’s best interest”, and definitely not in mine or my fellow teachers.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

46. May I please share my testimony anonymously? I have sent in written testimony to the BOE twice now but since I am in the process of requesting telework, I would like to share my concerns without identifying myself. I am at Farrington High School and put in a request for telework two weeks ago at the school level. The response came a few days later, suggesting that I apply for reasonable accommodations since I had shared that my doctor confirmed that I was at higher risk for complications should I contract COVID-19. I was told that telework at the school level is being considered on a case-by-case basis but that no approval was being given for daily telework…possibly for two or three days maximum. My understanding is that the complex superintendent wants teachers to be “managed” and “watched” to ensure that they are doing their job so telework is being discouraged. I was beyond disappointed and offended. Who is “watching” when I spend countless hours every evening and weekend grading papers, planning lessons, uploading assignments to Google Classroom, and the other teaching responsibilities that do not fit into our school day? The vast majority of us are conscientious teachers who will go above and beyond what is required to do our best to reach our students.

It seems that my telework request is on hold while I apply for reasonable accommodations, which I did last week Thursday. I heard from that department yesterday and was told by the DOE representative that the process will take a few weeks. In the interim, I may be able to take two days of telework per week if the principal agrees. It was also mentioned that daily telework has not been approved by the DOE unless the teacher’s medical condition is extremely serious.

I rush to and from my car to my classroom (without students) every day (wearing an N95 and a cloth mask – my own PPE) to try to avoid passing anyone. No matter how much I try to avoid it, I often encounter other employees – teachers, security, custodians – or students exiting the restroom or walking through the hallway (not always wearing masks). On two occasions, students showed up at my classroom door. I do not use the restroom in school because I don’t want to come into close proximity with others and because the facilities are frequented by so many people throughout the day. The high touch areas are not cleaned often as the custodians are already overwhelmed by the extra duties required by COVID.
We have not been informed about the number of students that are on campus daily and where their classes are located. This makes it difficult to know which path is safest and where there may be more risks on campus. I feel that I am in such an unsafe environment and am being unnecessarily exposed to conditions that put my health at risk.

On a very personal note, this is the first time with 17 years with the DOE that I have ever written a testimony to the BOE or applied for any type of accommodations. I feel like I am begging for my life…and the state does not care at all. If I have learned anything in the past two months, it's that the DOE really does not have my best interest at heart and sees me as expendable. Even after the tragic loss of an employee at Dole, there seems to be no change of heart.

47. My principal noted on my telework summary of conference form: “Complex Area Superintendent (Name of CAS) has informed me that for requests generated by personnel assigned to (Name of School), I (Name of Principal) have been designated as a representative tasked with reviewing and decision making until further notice.”

The principal did NOT approve full telework for my request, so I consider my request denied. He approved telework 3 days/week. I would need to report to work 2 days/week. That's not what I requested on my telework request. In addition, the principal listed four items that he claims are benefits for me to report to campus. Some of the items listed are state of Hawaii mandates regarding COVID-19. These “benefits” as he claims, should NOT be used as employee benefits on my summary of conference for telework. He states, "(Name of School) employees attending work on campus benefit from: (1) implementing screening, shaka-in, and entry protocols, (2) implementing safety protocols for mask wearing, (3) implementing safety protocols for social distancing, (4) communicating effectively with adult team members on campus as we all learn to implement these "new" safety practices & protocols with automaticity prior to the "blended" return of students to campus.

My principal is requiring teachers that applied for telework to report to work on the days he did not approve. During the telework request phone conference with my principal, vice principal, and myself on September 4, I asked:

(1) Is there a reason for all these off and on teleworking days (12 days telework - noted in Telework Summary of Conference form and 7 days report to work)?
(2) Is there something different on the days that will be expected of me? Will there be any training, PD, or faculty meetings I need to attend?

(3) Does the school have a Health and Safety plan? Could I get a copy of the School Health and Safety Plan?

These are the responses I received from my principal:

Reply to question 1: “You would do the same thing as you are doing when you telework.”

Reply to question 2: “No, there isn’t any training or anything like that.

In response to questions 1 & 2, he stated, “This is not part of this process for request for telework.” He referred me to look at page 2 of my Summary of Conference for Telework, which states:

- (Name of School) employees attending work on campus benefit from:
- implementing screening, shaka-in, and entry protocols
- implementing safety protocols for mask wearing
- implementing safety protocols for social distancing
- communicating effectively with adult team members on campus as we all learn to implement these “new” safety practices & protocols with automaticity prior to the “blended” return of students to campus.

In response to question 3 – my principal stated that he doesn’t have a Health and Safety plan. He informed me that the Vice Principal, (who was on the phone conference call also) was working on a “list” of items that needed to be taken care of. He also mentioned that they are working with the Head Custodian about some protocols for disinfecting.

A question that I have asked my principal many times in faculty google meetings prior to the temporary school closure, “What are the frequent sanitization procedures for commonly used machines and/items on campus. For example, the copy machine, laminator, microwave oven, teacher’s bathroom, handrails in stairway, door handles, etc.

8/10/20 - I sent this question as a COVID-19 question to our school’s HSTA representative. She added it on the principal’s “Health & Safety” faculty agenda
Sept. 16, 2020

google document. I also sent the link to the HIDOE Resource that I found online that stated the protocol procedures for high frequency touched surfaces. The principal replied he wasn’t aware of that resource and would need to look into it. He previously attached a link that contained no details about the protocol in how to carry out disinfecting and cleaning of high frequency touched surfaces.

I also asked this same question during my telework conference. The principal stated the above response to question 3.

During the telework telephone conference, the principal did not give me a chance at all to explain my reasons for my request to telework. I needed to interrupt him several times to “defend” my thoughts. At one point he stated, “I’m not going to argue to you.” This was very awkward to hear him tell me that, as he did not give me any chance to explain. He did not treat me with respect and I did not feel valued as a professional.

I again asked the principal the questions that I have always asked him about a Health and Safety Plan for my school in regard to cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces. I made the principal aware of the "Return to Learn, Version 5" handbook that states all the protocols. He stated that he wasn’t informed by CAS (Name of CAS) about this version 5 handbook, nor any protocols stated in that handbook. How is this make sense? He is requiring me and other teachers that applied for telework and he STILL does not have any plan in place to clean, sanitize, and disinfect high frequency touched surfaces throughout the day.

I teleworked from home from August 24 - September 4 (before my telework request) due to a temporary school closure because an employee tested positive for COVID-19. My school reopened on September 8, 2020. My principal scheduled me to report to work on September 11. During the two weeks of our school closure, I have teleworked to my fullest capacity. I've reached all my students and families, provided distance learning, and have 95-100% student attendance/participation rate daily. I confidently can carry out my job at home at the same level and beyond as I did in the classroom. Also, during the temporary COVID-19 school closure, a second employee was tested positive. Our principal did not inform us. I found out through a 2nd party contact that I was in contact with. When I asked the principal about this second COVID-19 confirmed case, he said he knows we text and talk to each other. The principal did not do any type of contact tracing related to the second positive case, nor did he inform the employees at our school.
It's been a struggle to try to stay safe on the school campus. It seems as if we are prisoners of our principal. The principal is forcing us to come to work, against our request to telework. I can carry out my teaching duties at home at the same level as I do in the classroom. This was even mentioned by Dr. Kishimoto at the August 19, 20 Board of Education meeting.

Also, why is it that some principals approve full telework for their teachers (with the same reasons that are being requested) and other principals don't approve. It seems like discrimination to me. We all have the same responsibilities and contract. We are all professionals.

I worry for my safety. I worry for my family's safety if I bring home the virus from my work environment.

Reasons to keep schools closed; lack of communication and transparency; inadequate and insufficient PPE; too many students on campuses; and more

1. I am appalled that the PPE I received from my school were two travel-sized containers of hand sanitizer, a homemade mask, and a flimsy face shield held together with a rubber band. That's the PPE I received when we were preparing for students to return to school -- BEFORE the Stay-At-Home and distance learning plans were put in place. The lack of leadership and regard for our safety is disgraceful.

As a teacher, I feel constant pressure to provide face-to-face instruction and support to our vulnerable population that comes to campus. To further clarify, this population I am referring to does not include the students serviced in the special education, fully self-contained setting. I feel like I am forced to choose between providing these students with face-to-face instruction, despite their lack of compliance with social distancing protocols, to maintain an amicable working environment over my health and the health of my loved ones.

Telework is a hot topic. And, sadly it's viewed as "survival of the fittest." The staff that "can't handle or are worried about COVID-19" telework. Those "who can handle" come to campus. Telework has created an "us-vs-them" mentality which has caused unnecessary divides during a time when unity is key.
2. The school I teach at is in Kalihi with the majority of the population Micronesian students. Besides Sped students, other students have been allowed on campus daily. The admin. has stated that it's okay to make exceptions and has even pressured teachers to tutor non-Sped students face-to-face, on campus. We’ve already been informed by many of our parents that their households have COVID. A parent of one of those households even walked on to campus and approached a teacher in her classroom. If students return to campus in the second quarter, I will definitely take a leave.

3. At my school, four teachers are responsible for the education of 1/3 of the student body; approximately 250 students. These families chose the Acellus option for various reasons and at the onset of this pandemic we were told to only take attendance. However, because we are educators who have a duty to our students we find ourselves analyzing student data and offering program suggestions to families to supplement their child’s education. We have to monitor attendance and consistently track down families who are not utilizing the program at its minimum. We have to field questions about the program Acellus itself. We have to make sure they have all the login information they need to access the school computer, Acellus, Clever, and all of the other online programs the school offers. We have to monitor and make sure they completed their iReady testing. We will have to do report cards for these students using a program that’s data does not transfer to the DOE standards based report card. All the while, the hybrid class sizes are between 9-15.

Please address class size inequity when it comes to monitoring fully online students. There are teachers who monitor more than one grade level and over 100 students. At the same time they are also monitoring 11 children in their hub for those that do not have internet. If this distance learning continues there needs to be language that addresses this work load inequity. I have attempted to set up a meeting with my head faculty rep and administration to no avail. Administration is not responding to the request. Thank you.

4. Due to an expected budget shortfall from the COVID-19 pandemic, our principal has decided to lock the supply room from teachers. This supply room includes everyday work supplies, such as pens, pencils, paper clips, folders, and so on. These items must now be planned for and specifically requested for by teachers. This is a direct violation of our contract Article VI, section G, which states, “Open
supply rooms shall exist in each school where feasible,” and yet, it is a result of management decisions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. I am concerned about the lack of cleaning at our school and how this will negatively affect our campus community. The school administrators and custodians have created a checklist for classroom cleaners to complete each day which includes items such as refilling paper towel dispensers, wiping students work surfaces and disinfecting high touch areas such as door handles. Each day the list is checked off, but after seeing the same pencil marks on these surfaces and asking multiple days for paper towels it is apparent our custodians are being tasked with more than they can handle. I’ve brought my concerns to my administrators who told me that the pencil marks were difficult to remove. After using the disinfectant spray supplied by the school and paper towels I supplied myself, it took exactly one minute to remove the marks. Schools do not have enough custodial power to clean our classrooms effectively. There is an incredible lack of accountability when it comes to cleaning schools. I am also concerned for all who enter our schools front office. Every time I have walked into the office in the four weeks we have been on campus I have entered to find at least one person unmasked, if not more. Even more frightening is that some of the worst offenders are school leaders, administration who need to be leading by example.

6. Since the start of school, three out of four of the students that I see face to face have given us a COVID scare: One was in 14-day travel quarantine, another's parent was exposed and so that student had to be in quarantine until they were “cleared” and the third ran a fever of over 102 for three days was tested and released after his fever broke. Only one of these three children was tested before returning to school. Fortunately the test was negative. My point is that there are no clear guidelines as to when a student can return after testing. It is my understanding that the Rapid Result tests are not always accurate. The parent who was tested could not return to work until two negative tests were shown but the student was allowed to come to school. There was no doctor’s note required nor was proof of a negative test. I think it is unfair that some teachers are required to have students while others are not. Half of our special education staff are in their 60’s. Everyday I go to work not knowing if I might be exposed. Of course, I take all of the precautions and do my best to stay safe. I know that parents and students are suffering but we need to have written guidelines as to how to determine that a student is "cleared" to return to school. I don’t think it is right that the parents do not have to provide proof and can be taken on their word alone. I don’t feel safe at work.
7. We have inadequate technology for teachers. DOE has never funded schools with technology since I have been employed for 20 years. We have ALWAYS raised the funds ourselves. Our laptops are 15 years old and go in and out of service. It has become crystal clear, the neglect of our technology, and we are paying for it! We have yet to receive hot spots for our families. Students are doing work books at home with no instruction. Students are not showing up for online instruction or showing up for a few minutes and not returning. Parents are non-responsive. The offer of 100% distance learning at home with programs like Acellus for which schools are paying tens of thousands of dollars are not working. There is no rigor and diligent students need to only spend an hour or two to keep up with program goals. Since it’s a supplemental program, there aren't enough teachers to provide direct instruction to these students. Students are not keeping up. One student has spent 30 minutes only since the first day of school. When we open the school to hybrid learning, each class can only take half the amount of students. There is no teacher to teach the other half at home. They will be doing computer work only without seeing their teacher for that day. The gap is growing wider between our self-directed learners and students with parents that support their child’s education and children with no parental support or low achieving and or of low socioeconomic status. The DOE can expect much because they have left schools to falter on their own.

8. In my opinion, it would be safer to keep schools closed and continue distance learning due to the fact that already there have been a number of students who would have been at school who had to be quarantined due to contact with family members or others with COVID, or themselves tested positive. This would have caused a chain reaction with other students and teachers.

9. As district resource teachers, we submitted our documents to telework as we are non-classroom teachers but provide lots of support to teachers and schools via Webex. As we are in different Webex meetings all day, it makes it difficult to participate in meetings appropriately while wearing a mask and being distracted by the other Webex meetings in the room and of course the confidentiality piece! Our DES approved only 2 days of telework and did not give reason for not approving all 5 days but said if there are additional days that you may need to work from home to let her know.

I don’t understand why she did not approve all 5 days as we also noted that if there was reason to work in the office then we would go in and I feel that’s the most
sensible thing to do as we are all professionals and trying to deliver support effectively and in our own homes without a mask and in a confidential space.

10. I am writing testimony to please consider suspending face-to-face instruction throughout the semester. COVID 19 will be wide spread throughout the public schools where the effects will simply be devastating.

There are not enough opportunities for teachers who are In precarious situations to telework. Please consider the health and safety of the public. Mahalo

11. The hospitals are almost at capacity and the daily reported cases are too high. Unfortunately we aren’t ready to safely re open.

12. BOE, I am writing to you to please be proactive. I have no confidence that this second shutdown has taught the public the seriousness in keeping safe and social distancing during covid. I feel that once we open up again, the cases will go back up. We are heading into flu season. Please do not open schools until after flu season. This could mean even well after the new year. In January and February of this year, I had so many students who had the flu. We cannot be reactive already. So many people have died within these past couple of months. While you can calculate that the percentage in death rates are low, but that is someone’s loved one or parent or sibling. So, it’s terrible to just shrug it off as a small percentage.

Teachers are not the driving force in starting the economy. We are not nurses or doctors or grocery store workers. It is not in our job description to be front line workers for covid. I still haven’t seen anything in writing about when there is a case on campus. We spend over six hours with many students in one classroom. That risk of exposure is high! Did you see in the news that you are at risk of catching covid when eating at a restaurant? You may stay at a restaurant for maybe two hours. Teachers stay with many students for over six hours!

Teachers have been working long hours to redo our curriculum for the first quarter. We haven’t even had time to plan for the second quarter and don’t even know what to plan for. I’m not interested in revamping my curriculum to go back and forth with face-to-face and distance learning.

I find it appalling how little you value teachers. We work hard for our students but it always goes unnoticed. And you expect us to risk our lives so everyone can go back to work?
I’m still trying to understand why teachers need to ask principals to telework. There obviously is a valid concern for having in-person instruction. Teachers are afraid to ask their principal to telework. You wonder why not many teachers are teleworking. We’re in a pandemic! Again, why do teachers need to ask to telework? Give teachers an option! Please understand it is not easy to just ask a principal to telework.

BOE, let’s do the right thing! The public will always criticize your decisions because these are difficult decisions to make. But you know the cases will get bad in the fall and winter. This is our chance to make it right. And we, as teachers, will try our best to educate students through distance learning.

13. I am worried about retaliation within the school and community since we live in such a small town. It is imperative that this remains anonymous.

I have had anxiety attacks and lack of sleep due to the fact that I don’t think my school is following guidelines as I understood them and it can be detrimental to our community that is filled with multigenerational households and many kupuna if the virus reaches our town.

1) K through 5 is attending school face-to-face 5 days a week all day. Preschool is 4 days a week all day.

2) Admin has opted out of temperature checks

3) During a typical week, each K-5 class has between 8-10 different adults spending time with the students. Students are not intermingling with other classes but at least 5 of the adults visit all the classrooms each week. I just don’t see how this constitutes an ohana bubble or single teacher classroom especially if one of these adults contracts the virus and visits every class.

4) Teachers and EA’s still are meeting together as departments instead of on Webex. This means the entire elementary (10 people) gets together in one room to work on PLCs, data teams, etc.

5) Elementary teachers are working with face-to-face students from 7:45-2pm everyday. They are given only a 40-minute block each day (during the schoolday) to work on distance learning which includes uploading, explaining, grading, as well as connecting with distance learning parents and students. This is quite difficult for
some who might not be as computer savvy to get everything uploaded and organized. Also without a consistent teacher workroom, teachers and EAs don’t consistently have a quiet place to do this work, let alone eat lunch, so some opt to stay in their room which never really ends up being “duty free” lunches or an uninterrupted block to focus on distance learning. The teacher ends up stressed and the students get subpar instruction. Nervous breakdowns and sleep deprivation have been some of the complaints and we are forced to choose between taking care of ourselves or providing adequate instruction for distance learners.

I’m just worried that our school is cutting some corners for convenience sake and yes we are trying to be there for our students but at what cost? I also believe that if we are giving families the option for distance learning, distance learners should get the same equitable education as those who are face to face. I don’t think 40 minutes is enough time for teachers who work all day with face to face students to provide adequate rigorous instruction, conference calls, and assessments for distance learners.

I’m worried that our school will get hit hard if the virus comes to our area because we are not following the safest of protocols and the guidelines are not black and white so admin has room for their own interpretation.

This is my testimony and maybe I’m a little paranoid but in my household I have 3 people that are in the high risk category and I don’t want to be the reason they get sick or die. So I feel I at least have to do what I can to protect our campus and community by bearing my testimony.

14. When returning to school this school year, I was surprised to see many school faculty members not wearing their masks. They would move from classroom to classroom without masks and they would not demonstrate social distancing when standing six feet apart was actually possible. The faculty members were not following COVID-19 precautions in shared areas like the check-in area, workrooms or teacher lounge areas. It’s hard to believe that we were in the middle of a pandemic with this culture in the school. The recent spike in numbers for several weeks did not affect the culture at all. Plus there were/are special Education classes, our pre-K and Fully Self-Contained (FSC), who must teach in-person classes everyday. These special education teachers sent out a survey to the parents to see who had proper technology and asked if their children were able to wear masks. Some parents admitted the children were unable to wear masks.
These students continued to attend school. Needless to say, these classrooms were filled with people and students not wearing masks. I do not feel safe under these conditions. More so, we had a staff member who needed to be quarantined but the faculty were not told of the situation. I felt more unsafe. I love teaching and I want the children to grow and excel but these conditions make it very difficult to do my job well.

15. I have taught in Hawaii for 5 years. I have taught in education for 15. My school is by far the most uncomfortable and unequipped environment I have ever had to experience. It’s sad for the kids and educators that we do not have adequate air circulation. We often endure room temperatures of over 85 degrees on a daily basis making it hard to think let alone make moment-to-moment health decisions. These situations require instant decisions concerning our personal lives and our students’ well being and should be taken more seriously. It is mandatory that we protect the health of our students and teachers in this crisis. Your actions and decisions affect not only the children’s health but us as teachers are being forced into these strenuously unsafe and unhealthy environments. We are constantly being exposed to colleagues, parents and children who could unknowingly be positive without any choice of our own. We are not supplied with adequate cleaning materials to protect ourselves or the kids, disinfect the rooms appropriately, clean our daily materials, etc. One school day with only 10 kids in class requires a minimum of 2 rolls of paper towels from all the constant hand washing, a full container of soap and 1-2 containers of disinfectant wipes, as well as 1 bottle of sanitizer just to maintain normal body and classroom sanitation needs. The school has not provided any of these materials and teachers will be expected to spend even more personal funds in order to protect our students and our selves adequately.

16. Classrooms are not being cleaned except for trash removal at the end of the day and entry/exit door knobs being sprayed once daily with disinfectant. There are no room cleaners and custodial staff are stretched thin.

Teleworking is not being granted. Rather emails are being sent from admin informing reasons for NOT teleworking (teacher feels unsafe, teacher is high risk, teacher lives with someone who is vulnerable, etc).

Our bell schedule remains the same as it was during the 19/20SY. This means students and teachers are expected to virtually attend; learn and teach three 90-minute blocks daily. Which goes against the mandated training provided that
says this is not best practice. Furthermore, it is not clear to parents or students and
confuses teachers alike. This is coupled with alternating student groupings which
makes it more cumbersome to manage. Let’s not forget that students have 30
minutes for lunch. So they need to disconnect, get to the school campus for their
“grab and go” meal, return home, eat and be back online.

There is not a clear school wide attendance policy. One administrator contradicts
the other and teachers are being told to create team attendance policies. Again this
is further cumbersome because of the student groupings and bell schedule deficits
needed for 100% distance learning. Some students may have teachers on different
teams as well. Student attendance is about half each class period. Teachers are to
keep track and submit attendance for asynchronous learners as well as
synchronous.

The personal hotspots that have been distributed to students only offer 2
gigabytes. So many students are having connectivity issues as the weeks
progress. Students in the valley aren’t able to connect. Parents are frustrated,
teachers are frustrated, students are frustrated. “Miss it’s lagging. Miss I’m sorry
lost connection. Miss you’re frozen.”

I personally am struggling to balance personal time with planning and preparing for
digital instruction, so much so, that I’ve developed health related problems as a
result of the stress. I’ve even consider taking a leave of absence because it’s just
too much!

Daily hour-long (sometimes 2 hours on +21PD day) virtual meetings follow an
already screen-filled day of teaching, which leads into a screen-filled night of
grading or preparing for the next day.

If we truly are a school Ohana, than it should be very transparent who has tested
positive for the virus on campus. We’re all adults and can determine for ourselves if
we’ve been exposed and feel we need to quarantine, be tested, etc. Instead we get
some blanket letter, followed by a false promise that DOH will be following up with
contact tracing.

Dr. K is either so grossly misinformed or just a dreamer or a plain old liar because
every time I hear her sharing publicly what she reports is far from what is reality.
Shame on the State and the Department for continuing to pass the buck onto the next person down the chain. Superintendent to CAS’s, CAS’s to Administrators, and Admin to Teachers.

I can’t wait for the day when I can enjoy my profession again.

17. One small bottle of liquid sanitizer, one small bottle of hand sanitizer, one snack size ziploc stuffed with gloves, a few disposable masks - that's the PPE I was provided at the start of the year, without mention of restocking of any kind of PPE supplies. Head maintenance worker, when asked about cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms, admits that he would love to do so but does not have the manpower to clean and sanitize every classroom between class periods and even after school! As far as distance learning preparedness, we teachers have become curriculum writers (no online curriculum has been provided to us so we end up creating our own from whatever resources we can find), digital content producers (our content needs to get transferred, scanned, and manipulated for us to be able to use it with students online), and teachers who are asked to do a job with our hands tied behind our backs (or try to teach even though we lack apps that make it easier for us to do our job and forced to use a platform that wasn’t built for education). If I didn’t have bills to pay, I would quit in a heartbeat! I am working 3-4 hours beyond contractual hours every day so that I can be prepared and ready to teach my class the next day. Every day is like that. It's impossible to be able to plan and prepare for a week's worth of lessons in the time we are given because we are required to be online with our students for x amount of hours a day and the amount of planning and preparation to prepare for that does not suffice. It's very exhausting mentally and physically. If the state would have chosen a platform to use for distance learning that was built for education, not collaboration in the workplace, and provided use with digital tools and a curriculum, our jobs doing distance learning would be much more doable and enjoyable by all.

18. There are some employees at my school who don't wear masks most of the time. These are not teachers mind you, admin, or office workers, but these are people who are on campus daily, and whose job it is to touch many objects on campus due to their job description. Often I will see a few of them gathered together, and not practicing social distancing. If it is a requirement for the public at large to do so, why is it not being done at my school? I am not one who wants to rock the boat, or get anyone in trouble, but this has been bothering me for a long, long time. It's interesting that when parents did their supply pick up drive thru last month for a
number of days, that these very same employees who don’t wear their masks, all of
a sudden were doing so. Mask wearing, and social distancing should not be just for
show. It should be mandatory for all employees on campus to wear them at work.

Also, I have my concerns about the conditions in one of the sped classes. It is by
far way overcrowded. I don’t know the exact numbers, but there are at least 10-15
(maybe more) people in the room at any given time, students & educational
assistants, with very little space for social distancing. They all mask up, and the
teacher has done well in placing sneeze guard barriers in the classroom, but I see
people within 3 feet of one another when at desks. Yes, there are barriers, and
they wear masks, but it is disturbing to see them sitting across from each other,
well within 3 feet. Again, I don’t like to rock the boat. I don’t want to get people in
trouble, but my integrity is getting the better of me, and I thought it should be
known. I love the school that I work at. I love the teachers, office workers, and
admin. I wish I didn’t have to write this, but in my heart it must be done. The public
needs to know.

19. We are having vulnerable students on campus. This number increases everyday.
This includes students “who are struggling to learn” at home and students and
parents are choosing the on-campus option. Social distancing guidelines are not
being followed or enforced. Students walk around campus without masks, come
into class without masks, don’t stay 6 feet apart from each other or the teacher.
These are not special education students. We are also doing online instruction at
the same time which is extremely challenging. We have more than 7 students in
some classes and everyday more are being added.

20. Despite the mandatory mask mandate by the state and the school, faculty
members, outside vendors, room cleaners, do not adhere to mask wearing or
social distancing. When this issue is brought up to admin it’s brushed off as a
laughing matter. If adults can’t wear a mask in public how can we expect students
to do so? The workplace is not safe. We’ve had no updates from admin about
cases on campus or exposures. It took until August 31st for the school to even
offer a virtual sign- in option which means they were in violation of the MOU for
over a month.

21. I am writing due to concerns that the BOE is considering re-opening our schools in
October. We are in no different position than when we opened in August. We are
still understaffed for proper cleaning protocol, we still have teachers on our
campuses that do not follow distancing and masking protocols who will be working
with kids enforcing the very thing they aren't doing. The reason we have no active cases of Covid on Kauai is that we have been closed, avoiding large gatherings. Once we bring students back to campus enmasse we will see it spread. Just look at what has happened in other states.

I know we need to have our kids back in school, I certainly want mine back in class with his peers, but not at the expense of overburdening our system and endangering our community.

If we are called back to campus without the option of rapid testing, contact tracing and acceptable low percentage positive results, I will be submitting my Leave Without Pay Form to keep my family and community safe.

I was denied telework as an option and the reasons were weak and not even relevant. As I was meeting with my admin she was telling me about her inability to run an IEP on time due to connectivity and sound issues. One of the reasons for denying my request was better WiFi at my campus and this is not true. I believe all teachers are being denied telework so that we can be more closely monitored I guess. This decision is absolutely disrespectful and lacks the trust in us as teachers doing our work without being watched. Many of us can work remotely even better from our homes than at school.

22. I have recently become aware that the military families that live on base or federal housing are not subject to the same restrictions on base that we are off base. For example, pools and gathering places are open. That means that these students are subject to greater odds of carrying and contracting covid. Is it also true that the military is not sharing the test results from the people on base? If so, this puts staff at schools with military related students at much higher risk. This is a big concern, especially to those of us that are already at higher risk.

Secondly, my principal has been extremely supportive of us, but we still don't have enough hand sanitizer and disinfecting solution to last for very long (One 12-ounce bottle of each will NOT get us through more than a day at a time, if that). The schools need more supplies.

Parents and others keep asking me why the superintendent doesn't just call off in-school classes for the rest of the year, or at least quarter by quarter so that families can plan for what arrangements they are going to make, rather than doing it piecemeal, 3 or 4 weeks at a time.
23. Please continue to keep schools closed. The students have been learning online, so far so good, keep them safe and teachers safe by continuing with online until cases have really gone down. I have four kids, three at different schools, all in the Kalihi area where most cases are. It’s not safe. All it takes is one child or teacher and the whole class can be infected. We need to better stop the spread before schools reopen. A lot of kids don’t use their masks properly and will be in close contact with friends. I feel that it will be a larger outbreak if kids are back on campus. My kids don’t feel safe and will not be able to focus in school like they are able to at home...please don’t risk the life of other family members also.

24. I feel that kids are not going to follow the mask rules, probably, so it’s not safe to send our kids back to school until the cases are low. Please don’t do it, or it will be a disaster and a lot of family will be affected. Keep them safe by continuing online until December, and if cases are still higher then keep them distance learning for the year. I feel safety should be first.

25. Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing as both a parent and educator in the public school system.

This year has been incredibly stressful, not only because of COVID, but the lack of good leadership during this time. Superintendent Kishimoto has shown that she is unable to make responsible decisions for her employees and students of Hawaii. She is not truthful and does not own her mistakes. Rather, she puts the blame on the Department of Health and teacher’s unions.

Her plans thus far have been vague and when questioned by the Board and/or Senators, Superintendent Kishimoto never gives clear answers. If her plan is to reopen in school for the second quarter, we want to know exactly what it will look like. What are the procedures and protocols? Has the DOE received clear metrics from the DOH? With the numbers still high, it is NOT SAFE to return to schools!!

I want to know why Dole Middle school was not closed after the positive cases. Why are the teachers there still not being allowed to telework, even after the death of Dayna Inouye? Why are teachers at some schools being approved for the same reasons others are not? Why are fear of COVID and health issues not valid reasons for telework? Chairperson Payne, you said after the extension of Distant Learning for the first quarter, that you’d expect more teachers teleworking. This has not happened!!! Teachers are being DENIED, all while the Superintendent and
Assistant Superintendent are working from home! Why are teachers being denied when they can do the same thing while safe at home?? Governor Ige and Mayor Caldwell have both stated if we can work from home we should work from home.

The DOE should put a stop to Acellus being used for Distant Learning. It is HORRIBLE! The Hawaiian history lesson is appalling...do we really want our children of Hawaii to not learn the real history of our islands and people???

I can’t even preview the lessons for PE/SEL. I’m worried about assigning inappropriate content. But I have to, otherwise my students won’t be given a grade.

Please do not allow the reopening of schools!

Sincerely,
A concerned parent and teacher

26. As much as we can, we have tried to adhere to CDC guidelines. However, each time I go to work, I am afraid and think, "Will I catch COVID-19 today? Will my children be the one on the news expressing their feelings about the loss of their parent like the family from Dole Middle?" I say this because I have coworkers eating food in the shared work space which is the size of a small classroom. Some coworkers sit at a table together, start eating and chit chatting. Wasn't this how COVID-19 started spreading in Honolulu Hale? Although staff are aware to maintain 6-ft distance, for some reason, it does not apply during lunch time where there is no social distancing since they want to eat together, no masks for apparent food consumption reasons, and possible aerosol spread since it is a closed office with no open windows. It is a possible threat to health and safety for those who strictly adhere to the CDC guidelines? Nobody wants to speak up to those coworkers as we are afraid of possible retaliation. 6-ft is only maintained when possible. Currently, it is NOT possible to have 6-ft distancing in an office. I am curious to know if Dr. Kishimoto has even bothered to see working conditions. I doubt top officials who make decisions with my life and the lives of other workers are aware of what goes on in the field. Requesting to work from home is approved at the discretion of administrators and it is not consistent within schools, districts, complex areas, or counties! Will it take another DOE employee's death for BOE/DOE to do the right thing? By then, it is too late. It already is...one life lost is one life too many. I love my job, but I also want to be around to see my kids grow up and be part of the milestones in their lives. DO THE RIGHT THING....let's not gamble with lives. Let's not play God.
27. I am a PreK Teacher in the EOEL classroom at a school that provides education for low-income students who live in housing. We have been face-to-face with five students since August 17 from 8:15 - 11:30 am. We have been provided with PPE (gloves, masks and shields for students and teachers) and Clorox for disinfecting materials used throughout the day. We have run out of alcohol and have been refilling our spray bottles in the health room. Our health room is located in the school office, but due to admin concerns about the office being a “high traffic area”, the main office door is LOCKED. Therefore, we either have to call the office for anything that we need, or go in before or after our students leave. I have also been questioned by the admin regarding supplies. I informed administration that we no longer have alcohol and it is the most effective way (does not need to sit and will dry quickly) to disinfect high touch areas in our classroom, especially after meal times since the students are eating breakfast and lunch in the room (without a mask on). We currently have two PreK classrooms and two SPED classrooms face-to-face. Our two PreK classrooms have 5 students each and as of now, we are seeing the most amount of students on campus. I should NOT be questioned as to why I am using school supplies to disinfect areas in our classroom when we are face-to-face with students.

My next concern is 2 out of 5 of my students have had positive cases within their immediate family and household. I was informed of the first case on September 1. The student’s parent informed me that he tested positive for COVID-19 and has recovered, however the other parent is awaiting results. I notified administration and followed up with the family every day until I was informed that the student’s second parent tested positive for COVID-19 and is in the hospital. The family shared that child had been living in a separate household for several weeks and was under the care of a grandparent. I was informed by the parent that the child was cleared by the doctor and after speaking with administration, the child was able to continue face-to-face. I was able to speak with the parent who was hospitalized on September 10, and thankfully, she is recovering at home and has been “cleared” on September 13. During this time, my EA and myself took a test on Wednesday, September 2, and both our tests were negative. This incident brought many concerns. First of all, everything is based on the parent’s word and we are trusting that they are telling us the truth; in terms of the child living in a separate household, and with the clearance dates. Parents are not required to turn in any type of documentation to show that they are cleared - especially since the child did not test positive. Secondly, I was the one to follow-up and be in communication with the family - not the health aide or administration.
The second student was considered in "close contact" with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. On September 10, I received a call from our Principal who informed me that “student’s mom” had tested positive for COVID-19. The Principal questioned me regarding my contact with the parent, duration of contact, student’s attendance, student’s last day in school, whether I was wearing my mask and shield, etc. This family is ELL and I asked our SASA to translate during pick-ups at the end of the day. I was informed that the SASA took the initial call from the family, and SASA informed me that it was the student’s aunty that was positive. I informed our Principal and she had the Health Aide follow-up with the student’s doctor. During this time it was a lot of back and forth conversations between the Principal, SASA and myself, as we tried to get the story straight since it differed from the initial story that I was told. I left school on September 10 with this information:

- Student and family members in household were tested and awaiting results
- Per the CAS, EA and myself would be working from home for two days (9/11 and 9/14)
- My classroom would be disinfected and cleaned
- Principal would inform families in my class via phone call - letter was not sent home because she had “direct contact” with parents/guardians

I received a call from our office assistant on September 11 that the student and 4 other family members in the household tested negative. The female that tested positive was in quarantine in a bedroom within the household, therefore the child will have to stay at home for 14 days, and will need to be cleared by the doctor upon returning back to school. I was informed that if the positive family member was in quarantine in a separate household or in the quarantine hotel, that student would be able to return to school on September 15. I took my second COVID-19 test on September 13, and am awaiting results. While we were awaiting the student’s results it was the most stressful evening and morning I’ve had thus far. I have a 5-month old at home and we are living with an elderly grandparent. From the beginning of the school year, I have been asking our Principal if Distance Learning is an option for the time being especially since our school is located in a low income housing complex, where there are known positive cases. Her response has been that preschool is considered vulnerable, therefore students must be serviced.

I know this is all very jumpy, I tried my best to write it in a way that was not
confusing. I was informed on September 11 that one of our PreK classes can plan to start Distance Learning (upon approval from CAS and EOEL). The other PreK class will continue with face-to-face learning. I requested that we have Distance Learning from September 21 to October 16. We are still waiting for approval. It is hard to believe that this is only our 5th week of school since so much has happened. I myself have asthma, and it is not worth the risk to expose myself or my family. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out and contact me. I am open to sharing about my experience in school, but I would like to remain anonymous.

28. On August 17 we welcomed our students back to school with all participating in virtual instruction except special education students that the special education department deemed as vulnerable and unable to participate in online instruction effectively. Although our department met with administration to determine students who would be coming to campus, there was no clear guidance on how we determined this. We made up the guidance we were to follow given the vague details provided from the state to determine which students would come to campus. This turned out to be that each special ed teacher had a different number of students coming to school in person. Some sped teachers had no students on campus.

We were provided with a definite answer that students would start school on the 17 on the 13! Therefore we had two days to prep and make sure we had our procedures in order. The sped teachers made up the procedures of how the students would enter campus, who would check temperature, how we clean and sanitized everything daily. There was no guidance from the administration team at all. When I asked if there would be any in place soon, my answer was we have nothing yet, keep doing what you’re doing. The administration has no clue what we are doing each day! Nothing is written down! Staff temperature is not checked by anyone, not even contracted providers. I have many service providers for my students coming in and out of the room everyday with no precautions taken before they even walk on campus. My classroom bubble is constantly being popped because other teachers are coming in to say hi or walking by. There is no such thing as an ohana bubble.

Also, despite conversations to change the caseloads so that each teacher was given a different platform to teach to, our caseload remained the same. Therefore, we had a mixture of in-person students, virtual students, and Acellus-only students to teach to. The special education teachers are the only teachers expected to do
this on campus where the gen ed teacher either gets all virtual students or only Acellus participating students. The Acellus teachers are only “coordinating” the learning and not even teaching! The general education teachers are not even teaching virtually all day according to their schedules!

On top of the uneven job duties expected of us, I have been denied the opportunity to bring my son to school with me because “I have students in my room during the day.” Every other teacher who does not have students in their room was allowed to bring their child and they have gotten approved to telework! I do not have either of these options. Now I have to pay for child care out of my own pocket so that my son has a safe place to go during the day.

My son has a 504 plan and needs to be monitored consistently throughout the day to keep him on task, and the only option I was given by his team is to have his teacher check in with him more. I need a physical body there! He is not in college, and hasn’t even developed the capacity to be able to monitor his own schedule and learning yet! Why is the DOE expecting all the students whose parents have to work to be able to do this!?! 

29. My school seems to have the notion that the Covid-19 virus is not real. There are small groups of students on campus every school day, people coming in and out of the office despite reminders from office staff, Flu-Shot clinics, AND even Covid-19 testing open to the general public on the school campus. We were told to pick up IEP and 504 plans from the front office in our box, but not offered the documents online. The lunchrooms/lounges are all open and teacher restrooms are not cleaned daily with proper supplies. I and other teachers are afraid to speak up as many see the Superintendent as a person with retaliatory tendencies. Questions about who on campus may have Covid or how many in our school community are not reported so we do not know how much exposure we may have. One parent from a feeder school and another uncle of a current student died from the virus recently. There are some students with the active virus and others waiting on test results after exposure. The HIDOE has not been transparent with which schools have cases and even asked the news not to report the information. I would like to telework for the next quarter, but am afraid to submit paperwork and become a target. I am considering early retirement or resignation.

30. It is not worth even one more life, is it? Full distance learning until there is a vaccine -- send the message that teachers, staff, and keiki matter. Allow us to plan accordingly by making an early and decisive choice to put public health as the top
priority. Thank you for considering my testimony today.

31. Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am testifying against reopening schools for face-to-face learning to ALL students until the DOE has a dedicated contact tracing team set up, schools are stocked up with essentials to last beyond a couple of days and efforts to work online with students have proven themselves to be ineffective on both ends from students putting forth effort to learn WITH parent and teacher support.

First off, things are finally starting to settle down with teachers and students finding a flow with working online together. Now that everyone feels a sense of routine, why go and change it again? Kids need structure and making another switch to face-to-face learning during a pandemic is only going to cause more emotional stress because students will not be returning to the learning experiences they are used to having. Both students and teachers will also be forced to readjust themselves to another method of instruction and teachers will feel the burn of having to instruct students both in person and online, thus having the same kind of ripple effect flow down to their students.

My next point is that there’s no solid proof that being in person will magically transform vulnerable students who are often just mislabeled as “vulnerable” due to behavior issues or problems at home. If there’s anything this pandemic has highlighted, it’s that the faults of our society have been placed onto the shoulders of educators and we cannot fix every single problem that our students have. I still have students who are not putting forth the effort or turning in work and these have been issues both in-person and online that I’ve experienced as a teacher because many of these students have learned over the years that they will just get passed through the system regardless of how much effort they put in. There are also things going on outside of my control that my students deal with that I am not responsible for and no matter how hard I try to reach them, I have learned the hard way that I cannot reach them all.

Presently, I have a student who barely speaks a word of English that I have made multiple attempts to reach out to, their parents and family friends included, who I have not heard from. I’m going to safely assume they have not responded because of the language barrier and other challenges of their own going on to deal with. Having this student come in for face-to-face learning will not change the fact that he and his family do not speak English. Plus, if he’s the only person in his classes,
how will he be able to be exposed to the language if there’s no other peers he has to try and communicate with? Should more vulnerable students end up being deemed as needing to also be in the class face-to-face with me, how will he be able to interact with them safely if social distancing protocols are in place and he can’t? How will he even be able to hear me if I have a mask on the entire time while I’m trying to teach? Mind you, I am a general education English teacher. I am not an EL teacher or a SPED teacher and being forced to come in to teach vulnerable students only face-to-face defeats the purpose of them being included into a general education environment if there are no other students in the class who are not considered SPED. Will I receive the pay differential that SPED teachers receive for having to do the extra prep that is needed to plan special lessons for these students as well as plan lessons for the other 25 kids enrolled in their same class period? I feel like we need to keep ourselves safe and work out the kinks online first. All of our students need us and many would love to be back for face-to-face. Why are students who are gifted being excluded from the opportunity to go face-to-face? They are also considered exceptional. If we can’t make school open for all of our students, we shouldn’t be opening our doors to in-person learning at all yet.

At my school, I’ve been swamped with new students being enrolled for the past 3 weeks. Last week alone, I had 4 new ones added to my rosters. Today, another has just been added. Although we are online now, my numbers are surging and I am extremely concerned about being face-to-face in a classroom, which is NOT a controlled setting, around more than 10 students I am not related to without enough PPE or specific guidelines from the CDC. For some odd reason, my school keeps adding kids to the already larger sections of my classes and leaving the smaller ones empty and I’ve raised many concerns about this yet it continues to be ignored. Regardless of the size of the room, the ventilation is poor and students are being uncomfortably crammed into classrooms where there is no room for them to get up to use the restroom, drink water, wash their hands at my sink or much less breathe. Ironically, a lot of these kids also have asthma and other breathing issues listed as health conditions but are still being crammed into these large sections rather than spreading them out evenly throughout the rest of my class periods. With people being drawn to move to Hawaii from the mainland in spite of the pandemic going on, how are we teachers being ensured that they are following the mandatory two week quarantine and testing their kids before enrolling them into school? If students are allowed to enroll one month after school has already started and not be tested, this is unacceptable and a huge risk you are taking on your school employees.
The last thing I want to mention is that we have already received two letters from our principal regarding four employees of our school being in close contact with people who have COVID. Even though we have not heard anything yet about whether or not these people have tested positive, Kahuku and its surrounding communities are extremely tight knit and many also reside in multigenerational homes. We are already cut off from resources on this side of the island so it won’t take much for the virus to spread like a wildfire out here once we resume in person school. Many of our kids are of Polynesian heritage and it is in our culture to share everything and everyone is related somehow out here so keeping social distancing in place is not going to fare well in a school like mine.

Please do not reopen the schools for face-to-face yet. Allow teachers the choice to continue working from home. The ones who are comfortable being in person can take their chances but the ones who have their reasons should not be forced. Do not reopen schools till we have a more concrete plan in place to provide PPE and other protections for school staff and students, stabilize our distance learning programs to support ALL students and have a dedicated DOE contact tracing team.

Mahalo nui loa.

32. Honesty & trust are key issues in this time of Covid. Here at Kohala Elementary School, there was a student who was attending preschool on campus who was in close proximity to her brother who was a patient of Dr. Josh Green over the Labor Day weekend. After the news of Dr. Green's positive test, there was no follow up by our administrator to keep us teachers safe. In fact, we came to school this Monday with no idea what had just happened. Teachers and aides were appalled by our administrator's decision to work the situation out behind the scenes with no transparency-while still teaching in conditions that could possibly have been contaminated or infected. Granted, we all knew the story-who it was, when it happened, etc. But why is this going on? In this small community, this can't happen! We need to know! Why is the BOE acting in a manner that forces us to be the "Guinea Pigs" to such a dangerous virus? Teachers are afraid to speak up fearing that they'll lose their job. For all teachers do, we should be treated fairly and be taken care of by the employer. This isn't a time to play around! Let's be transparent. Let teachers work from home instead of sending them to school to brave the virus. This is serious and we should act now!!!
33. It is not safe to allow students back on campus for any kind of face-to-face learning at this point in time. On the Big Island, the numbers are growing and moving into our rural area where businesses are being shut down to deep clean and sanitize. Workers in these businesses live in the area and have children in our complex area.

Our school plans to use blended learning models for students upon their return. If we can use blended learning, we can continue virtual learning/distance learning which is safer for all students and faculty/staff. I strongly feel, if we can distance teach and be safe, that is the only choice we should be looking at to help our students. We face-to-face virtually with students on a regular basis so that takes care of building relationships in safe manner. All of our students have chromebooks, access to hot spots/wifi. When numbers were lower than they are now we had a “stay-at-home” order. Now that the numbers are huge, we go to work?

Sanitation? We have supplies, but the custodians are already grumbling about “How are we supposed to come in between classless and clean? And take care of our regular duties?”

What is really upsetting is our blanket denials for teleworking. Our principal has denied all teleworking requests that I know of and has created a hostile work environment trying to provide rationale for her denial. We have people on campus with health risk yet she said sanitation is adequate. Being at home is adequate and safe. If we get sick while at home it’s on us, if we get sick at school, will the DOE take responsibility? She has already told us we cannot have microwave ovens, or refrigerators in our rooms to save money. Allowing us to work at home will save money.

Please consider pushing back face-to-face learning and stay with the 4 weeks of no cases to start school up.

34. I am writing out of concern to the hostile work environment imposed on staff by Stevenson Middle School Admin. Teachers are at their breaking point. They want to do what’s right and help every student grow to their full potential while building important partnerships with their families and the community. Right now, due to the reactive leadership and lack of planning, teachers are stuck in a hostile game of “cut throat kitchen,” being stripped of all resources and curriculum and being told to pivot daily and even hourly.
At Stevenson Middle School, teachers can’t keep up with the demands and lack time to adequately prepare for instruction because they are constantly assigned “non-negotiable deliverables” that have to be completed with unrealistic deadlines. They were given two days’ notice to bring an assessment from all classes, graded and sorted which drastically changed from last year’s policy of only bringing one class set last year.

Teachers are disrespected when they raise concerns and ask questions about Covid, in-person learning or policies. They are quickly told to put all questions “in the parking lot” and are verbally attacked if they press for answers.

Teachers do not feel safe on campus. Students in the Learning Hub wander around campus freely and when asked for a log of students on campus, the administration becomes agitated and hostile.

Classroom cleaners have been reduced to twice a week instead of five times a week. Over 100 staff members including custodians, teachers and support staff are being forced to use one single stall bathroom per gender and the bathroom is not cleaned or sanitized throughout the day while the principal has her own private bathroom.

EAs from the CBI program have been walking students all over campus without social distancing or wearing PPE which puts all students, teachers and staff on campus at risk.

Principal Balatico has denied telework for teachers but constantly allows certain teachers (friends) close to her to leave campus early and often, while all others are told they have to remain on campus until 3:00 as contracted. This is a clear violation of the DOE policy of nepotism. This past month, she even hired her own mother as the health nurse.

Teachers have been told they cannot use the air conditioning in their classrooms while those with health conditions are left to suffer and the office ACs are running all day and can be heard across campus.

One of our teachers who has a child with special needs was turned down for telework and had no choice but to leave the DOE. Teachers with underlying health conditions are scared to even apply because of her clear message that they will be shut down. Anyone who asks questions about telework is retaliated against by
principal Balatico and CAS Dilwith.

Washington Middle School principal allowed his teachers to use their professional discretion to determine if telework was right for them and he was verbally attacked by CAS Dilwith.

Please do some fact finding and send DOE officials in to do a temperature check on employees at Stevenson Middle School to assess their physical and emotional well being. We ask that you do not send KMR Investigations Officer Ted Mura because he covers and hides information for CAS Dilwith to protect her and employees close to her.

35. I am a CTE teacher, my room is not disinfected daily and I have at least 50 people coming through my room. Maintenance is stretched thin, like previous years, often understaffed. Janitors are physically unable to complete the volume of rooms. I often offer to clean my room for the janitor as she is physically and mentally exhausted. Because maintenance is having a physical reaction to the chemicals of the CV19 sprayers, they have opted for manual wiping down at the end of the day. There is no physical way for them to wipe every surface touched in every room. I watch the honest and incomplete effort daily.

I have asked admin if there is a schedule and how do we know if the room was disinfected. The reply was a spreadsheet of the maintenance department work week and the assurance that it was being done. I am watching it not be done consistently. I do not feel comfortable re-submitting my inquiry to admin, given the dismissive nature of the first reply.

There are three (3) main CV19 issues:

1. Maintenance is understaffed, under-equip w/PPE, under-trained. There is no transparency in completion.

2. Admin needs to be more approachable about concerns put forth from staff, and accountable about compliance. The pre-existing culture of mistrust prohibits honest discourse. Whistleblowers will be 'blacklisted,' it's a known thing, which is why this is anonymous.

3. Communication, protocols and procedure needs to be transparent and collaborative with ALL school site staff.
Sacrifice is a word that I have never thrown around lightly. Being a teacher in one of the most expensive states in the nation requires sacrifice of immense measure, not only from me financially but also from my family. It is not uncommon for me to work 9-10 hour days and on the weekends, but this is a sacrifice I willingly make because I want to ensure my students are receiving the best education available. However, this word has struck a deeper meaning with my family recently, and I am writing to you to share how this word is impacting my life and how your decision about our return to school will continue to impact my life and the sacrifices my family and I will need to make.

My father was diagnosed about 8 years ago with a lung condition that turns his healthy lung tissue into fibrous tissue. He has to work extremely hard to breathe, and over these last 8 years his condition has worsened. What makes him remarkable is that during this time he has continued working full time as an EMT. He picks up overtime shifts, works with the bike team for events at Aloha Stadium, and works at KCC training new EMT hires, and genuinely loves what he does. This is where my passion for teaching comes from; he has always told me to pick something I love doing and do it to the best of my ability and with everything I have. He has saved countless lives and has helped to train wonderful EMTs who have gone on to great careers as paramedics, nurses, and even a few doctors. This pandemic has hit my family especially hard because he is an essential worker. He gets no break from his disease and puts his life on the line transporting COVID positive patients every single week. Even though he puts his life on the line for what he loves, there is one thing that is very clear to our family and friends; if he contracts this virus he will die. He will not be able to recover from the lung damage inflicted on him and we will lose him forever. He is only 58 years old, and he is the only living grandfather my son has. I am terrified that I will bring the virus home from school because someone was not following universal precautions. I am terrified of killing my father because I am forced to be at school with young students. I am terrified of watching him struggle to breathe while the virus turns what little usable lung tissue he has left into swiss cheese. It is an eventuality that we will lose him to his lung condition, but I don’t want to lose him any sooner than I have to.

Please consider my family, and other families in this situation, when you are making decisions about the future of our schools. I am willing to sacrifice a lot, but I am not willing to sacrifice someone else's life in order to bring students back on campus.
37. Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing as both a parent and educator in the public school system.

This year has been incredibly stressful, not only because of COVID, but the lack of good leadership during this time. Superintendent Kishimoto has shown that she is unable to make responsible decisions for her employees and students of Hawaii. She is not truthful and does not own her mistakes. Rather, she puts the blame on the Department of Health and teacher’s unions.

Her plans thus far have been vague and when questioned by the Board and/or Senators, Superintendent Kishimoto never gives clear answers. If her plan is to reopen in school for the second quarter, we want to know exactly what it will look like. What are the procedures and protocols? Has the DOE received clear metrics from the DOH? With the numbers still high, it is NOT SAFE to return to schools!!

I want to know why Dole Middle school was not closed after the positive cases. Why are the teachers there still not being allowed to telework, even after the death of Dayna Inouye? Why are teachers at some schools being approved for the same reasons others are not? Why are fear of COVID and health issues not valid reasons for telework? Chairperson Payne, you said after the extension of Distance Learning for the first quarter, that you’d expect more teachers teleworking. This has not happened!!! Teachers are being DENIED, all while the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent are working from home! Why are teachers being denied when they can do the same thing while safe at home??? Governor Ige and Mayor Caldwell have both stated if we can work from home we should work from home.

The DOE should put a stop to Acellus being used for Distance Learning. It is HORRIBLE! The Hawaiian history lesson is appalling...do we really want our children of Hawaii to not learn the real history of our islands and people???

I can’t even preview the lessons for PE/SEL. I'm worried about assigning inappropriate content. But I have to, otherwise my students won’t be given a grade.

Please do not allow the reopening of schools!

Sincerely,
A concerned parent and teacher
38. I have two concerns for this school year. The first is that I applied for telework 3 weeks ago, with a doctor's note, and my application was sitting on my principal's desk for weeks. Last week I was notified a student would be coming to my room first period every day and when I followed up with my principal she said she was now making the decision to deny my telework application because I need to be on campus for this one student during the one period of the day. I am concerned that the school is sending students to the various teachers following their daily schedule, which means the students are going to multiple classrooms each day. In this case I am expected to be conducting my online course while also supporting an in-person student. Further, I am concerned that I am scheduled to be alone with the student in my classroom because there is no EA/other staff member and he is the only student assigned to my class period. This seems like a liability. I was under the impression that schools were expected to set up learning hubs for special education students or students with connectivity challenges. My school has not set up learning hubs and has instead directed the students to just follow their schedule going to each teacher's classroom. I know that my classroom is not being sanitized each day and I expect the other classrooms with students in them are not either.

39. I am concerned about the safety of our campus. The cleanliness of our campus is not being maintained with the staff being on campus. The custodians need more training on proper cleaning of our facility. I don't feel safe bringing the students back on campus until more training is provided to the custodians.

40. My campus has expanded the definition of vulnerable students to include most any student whose parent calls the office to express a struggle with distance learning. We started the year with about 8% of our student population as full time, on campus, learners. Any student with an IEP, 504 plan, or EL designation was called and given the option to come to school 5 days a week. In addition, children of school staff have also been allowed to be on-campus learners. The number of on-campus learners has now grown to 12% of our student body. These students are supervised all day by EA's with the part time support of PTT's. Many of these folks are not distance specialists and do not have the proper training to oversee or help our high needs learners. There have already been disciplinary issues including student suspensions for behavior.

Our students are spending the days in their learning lab pods, however they are allowed to mix at will before school, during recess, and during lunch. Social
distancing is encouraged, but most students do not abide by these rules and security and supervision has not been able to control this. Teachers have witnessed students playfully wrestling, putting their arms around each other to make social media videos, and pulling their masks down while socializing within 6ft. The teachers do not blame the students. These are all natural behaviors for middle schoolers, however there is not enough supervision to stop it.

Our school claims to have a cleaning schedule that is reported to the principal. I work in a room where other adults come in and out during the day. In this room, we see a custodian maybe once a day. The last time we had a custodian enter our room during school hours was three days ago. He came in one door, sprayed solution on a single light switch and then walked out. No other surfaces, including the other door, were sanitized. In addition, our staff members with sinks in their classrooms have been denied soap. Soap is being supplied in bathrooms only.

Today our main bathroom was out of paper towels for most of the day. The bathroom that a majority of our special needs students are using is infested with ants that crawl all over the sinks. How are we supposed to trust that our bathrooms are clean when we have no towels and there are trailing ants all over?

As much as we are advertising to the community that our school is running a distance learning model, this simply isn’t true. 3-4 busses of students arrive on our campus each morning. Our campus is not able to follow the recommended guidelines with this many students.

41. My administrator told me I should consider doing a home visit for a student who has not been attending their virtual classes during this lock down period. Although he chose to use language as if he were giving me a choice, ultimately he is my boss. I fear that if I don’t oblige, there will be backlash.

He asked me to do the home visit shortly after the stay at home work at home order was put into place; no gathering with anyone outside your household; parks, trails, restaurants, malls, etc. all closed. I cannot even visit relatives outside of my own household, yet I am being asked by my boss to visit students and their families. I do not feel comfortable/safe doing a home visit and violating mandates that have been put into place by state officials.

These are the things we are being required to do because we are deemed essential and need to report to campus. The state is failing us by not keeping teachers safe.
I am now required to call the student’s parent and request that the student attend school in person. I will have to supervise this student face to-face all day. I greatly fear for my safety as well as the student’s safety. I feel as if my back is up against a wall and I have no choice but to follow the orders that are putting my life in jeopardy.

42. I am writing this testimony in hopes of shedding some light on some of the real conditions and situations occurring at schools in Hawaii. I understand that the superintendent has given authority and control to principals to lead their schools as they see fit, but let’s be clear - not all principals have the same vision or values. Unfortunately there are some who do not value the health and safety of their teachers, staff and ultimately their students. ALL schools need more consistent guidelines and rules that must be followed to ensure the health and safety of the teachers, staff and students.

In my school, teachers are all still required to sign in daily through the office, which due to scheduling, is often too crowded given the social distancing orders, and repeatedly features people not wearing masks or face coverings, standing way too close together and waiting in line to speak to someone in the office. Throughout the day, us teachers are still exposed to dangers and contradictory workplace regulations. Our staff meetings are not done through WebEx or Zoom, but with an in-person audience, despite the resources available to do so more safely. Teachers who have requested to attend these meetings virtually have been retaliated against and have had digital teaching tools taken away.

The situation continues to worsen as social distancing guidelines including wearing masks and sitting at least 6 feet apart are routinely disregarded. As a way to save on custodial hours, my administration has also decided to not utilize all classrooms on campus. Teachers are assigned 4 to 5 teachers in a classroom to teach remotely. (Teleworking is not an option at my school, and most people do not dare even request it.) Since there are so many of us teaching in one room we have to wear masks and headphones throughout the day, which makes it even harder for us to communicate with students remotely. Teaching elementary students is difficult enough without these added obstacles.

This contradictory attitude got even more convoluted during our PD waiver day, where the 8 to 10 of us in a grade level were required to sit in the same classroom to meet throughout the PD via WebEx. The whole point of distanced learning and
communication is to keep people apart such as to reduce the rate of transmission, and it is therefore self-sabotaging to perform distanced communication with a dozen people in one elementary school classroom.

It’s a ridiculous idea, in the sense that it is an idea worth ridicule, that our schools could be expected to even have a mixed approach to digital and in-person learning at this point. Most teachers would be in favor of classes of ten or so students alternating throughout the week, but NOT with the current standards of social distancing and mask-wearing in schools at the moment. We need more specific detailed and mandatory rules and guidelines that will ensure the health and safety of everyone on campus.

In short, schools are a long ways away from being safe for students to inhabit once again, and the callous disregard for the health, safety, and care for teachers is proof of all the structural holes that undoubtedly leave room for Covid-19 to enter our schools and potentially make them a hotspot for the disease. If we want to consider having children back on campus, we must take hold of regulating schools in such a way that teachers aren’t a scapegoat in what will be a lost battle for education and against Covid-19.

43. Why are teachers’ children allowed on campus? They can’t get Covid? Why are SPED children allowed on campus? They can’t get Covid? A teacher has died! How many teachers need to die before you take this seriously? Governor Ige makes us essential workers, do we get hazard pay? NO! In fact, he wants to furlough us! Essential, but not really. Furloughs for 2-3 years? Some of us are looking towards retirement, not if we get furloughed. This year we were working on decompression and instead they want to take money away from us! Enough is enough! Treat teachers fairly!!

44. Our school does not have a health room or nurse on campus. We do not have adequate janitorial supplies and staff. The covid cleaning that has been witnessed is basically spraying the desks with a green solution and wiping them all down using the same rag in every classroom. They also do this on other surfaces that are known to be high traffic use like doorknobs. However, that isn’t always the case. Trash is collected but the original trash bag is left in the bin. When students come in, right now mostly just SpEd or any student that is struggling, due to time constraints, the teachers are not always able to be consistent with sanitizing protocols such as cleaning the desks and other items used in between students/classes. It is difficult to maintain proper distance when you have SpEd
kids needing extra help. There is not enough staff to monitor students who need to use the restroom or need someone to accompany them to the office. There is more but I think that’s enough for now. I’m hoping that because we’re on Maui and do not seem to have as many new cases, this will eventually blow over…. But in case not, I thought I needed to share.

45. Since the first case of Covid 19 on the island, we’ve asked our school, what is the plan? What happens if one of the teachers or students gets Covid? There is no plan. Any time we try to ask questions about our safety, we are told our questions “cannot be addressed at this time” and we are forced to place questions in a “parking lot” document. The response? Admin will address at a later time. But that later time never comes. There are around 100 employees on campus every day, forced to share a single stall restroom— one for men and one for woman—for the entire campus. Students are being allowed back on campus at random without any prior knowledge being given to the teachers. When we ask how it was determined that they returned, we are not given an answer. Students have been showing up on campus for a learning lab, and wandering the halls. There are no rules or regulations in place for students to know where they need to show up and stay in one place, it is chaos. CBI students are walking all around campus and down the halls with their EAs, going by teachers classrooms instead of staying in their classroom. Some CBI students aren’t even wearing masks which makes the risk even higher for staff members and other students. Students keep coming on campus every day and teachers have been given no information regarding this. Why? Why are they coming on campus when our cases are so high? SPED teachers are being asked to offer to parents to have students come back to campus to have face-to-face classes—- even if distance learning is working for the student. We are worried that this is only being done so that administration can tell us we can’t try to telework because students are on campus. We were told that an employee had a potentially positive covid case and we were told we still needed to report anyway to school the next day. While we did not ever receive an answer if the employee tested negative or positive, one employee still not been back to work for weeks which would indicate that the case was likely positive. This message was never relayed to the staff. We never heard if the case was positive or negative, we only know that the person has not yet returned on campus. Classroom cleaning has been cut from every day to only twice a week (even though some classrooms have students). When teachers asked if we would be responsible for sanitizing our rooms ourselves, we were never given a response. Teachers are being bullied into giving co-teacher access to their google classrooms by administration. If they do not add administration, they are called into the admin office to be interrogated...
about it in person. The PPE provided is not enough to last even a month. Curriculum coordinators Julia Smith and Dani Hitt are focused on enforcing admin rules for data teams instead of asking how they can help teachers. Each department (minus math who is using a free trial) was told there was no money to purchase curriculum for students. Why do we have two curriculum coordinator positions when we do not have any funds for curriculum for our students? Curriculum that would enhance distance learning would be far more valuable for student needs versus another curriculum coordinator position. The curriculum coordinators offer no support to teachers but instead use opportunities provided by admin to threaten and silence those who have questions. Staff meetings are filled with “non-negotiable deliverables” consisting of busy work instead of allowing staff to prepare instruction and train for what is going to happen next. Every day I have at least 12-15 people stop by my room and ask me questions. Parents show up unexpectedly and open classroom doors, asking where the office is. We are scared. We are not safe on campus. We have begged for the option to telework, only to be shot down and told no. Nepotism runs rampant. Friends of administration are allowed to telework for a day if needed, while others are turned down, and certain teachers are allowed to leave campus early. The principal’s mother was recently hired as a school nurse. Teachers were told they are not allowed to run their air conditioning units while on campus- even if students are not present. Admin and main office run air conditioners constantly all day in while teachers are suffering from the extreme heat. Some teachers who are at risk and vulnerable have been told they cannot run their AC. Teachers continuously ask for answers regarding Covid 19 school information and are attacked by admin in a threatening and confrontational way for asking. Although every teacher would love to have students return, we know it is NOT safe for students to return face to face, even for special education students. Dole Middle School’s tragic loss of a staff member due to covid 19 should be an example of why all staff members need to be allowed to telework. There is no vaccine for Covid 19. People of all ages are dying. Why are we risking our lives when the rest of the nation is closing down campuses completely, offering teleworking options and making sure the safety of students and teachers come first? We must change. We need to see compassion from the Department of Education. Stevenson is in trouble. We are scared. We have no answers from our administration.

46. Aloha BOE,

My testimony is anonymous because I know my principal would be vindictive if I made my testimony public.
I have not been given any sanitizing/cleaning products.

I was given a welcome back to school logo mask but no other PPE have been provided even though I, and others, have requested a face shields.

I was told the room I am in would not be sanitized because it is not use by students. Luckily, the custodian sanitized it anyway.

Staff was not informed that Kindergarten students would be attending school as a learning hub. Later, when questioned, it was called education for the most vulnerable students. Either way, this is a change in the MOU program.

Now, First grade students are attending as “learning hubs.” Again, staff was not informed of this change in programming.

All telework requests have been denied except teachers who are quarantining.

Non-classroom teachers who feel their workspace is unsafe are being told to find their own room.

Teachers were told Acellus is their content to teach from. Now, Acellus is being questioned and teachers are being expected to make up the gaps without materials and planning time.

Teachers are working harder than ever trying to contact students and families that do not participate in their education without support from administration.
Administration feels attendance should be based on signing into Acellus.

Please help the teachers and support the students and families.

47. My ultimate goal is for our keiki to return to school. In order for this to happen, there needs to be many things done for them to come back safely. NO steps have been taken to ensure their safety and the teachers/staff's safety!!! Admin had all this time to order cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer stations, automatic soap stations, plexiglass partitions for the teachers, dividers for the students, etc. These vital supplies should be in our classrooms as we speak!! We have nothing around our school! No matter what, we all know this virus is not going away anytime soon.
Moreover, we need these essential supplies for the next how many years!!! My next concern is our school's wifi. This is our fifth week of teaching online and the
internet at our school is so slow!! We are not able to access and play our resources/curriculum and both teachers and students get kicked out of our live sessions daily. Students who need wifi at home still did not receive their hot spots. That means they will be missing the first 6-7 weeks of school. There also needs to be better communication between district and admin to teachers. We know nothing of the steps being taken to ensure our safety.

48. Since returning to work, I have observed our custodians eating together without their masks. They eat in the school's main hallway. One of the school's vice-principals visited my classroom without his mask though he was holding it in his hand. Just today, when I asked a question about a donation of masks to our school, another vice-principal took off his mask to answer me. I regularly see the clerk who works in the library wearing her mask but it doesn't cover her nose and I also saw her driving a golf cart without her mask. Since the start of the school year, I have seen varying degrees of compliance with the Governor's and Mayor's mask order in our school's office. There are times when I go into the office and most of the staff are not wearing masks. There is one security guard who never wears his mask. Last but never least, I caught 2 students who were filming a video for new students walking down the hallway with no masks and no social distancing. When I asked why they weren't wearing their masks, they told me that they were told they didn't have to.

49. I am going to be very worried if students come back for in-person instruction. Currently our SPED students come to class for in-person instruction - my door is right by the field so I see the students playing at recess with their masks not on properly or not on at all and there is no social distancing in their lines when walking. I've also seen staff members taking off their masks near students. I am aware of at least 4 positive covid cases at our school from students and parents. 3, of the ones I know of are on our grade level alone! It just goes to show how easily the virus would be brought to school if we were doing face to face instruction. I have 30 students enrolled in my class. Even with an A/B rotation schedule that still leaves me with 15-17 students per day because students with IEPs and ELLs would come to school every day. It’s impossible to maintain Ohana bubbles at school. Kids play together after school. Our community is mainly low income and military, and families live very close to each other. Covid can be easily spread in our close-knit community and imported from the mainland students. Please allow us to continue with distance learning. We’ve worked really hard to teach online for the students and are finally getting the hang of the routine. Going back face-to-face in 2nd quarter would make things chaotic!
50. I am very concerned about my school’s decision to allow kindergarteners to return to school. There are as many 7 adults helping with the drop offs and pick ups and many times the parents are not wearing masks. Recently the school has allowed two first grade classes to also return to school for in person instruction. There was no information given to staff regarding the return of students to the campus.

Another concern I have is the lack of consistency in the staff adhering to safe practices of mask wearing and social distancing. I have seen teachers congregating without masks in the break room for lunch and they continued to sit and talk without masks for a long period of time.

I would like to be able to work from home seeing I have a number of risk factors for catching the virus. I have been told that no one is being able to work from home and I feel that is putting my health at potential risk. I would hope the Board of Education would allow people to work from home.

51. The problem with our current work conditions is that we don't have enough physical space to keep students and staff safe if we go back to school face-to-face. So bringing students back to school without addressing this problem is very irresponsible. We need to make sure there is reliable Covid testing on a regular basis so that we can prevent the spread.

52. I am writing to ask to extend the distance learning. I feel with this "new" virus, there are so many unknown factors and the safest place for teachers and staff to be is at home. Teachers should be able to choose telework for their safety. I have spoken with some teachers who prefer to come to school and work by themselves in their classrooms and that should be a choice.

I also have a concern about the training that teachers got to teach the curriculum. NONE!!! We did not have any training on how to use Google Classroom, Google Meets, or Seesaw. I have had to watch countless hours of YouTube videos on my own time on how to use these platforms. Did the DOE expect teachers to just know to use these platforms? It is a good thing that I have teachers who are very knowledgeable in using these and have helped me. I am constantly calling them on what extensions to add to my Chrome in order for me to teach effectively and for help to troubleshoot my daily problems. My friends have had to find time before and after school to teach me how to use my extended screen so I can see my students, how to project my stories and use my document camera. I don't think that it was their job to do that. The DOE always expects teachers to "find a way
and just do it.” We want to do what is best for students so we do what is necessary for our kids. This needs to stop. The DOE needs to start looking ahead and planning for what is needed for schools to move forward.

At our school, our internet services are not big enough to handle all the teachers at one time. I am trying to teach and the internet keeps lagging. I can't load videos and curriculum needed to teach. Many times, I have to log out and tell my students to just stay on and I will be back. Some teachers end up just posting work and not teaching live because it is very frustrating to have to wait. When talking to my students, the screen freezes and their voices cut in and out. If the DOE lets teachers telework, it will open bandwidth for the teachers who choose to teach at school. There are also students who don't have internet access at home and we have not gotten any hotspots. They have had no contact with their teachers and no live lessons since March. This is terrible and unfair. I feel so sad for these families and don't know how I can help them.

It is also unfair and scary for the SPED teachers. They are constantly in danger of getting COVID. I have watched a SPED students drooling on the arm of the EA while toileting which is not o.k. This takes me to another point. PPEs are not adequate. Our school gave out wipes and gloves to only some classrooms. They ran out and it is September and I and other teachers still have not received any. We were also given 5 N95 masks and were told we can't use them unless we think a child may have COVID. How would we know? The SPED teachers and EAs were issued gowns. The EA that was mentioned above was using it, and was told by admin it is not for toileting. I am sure the admin would not do it without being totally covered up. I have had to go and buy my own PPE. It may be over the top, but I feel it is my responsibility to myself, family, and parents that I stay safe. I have purchased my own sprays from a chemical company, antibacterial wipes, goggles, face shields, gloves, N95 masks, regular masks, alcohol, spray bottles and sneeze guards. Some items are in anticipation of students returning in a few weeks. These items are hard to find so I was proactive in purchasing these items. The school has not bought many of these items and are trying to purchase them now and they can’t find them. We don’t have sanitizing stations around the school so the teachers and SPED students can frequently clean their hands.

Another concern is cleaning. Classroom cleaners were not deemed essential, so the rooms that they were cleaning now fall on the custodians. They are trying to do their job duties plus more. More monies should be given to the schools to hire adequate staff to clean and sanitize. They are given guidelines on cleaning which
require more time, but no extra staff. Our custodians were told recently that they have to now check and clean their bathrooms every hour. They are overworked and underpaid. They can't effectively clean because they are overextended so I have to clean and sanitize so I feel safe.

We knew that opening schools would be a daunting task, but it is unrealistic to do so without these items in place before school started. The DOE had months (since March) to plan these things. With this unknown virus, we knew we were probably going to distance learning. Somebody dropped the ball. I know for a fact that the "higher ups" would never work in this type of situation. Meetings in the DOE are still being held virtually because they don't feel safe. Why is it safe for us? Let's trade jobs for a week and see if they would be o.k. in these working conditions.

53. Dear Board of Education,

Thank you for meeting with the HSTA today. There are many issues that need to be addressed here. The main concern for me is health and safety. I have been on an emotional roller coaster before school was even back in session. The fear of being unprepared to open the schools with COVID-19 numbers higher than it's ever been. The relief of finding out that all of HSTA's tireless efforts yielded success. The joy of seeing my students' smiles on Webex. The heartache of learning my student's parent passed away from COVID-19.

I would first like to address the ever changing situation on my campus. During the first week of school, my administrator designated Sped students as the vulnerable population. The second week, it expanded to include 504 and EL students. The third week, it expanded to the homeless population. The fourth week it included students who were having connectivity issues. Finally, this week it includes students with poor attendance, poor grades (Ds and Fs), and students without a quiet work space at home.

The amount of students deemed vulnerable and offered face-to-face is quickly growing. It is concerning that the definition of "vulnerable population" varies between schools and that there is no statewide guideline.

There are approximately 35-40 students who are coming on campus daily. They are being housed in the "Learning Hub" located in the cafeteria. Educational Assistants are supervising these students during the morning. Most students will leave campus right before lunch. There are about a handful of students who stay for the whole day. During the afternoon block, the students who stay for the whole
day report to their care coordinators' classrooms if they are Sped. Full day students who are not Sped, need to stay in the cafe and I am being directed to supervise them, along with the other counselors and occasionally an administrator. It's not a safe situation for anyone.

Since the schools opened, we have had multiple incidences of potential COVID-19 cases on campus - 5 to be exact, with one of them being a 1:1 nurse who was also housed in the Learning Hub with all the students, EAs, and various other faculty and staff members, including myself. All students, faculty, and staff were directed to report to school the very next day, even though the 1:1 nurse was directed to quarantine for 14 days. We also had a positive COVID-19 case with one of our very own teachers. The timeline is below:

August 20 (10 days prior to the positive results) - Individual's last day on campus.
August 22 - Individual was tested.
August 25 - Results were negative.
September 1 - Individual was re-tested
September 5 - Results were positive.

There were at least 5 other staff, including myself, who were in close contact with this individual. We were not notified by her, our administrator, or DOH of her positive results. On September 9, one of the staff personally asked the teacher of her results, and the tested teacher in question confirmed that it was positive. On September 14, my administrator sent an email stating that DOH deemed exposure at school to be "low risk."

Any level of risk could and should be avoided at all costs. We should not be forced to put our lives at risk. Telework should be provided to all teachers. Why does the Stay at Home, Work at Home order not apply to us? Are our lives worth less than that of private school teachers? We can teach virtually and our students can learn virtually. It may take a little more effort on our behalf, but health and safety is top priority in the whole state, so why are we exempt?

I have been fielding calls and emails regarding the COVID-19 positive teacher because our families have not yet been notified. Sick teachers cannot teach and sick students cannot learn. We must all do our part and stay home in order to combat this deadly, infectious virus. We need to have a mandated telework option for all teachers and continue distance learning for all students. No life is worth the risk. It breaks my heart that the state has the option to be proactive, but instead
chooses to be reactive. This virus is tearing these children’s families apart left and right and you have the power to help us, help them.

Sincerely,
Concerned Educator

54. I am testifying about discussion item VI, B: Update on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress.

First of all, as for the subject of student access devices and connectivity, at our school for students who need computers have either received a device and or have been getting access through coming to school and utilizing a tech lab in our school library, at the beginning there were a a very few number of students and now the number of students have been increasing. The librarian is worried that more and more students are coming unto campus. The librarian also mentioned to me that students who are using the tech lab now say they cannot do work at home or want to just get out of their house are coming to the tech lab at school and are not doing their work and imposing a risk for teachers. The librarian also mentioned that other teachers in classrooms have been worried about their health and risk the virus due to the number of students showing up increasing in their classes in addition to the FSC students. One teacher already had 5 students in her class and those were students who aren't FSC students. I know the intention is to help all of these students, but it is posing a risk for our teachers on campus. The librarian said if the numbers of students continue to increase, she is worried about herself and the CI workers and all of the teachers that use the library to make copies. Something needs to be done to keep the staff and faculty safe while helping these students.

Secondly, it was bluntly made known to all of the teachers that we would be denied telework even if we asked for it. The only way we would get telework approved was if we got COVID-19. The main reason mentioned by our principal was to be fair to those who had FSC students because those teachers had to come to school to help those students so because of this everyone has to go to school and telework request would be denied. Now that all of the teachers have been at school, in the office, library and cafeteria and since we have not gotten any air filtration checks and teachers take off the masks in their rooms because they are alone and think they are safe doing that not only does that increase the risk of COVID 19 spread
because more people on campus including the students (FSC or others) but it also has been difficult at times to utilize the broadband internet for synchronous online teaching because all of the teachers are utilizing the school broadband WiFi at the same time during class. It has disrupted my class many different times during the past three weeks. During 4th quarter last school year, I felt utilizing my internet at home was much better and I work the same both at home and school. I don’t understand why we cannot have the option to telework and that we have to be told because it’s not fair to our FSC teachers that we need to work at school especially when there are many people already there and don’t know how many more will come in the coming days. I also did not like how we were told that being at school is better than doing telework through our PD team. Without the proper checks in place (especially air filtration), it still is not safe. I still wear my mask in my office and take many precautions. At-risk teachers are also coming to school and they feel like they have to or they will be denied anyway or retributed in some fashion.

Thirdly, I feel we still don’t have enough PPE and supplies to say that I feel safe in school and be ready to have students come to classes. Teachers have received 1 face shield, 1 box of gloves and 1 spray bottle for their room. Also only those who have asked for plexiglass (higher risk teachers) received it, but it is not enough to protect us. When asking the admin for plexiglass, they said they could not support all of the teachers at the school. I had to purchase my own supplies and spent 400 dollars. I had to do it because 1 of each is not enough and I didn’t receive a box of gloves or any spray because I’m a floating teacher and go to four different classrooms so definitely the number of supplies is not enough for me. I did it because I knew we would not get the supplies we needed. I also was told I would not be reimbursed for my supplies. I was devastated to hear this when I thought we would be reimbursed. I heard through various BOE meetings that we would receive supplies, but no new supplies came in since those meetings via WebEx and TV. When are they going to come and will we get enough supplies?

I know this is not an easy situation, but it has already been 5 months since COVID 19 came and I know many teachers including myself do not feel safe and we have not been given the respect and professionalism we deserve. We can’t even have the option to telework and nothing at the school has been checked and we don’t have supplies. We love teaching and the kids, but how can we do the best at our job if we don’t feel safe and aren’t treated as professionals. I came into this job because I love teaching and kids and because I felt I would be taken care of and treated with respect, but I feel now that I am not a professional or trusted when I have been teaching for 10 years in the DOE now. It makes me really sad and at the
end it affects everyone. I know teachers who have taken leave and left the profession because of these items that have still not been taken care of and still left in the air. They feel the same way I do and have taught for many more years than me.

I feel more needs to be done to check the schools-buildings, facilities, air filtration systems and supplies need to be distributed as well as better ways to enable the schools to help those who need it. We also need to know information dealing with these topics since we work at our own school. We need the metrics for all of these items including the metrics from the DOH and DOE for dealing with COVID 19 incidents at schools. I still don’t know what to do when a student has COVID 19 in my class and how to go about the situation, I don’t know what to expect and what to do. There are still so many questions about this.

It is going to be second quarter and more action needs to be taken. We cannot go into hybrid learning if none of these action items are taken care of and the school staff and faculty are not notified about this. It is dangerous and not fair and professional to everyone working at the school. I want school to be back to normal, but we should already have taken the proper steps to go there, but at my school, I have not seen it happen yet. We should go back to school and start hybrid once the metrics are determined, buildings are checked and enough supplies are given and information is given to everyone on campus. Please think about the lives of everyone, our students, teachers and community. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

55. I am writing to urge the BOE not to open schools face to face 100%. Although I have been working tirelessly to create lessons for virtual learning including planning, implementing, and assessing assignments, I still do not feel it is safe to welcome students back to campus. I am a teacher on Kaua’i and although this first quarter has me beyond exhausted daily, we are all safer at home.

One issue I have is that so many teachers, including myself, are pretty much doing things on our own, without much support from our administrators. I am tasked with moving my curriculum online for my young learners, creating my curriculum in Hawaiian as an immersion teacher, translating for parents, teaching online (a whole new world and set of issues for me), helping parents to navigate it all as tech support, and then being demanded my our administrators to do extra work to create online things for parents that they will never even look at! When asking for support from admin, we get no answers or are sent to a guide to find unclear
answers.

The teachers at my school are not treated equally when it comes to telework. We were all told it was not allowed and we would have to use our sick days instead of being able to teach from home, yet some teachers along the way were allowed to and received pay for teleworking. Some teachers have five or so “vulnerable” students that are present in school daily! This is one reason, in my thoughts, why many have been denied telework.

With all of this being said, as a Hawaiian language teacher at a charter school, where are our differential pays? We did not receive the pay last year or this year and we are struggling to make ends meet. We deserve more pay than ever right now and the fact that we have been denied our differential pay is beyond me. Please help us and our keiki only return to school when it is safe and we can guarantee to provide a quality education.

56. Despite my principal's efforts to urge teachers & school staff members to socially distance, this is just not the reality at my school. I have seen many special education teachers & EAs take off their masks in their air-conditioned classroom while working closely (not 6 ft apart) from one another. I have had to tell several people who wanted to speak to me, "Where’s your mask? Put it on before you talk to me." Only recently (this week) have the custodians started to disinfect door handles and light switches.

I made it abundantly clear to my colleagues how scared I am of COVID-19 and how I take extra care in following CDC guidelines. In fact, the day before the school year officially began, I set up a revocable trust with my attorney. I even made a shower curtain barrier in my classroom because none was provided to me. When I walk around campus I make sure I have something to protect my hands from touching door handles and other things. I am also one of the only teachers at my school who teaches with all my windows open as that was what we were told to do. I do not run my air conditioner. In addition, I have requested to be a distance teacher if students have to return f2f in the future.

Bottom line, my elderly parents and in-laws take care of my kids so I can do my job. I do not want to take any chances to compromise their health, my health, or any family member’s health (including my husband and kids).

57. I am testifying on discussion item VI, B: Update on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education’s comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the
2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress. In addition to the above concerns, I am also very concerned about teachers’ well-being. I have been working 12-14 hours a day and continue to work on the weekends as well. If I only worked my contractual hours of 7:50-2:50, I wouldn't be able to even have a lesson ready for my students. Teachers are working beyond our contractual hours with no compensation. Is this right? Are students coming back next quarter? I am under the impression that some students will be coming to school after October break. I am not comfortable with this. I feel distance learning should continue through December. Flu season is coming upon us and the cases are still high. Our state is still on a shut down and will need to reopen slowly. I won't feel safe if students return to school. I don't feel our school is ready for students to come back to school yet. Will the Board of Education provide us with time to prepare for the second quarter? What are the guidelines for giving quarter 1 grades? Most teachers had to prepare for hybrid learning and then switch to distance learning. In reality, those 9 days of training didn't really give us much time to prepare. I know the students and teachers are tired of distance learning and I want my students back in the classroom but I don't feel safe with my students returning back to school. It's better to be safe than sorry. One of my students comes to school on a daily basis. This student is in the library with other students and teachers. When this student needs help, the teacher/EA isn't able to maintain the 3 ft distance. If the students return to school, and need help with something it is a natural tendency for us to go and help them and stand beside them to show them. We can't possibly help them in person from 3 ft away. With being said, what is the plan for the reopening of school? What will it look like? Will teachers have to decide whether or not we will maintain the distance or just help our students like we usually do?

58. On the first week of school, when the teachers came back, it was apparent that the school had not planned and prepared very much over the summer. They did remove half of the desks and chairs to prepare for social distancing in the classes. All of the removed furniture was sitting in the halls just outside the classes while they figured out where they were going to store it. There were no signs put up about wearing masks or social distancing, the water fountains were not saran wrapped. The rooms had been given a good clean over the summer which was really nice to come back to, last year my classroom only got mopped twice because of custodial staffing problems and always being short staffed.

We had some staff meetings over the summer but everyone still had a lot of
questions, I set up for the first meeting which was streaming from the cafeteria, I wasn't sure if it was face to face or streaming but since streaming seemed safer I did that. It was awful, the admin was wearing face shields and passing around a microphone, the system was lagging, sound was terrible so I missed a lot of what was being said. I learned from teachers in the cafeteria that some people had noses poking out of masks and a lot of people take off their masks when they are speaking. I did hear to go pick up a box of PPE at the cafeteria but when I went there was none for me and my rooms (I have a lab and classroom). I bought my own hand sanitizer and spray bottles for disinfectant but I wanted to make sure I used the one approved by the school, it took weeks for them to get me the sanitizer. We still thought the kids were coming back and I was worried about all the furniture in the hall but then one custodian moved it all into a storage room because he was worried about it being in the halls. He is also a father of 2 students. He stopped to ask me and another science teacher about how viruses work because he was worried, his wife is medically fragile and he doesn't want to bring anything home. I asked our HSTA rep to ask about getting him more PPE and they (at the covid team meeting weeks after school opened) said, no, he had enough.

We had to fight to get a drive-by pick up for computers, they wanted to bring the kids by bus into the classrooms for orientation. We had to spend time presenting our evidence and argument to admin, time we could have been spending prepping to go virtual. Why do we have to keep fighting to get the schools to do the safe thing?

There have been at least 2 known positive cases at our school but only one was reported in a really confusing letter. We all know the DOH is not set up for efficient contact tracing and last I heard they had still not contacted the school about either case, it was the individual. When I asked if they were going to close and disinfect I was told no, I need to read the handbook, the trigger for that is 5%. We still have SPED FSC students coming on campus! I asked the FSC teachers if they feel safe and they said no. Who is making these decisions? I am a science teacher and I am very concerned. We see hot spots in Hilo and Keaau, why aren't we being proactive and removing as many people as we can from campus? We have a hub for students without internet access at home but because of a positive case it caused a lot of people to be quarantined and there was nobody watching students so an old student popped into my class (I taught first 2 weeks from school) to say hi, he was very sweet when I explained to him he was not allowed to roam around, he just wanted to say hi. Some teachers have had to bring their kids to school
because they don't have child care. A lot of our teachers care for their elder parents and worry about bringing Covid home. If we can teach from home, we should! Why is teleworking being denied? I live right up the street from the Okutzu Veterans home where we lost 13 veterans in the last couple weeks, this is devastating, why are we taking any risks? We need to isolate as much as possible. Our school is doing a lot of great things as well, we want to serve our community, but we need to do it in a way that minimizes risks as much as possible and err on the safe side.

Our school is in Puna, we have a lot of at risk students and I am really impressed how many are attending my online classes and doing work. We can make this work but we need to do it safely and mindfully.

Sorry I don't have time to go into more detail or prepare a piece that does not need to be anonymous but I am so busy with work!!! I feel like we are having to spend so much time fighting for our right to safety it takes away from focusing on our job, teaching! I got a kind of unofficial approval to telework? I filled out the application and was told okay because I am a professional and can be trusted. I was also told the name of one of the infected people (I did not ask. I think it is illegal to reveal that info FERPA and HIPPA-right?) and since I have some underlying medical issues I should stay home for now. Everyone who can should stay home for now.

59. Good afternoon, I am submitting my testimony because I am not ready for students to come back into my classroom. While our numbers are low, teachers have been asked to sanitize our classrooms and I still do not think that we can maintain social distancing with 5 year olds. Aside from the cleaning and sanitizing, I feel like coming to school for hybrid learning will be DETRIMENTAL TO OUR K-1 students. I think that if we ask the kids to come to campus 2 days a week, they will not be able to work independently for the other 2-3 days. Our kupuna are watching the majority of our students and they would be at risk. Also, a lot of the parents and grandparents do not know how the curriculum is taught. Math AND ELA are taught differently than they once were and if we want our students to stay on track with the standards, a certified teacher needs to be the primary teacher for the children.

We have just figured out how to run our small groups and whole group instruction. We have 3 weeks to teach and assess for report cards. I am afraid if we change it now to hybrid, we will have to take more time to rework schedules and procedures which again will take away from students’ learning. Then if cases go up, we may have to go back to 100% distance learning. I think this is a huge sacrifice for our
children. Now that we are set with distance learning, and families are getting used to it, I propose we stick to it and not flip flop. If we continue to change our models, it's going to upset our families, our teachers, our kupuna, but more importantly our keiki. We have to choose 1 and stick to it. I think our K-1 students need instruction 100% throughout the week, whether it's 100% distance learning or 100% face to face, no in between. If/when we come back face to face, administrator's need bigger budgets for sanitizing classrooms. At my school, we have been told that the "janitors don't have time" to thoroughly sanitize our classrooms and to be honest, neither do I.

60. I am extremely uncomfortable with students returning to classrooms as my wife has a preexisting condition and I do not want to compromise her health. I also have serious doubts about the DOE's ability to adhere to health protocols set by the CDC.

61. We had one positive case a few weeks ago. Staff was notified on Aug 24th (Mon) at 3:52 pm by email. The emails said the campus will be closed and we taught from home on Aug 25th (Tue).

Turns out, we received another email at 2:52 pm on Aug 25th, which says we will have to go back to campus from Wednesday. The closure was only one day.

Some staff was notified of close contact after the 2nd email-more than 24 hours later than the initial email. This staff had close contact with the positive case person, but her brother who also teaches at Kalaheo, and lives with her was not the subject to be contacted, nor their family.

Our union rep questioned our admin as steps 3 & 5 from HIDOE Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan July 2020 (Pg.54), were skipped. Asked why we can reopen so early.

The admin can explain a clear, scientific, convincing reason for this IRREGULAR decision, but after all, we never received any explanation of skipping steps to this day---it has been 3 weeks.

I believe administrators are obligated to explain and if they cannot, then maybe the district or DOE should explain it to us. We even do not have any agency to report this kind of violation when the school is literally risking many staff's health and life. There might be a new/updated protocol, but we could not find it---it is not public if there is any. Then what are our admin or CAS following?
As school administrators are not explaining any reason for this short closure, I am feeling any reporting might result in retaliation and would like to stay anonymous. And this created a complete trust issue towards my admin.

From this experience, I know:

--DOE took more than 10 days to update the website to tell which district had cases. What is the point to know by the district? We need to publicize the name of the school. It says "case confirmed on Sept 9...17 days after we were notified. It is too slow, ridiculous and pointless.

--Variety of School closure and disinfection protocols do exist. Some say total closure will be 10 days, 14 days, 21 days. The update is fine if there is any but NONE of the protocol says closure can be one day.

--Our school at least notified the school community (Staff/students/families) but contact tracing was not good enough.

As a conclusion, how am I supposed to feel safe to work on campus?

I would like to ask BOE to approve:

-Distance Learning extension until we will have sufficient amount of ACCURATE testing + SAFE, well-tested medication & vaccine. Students should not be back to campus until we can open it without caution.

-Teleworking by choice-not by principal's approval, BY TEACHER's CHOICE. DOE trained us with its mandatory training-they should be confident with what they made us to do.

-Clear, scientific protocol with clear rubric/requirement upon positive case on campus

-System to report protocol violation without worrying any retaliation

-Faster announcement of positive cases for community safety (Maybe self-reporting system) with individual school names

-Free testing every 2 weeks for the teachers
It is not about political choice, it is about our health and life.

62. Why are teacher’s children allowed on campus? They can't get Covid? Why are SPED children allowed on campus? They can't get Covid? A teacher has died! How many teachers need to die before you take this seriously? Governor Ige makes us essential workers, do we get hazard pay? NO! In fact, he wants to furlough us! Essential, but not really. Furloughs for 2-3 years? Some of us are looking towards retirement, not if we get furloughed. This year we were working on decompensation and instead they want to take money away from us! Enough is enough! Treat teachers fairly!!

63. Aloha,

I am testifying on discussion item VI, B. I am a teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii and have been teaching for 25 years. I am currently undergoing chemotherapy treatments for Breast Cancer and will be done at the end of October. I am on medical leave as my treatments put me at extremely high risk of not only contracting COVID, but any other disease out there.

I was going to apply for telework, but the stipulations are so explicit, I wouldn't have qualified anyway. I HAVE CANCER. Why wouldn't I get approved? My principal told me I should just use my sick leave, which in desperation I agreed to because my treatments were starting soon. I simply cannot be in school physically. Telework should be an option for EVERYONE without a reason. School is simply not a safe place, no matter what protocols are in place.

I love to teach and I want to ensure a safe environment for myself, my colleagues, my staff, and especially my students. Although there have been numerous "safety plans" developed by my school, I do not feel confident that it will be safe for any of us to return any time soon. As you know, there has been a HUGE surge of cases on the Big Island, and that is one of the reasons I don't feel safe.

HIDOE has yet to release a detailed plan on the procedures we should follow if anyone tests positive on my campus. Schools are being forced to do their own contact tracing, and to say our custodians are "cleaning" is a stretch. There is simply not enough training for custodial staff to effectively clean every surface.

Our HSTA contract states that if campuses aren't safe for students, they aren't safe for staff either. I want you to ask yourself if someone in YOUR office/building
contracted COVID, would YOU feel safe going back to work knowing that cleaning is so-so, there is no contract tracing, and no mandatory testing of everyone in your building?

IT IS NOT SAFE FOR STUDENTS, IT IS NOT SAFE FOR TEACHERS!

Mahalo for your attention.

64. With an explosion of cases here on Hawai‘i Island, it would be absurd to force face to face instruction. Until recently, we had zero fatalities due to COVID. As of yesterday, however, we have lost 10 invaluable members of our community. On O‘ahu we have lost many more than 10 community members, and we recently lost a sister in education. The fact that the DOE is considering ending our virtual learning platform, and is actually pushing for a return to face to face instruction, is an absolute slap in the face to our teachers, keiki, and community. At Kea‘au High, there have been multiple positive cases. Not once has the school been closed in order to clean the affected area. Many teachers on campus are scared, many teachers are fearful to express their concerns, as the principal is notoriously callous, and is actively harassing teachers for a myriad of inconsequential things. Are we ready to return to face to face instruction? Absolutely not! Is Kea‘au High going to appropriately handle the influx of positive cases that will inevitably occur if the students return? Absolutely not. The only option we have to ensure our safety is to remain within our virtual learning models.

65. This testimony is in regards to sanitation and cleaning. I have a “hub” of 10-12 students daily. I am in a class-space too small to properly socially distance. I do not have a sink. I do not have windows to open to encourage air flow. My air conditioner broke. My building custodian DOES NOT vacuum, sanitize, nor take out the trash daily. Multiple complaints about custodians on campus not wearing masks and nothing has been done to remedy this. Complaints have been brought up multiple times to administration however NOTHING has changed.

66. Aloha,

I am a second-year teacher at a school in the Farrington complex and would like to remain anonymous. Here is my COVID-19 story that I would like to share.

In August 2020, I came into contact with a student who was positive for COVID-19. This student was asymptomatic, and didn’t know she had the disease at the time of contact. She came to school to pick up her beginning of the school year
belongings. Unfortunately, I did not find out until the following day that she was COVID-19 positive. By this point, I had met with other students in my classroom. When my students’ parent informed me that my student had tested positive for COVID, I immediately informed my principal. At first, I was told to meet with my last student of the day to give her her beginning of the school year items. Prior to finding out about the student who tested positive for COVID, another teacher on campus had planned to come into my classroom to meet with my last student of the day as well. Since my principal told me that I was still to meet with this last student, I took it upon myself to notify the other teacher of what happened so he wouldn’t come into my classroom, as it would put him at risk of getting COVID. After I got off the phone with my co-worker, I was then told to bring the last students’ items to the office. Another ten to fifteen minutes passed by, before my instructions changed again. By this point, around forty-five minutes had passed since I found out I came into contact with the student who tested positive for COVID. Finally, I was sent home to quarantine. I was told to keep information about this situation confidential, to speak to my doctor, and that I would be teleworking until I was cleared to return to work.

Since there are no designated COVID-19 testing facilities for DOE employees, once I got home I looked for somewhere that I could get tested that day. I do not have a primary care physician on Oahu because I am from another island. After doing my own research on where to get tested, I ended up going to an urgent care, where they told me a letter from the school might be able to cover the testing costs. Although my principal wrote me a letter for the urgent care, I still had to pay $215.00 out of pocket to get tested. As a new teacher who pays rent, and other bills we are already on a tight budget. To hold any teachers responsible for funding our own testing in a situation we could not control is absolutely unreasonable.

My boyfriend that I live with also had to quarantine, and is considered a high-risk candidate because of his underlying health issues. Coming into contact with the student who was positive for COVID caused, and continues to bring a lot of anxiety for everyone. On top of having to cover the costs of my testing, and the anxiety of spreading this deadly disease, I also had to tell my brother who was coming to stay with me to attend grad school that he needed to find other accommodations for his own safety.

During the time I spent quarantining, I had to continue to reach out to my admin about what the protocol would be for returning to school. Although my test results were negative, I found out that I needed to get tested again because I started to
have some minor symptoms. I also may have taken the first test too early. Luckily, I was able to get free testing for my last test.

Before getting cleared to return to school, I emailed my admin sharing my concerns about the lack of protocol, anxiety, and financial burden, along with a request to telework. I was told that the protocol we have in place is to “follow frequent hand washing/sanitizing, social distancing, mask-wearing, contacting the CAS, starting the process of notification, and cleaning.” However, the lack of protocol I wanted to address was about coming into contact with a student who tested positive as the directions that were given to me changed three times before I was sent home. Then, I had to reach out about how many times I needed to get tested, when I needed to return to campus...etc. As for the anxiety I feel, I was told to reach out to our school counselor for “self-calming techniques”. In regards to the financial burden, my principal’s response stated that he “hoped the letter would cover the testing, but that sucks.” Unfortunately, my request to telework was also denied because I had vulnerable students who could potentially come onto campus. I was not given any apology for what happened, or reassurance that returning to campus would be safe.

I am now back on campus and continue to have anxiety about getting and spreading COVID, as well as about the financial burden of having to cover future COVID testing expenses in the event that free testing is unavailable. I hope that teachers will receive more flexibility with requesting telework, or that all schools will not have ANY students on campus to stop the spread of this dangerous disease. Thank you for your time.

67. Administration seems very concerned about keeping the office safe but not as concerned about keeping the teachers as safe.

1. The office has been outfitted with a giant acrylic shield for the counter and a smaller shield similar to those at banks and such at the locked front door so outsiders cannot enter the office. All business is conducted outside.

No teacher has been provided similar protection in the classroom out of the PPE funds. Teachers who do have such protection provided their own.

2. Protocols set up by the administration to alert teachers when families/households have been quarantined are not followed consistently. We had one case recently where a household was in quarantine and the Office knew but did not inform the teacher when parent and child showed up in person for training
to use the iPad.

3. Recently one student exhibited symptoms (lethargy, coughing and sneezing) that were atypical for this child. Teacher wanted the parent contacted and the child sent home as a precaution since s/he could be an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19. The questions arose: a) who is responsible for the supervision of this child while waiting to be picked up, b) where is the triage area, c) what happens when parent cannot be contacted and d) who follows up and shares findings?

Yes, we do want our students back in class but we want to feel safe and that means everyone should be following safety protocols and everyone should be offered the same level of PPEs. Teachers and aides have direct and continued exposure to students. We are most at-risk. We ask for your support in keeping all of us safe and COVID-19 free.

68. I feel that kids are already used to online please don’t change it by rushing them back to school until it is safe. Parents and children with health issues are being put in a dangerous situation, For those parents who want to send their kids to school because they have work or just tired of having them home let them have a choice to send their kids to school see how that works out for them. We all don’t like the idea of sending our kids to school until there is a vaccine.

69. I am a school leader, department head, part of an interdisciplinary grade level team, a grade level team, a WASC leader for Category E (was supposed to be 9/21 and cancelled after wasting several mtgs preparing for this). I teach a “wheel technology class for all 8th graders plus an advisory class. The class is delivered online.

I have been doing PD independently since March, through HSTE, and Hawaii Creative Media classes, as well as self-directed PD. I have an M.Ed in Ed Technology from UH Mānoa, and am working on a doctoral degree in learning design and technology (LTEC) at UHM.

I teach synchronously – every time class is scheduled – I am available for the entire class period using Google Meet and Classroom.

I have been teaching full-time since teachers reported to school. I was on Oahu, applied and granted exemption in March to return to Maui to clean out my class. Returned to Oahu. Got sick, tested for Covid. Kaiser: negative but that doesn’t mean you don’t have covid. My doctor put me in isolation due to my continuing
symptoms until Aug 31, during this time, travel quarantine re-imposed so need 14 days upon return to Maui. No exemption. Got sick again. Teleworking approved by principal Tim Lino on Sept 3, with the agreement that if I had students on campus, I would hire a sub.

In good faith, I have hired a sub who comes to meet and is a teacher in classroom, is with me the entire day when she comes, and I am training her to operate in my stead.

Yesterday, I got 4 MORE students – I think – communication has been ambiguous, who will come 5 days a week, which means I have to hire a sub 5 days a week.

Met with principal on the following points this morning:

- Why isn’t IDEA being followed in terms of student placement? Why is this brand new SPED teacher (who is making $10,000 pay differential plus will get 3 paid hours/per student to further evaluate? and has TWO PREP PERIODS in her line) making decisions unilaterally to place student she does not know in my classes? She is new to Hawai‘i. I have actually had some of them when they were 6th graders, so have worked with them a full year. She is not even asking for our input, let alone having IEP mtgs. I added the SPED teachers as teachers in my classroom and they have not even looked at it. I have NO additional support, and they have not made an effort to help me develop specially designed instruction for these students (who range from 1.7 grade to 3.4 grade in reading), yet bombard me with emails every other day - literally, asking what assignments are missing, how are they doing, etc.
- NEW Principal’s response - I’ll clarify and get back to you.
- Other part of that response – which I’m sick of hearing – because of covid, we have to be flexible and be prepared to accept things (like not following IDEA?) because of Covid – how can breaking the law now be ok based on decisions being made at school by individuals?
- I am not being offered any other support for the students (EA, student goes to resource room/study skills) which other teachers are doing. Some teachers are being allowed to send their students to the cafeteria – I think this is our learning hub, supervised by admin, with no learner support - only wifi. Lack of equity for students.
- Some teams have been allowed to “group” these students together so they have them all in one period. Not everyone is being allowed to do that.
I have testified at every BOE meeting except the last one, too busy teaching. I want to testify tomorrow and if I could do so in person, I would face the wall and talk. Why do we have to keep repeating ourselves?

My reality, I’m old, vulnerable, have doctor’s letter saying so, and can’t bring any of this up. My dad is 98, I’m caring for him – none of this counts. They will tell me there’s no job for me at the school.

I’m tired of hearing people say – well you could retire – well – ANYONE can leave. And when is the last time they said that to Ruth Bader Ginsberg who is considerably older.

I thank you for the opportunity to actually tell my story. I have absolutely tried to be flexible and open and work my butt off for my students. I will try to submit written testimony as well. There was one other time I ever felt so disrespected and trivialized by the DOE. It’s affecting my work with students. If nothing is done, I will need to end my 40 plus years as a teacher who ALWAYS gives more than is required – like MANY others.

The DOE is a fail. It is inherently a fail. Some have been able to get an education. Many have not, contributing to what we see happening around us. I tried. I believed in it. I think I’m done. I hate that.

70. At this time Kalihi area has a lot of cases and there are a few housing, It is not safe to send our children back to see now the kids are getting us to using online one day a week for hybrid is a risk to our children, family members and teachers. Please think safe first before anything else, we need a vaccine before even thinking about sending our kids back to school with this virus still going on.

71. To whom it may concern:

I am a DOE teacher and my four year old son recently contracted COVID from his non-DOE preschool. I did end up catching it from him and we have both luckily been almost totally asymptomatic. I also seem to have narrowly avoided spreading it at my worksite.

That being said, the reason I am writing this is to attest to the complete failure of the DOH contract tracing system/policies and procedures regarding COVID. On (date redacted) around 11 am, I received a text from one of the other parents at my
child's private preschool to check my email/the app the preschool uses for communication because a student had tested positive for Covid there. I contacted my principal who was very supportive, we agreed that even though the DOH would classify me as a "contact of a contact" who did not need to quarantine I should leave early and go on telework until I knew if my son had it or not. I assumed the DOH would be contacting me that day because this is so serious that our entire state/country/world has been completely upended to avoid the spread. Never heard from them. I called my child's pediatrician to schedule his covid test for the next day. I could not find anywhere to test me as a "contact of a contact" with no symptoms.

The next day, my child's preschool emailed to inform me that a teacher now also had tested positive. At that point, I tried to find a number to call the DOH myself on the state website. I called between 3 and 4 numbers and waited on hold for 5-10 minutes on each only to be run around in circles and told to call one of the numbers I'd already called. When I finally did get a person on the phone, she said no need for me to quarantine or get a test unless I showed symptoms. I was feeling a sense of urgency to get tested however and scheduled a "self-swab" test for the next day since I'd heard from a co-worker that they are testing anybody who wants a test there. Tuesday afternoon I took my son for his swab. Wednesday I went and did my self-swab test. Still no call from the DOH.

Two days later my son's pediatrician called to inform me that his test had come back positive. I can't even describe to you the panic and horror I felt. I let my principal know and started making plans for what to do should I become too sick to care for my child because I knew that the likelihood of catching it from my four year old was extremely high. I also personally took it upon myself to let any of my close co-workers know as well. I share a very small office with one other person and we are located in the library where about 5-6 other people work regularly.

The following night (now four days after the preschool emailed) I finally received a call from the DOH to inform me that there was a positive case reported at his preschool. The public health nurse that contacted me had no idea that my son had tested positive or that one of the teachers had. She said "So you folks have been quarantining? Great. I'll call back tomorrow to get your details". No one called.

Two more days passed and I still hadn't received my results from my self-swab test so I went to a mass testing site sponsored by the county. I told them immediately that my son had already tested positive. We both continued to have no symptoms.
Two days later I got my results from the mass testing as positive. I immediately let my principal and close co-workers know and I called back the number from the DOH that had called the other night and left an urgent message. Only then - a full week after being notified by the preschool - did I receive a follow up call with any kind of direction on how long to quarantine, isolate, etc. My case worker said she would email me my paperwork, I got it a week later. I don't fault my case worker - I think she was totally overwhelmed and unsupported with her caseload and she had to use her discretion to decide that I was self educating and being proactive so our cases were not a high priority. When I did hear from her it was often late in the evening and on the weekend when she had clearly been working all day. She was completely professional and helpful in all interactions but it was plain to see that she was being given way more than she could reasonable be expected to handle and was doing her best to manage it.

The next day (day 8) I got back my results from the self swab test I'd taken as also positive also positive which meant that it was entirely possible that my co-workers, in particular the one I share an office with, could have been exposed while I was at work in the morning 8 days prior. We were wearing masks but did take them off to eat and drink water it's a small office with no ventilation other than air conditioning. I walk by her desk at least 10 times a day on my way in and out. The DOH never got her info from me or gave me a clear answer on if she should quarantine and for how long. She was never contacted by the DOH. My principal did end up allowing her to telework for the week just to be on the safe side.

So to recap, had I not seen the email from my son's preschool (the preschool didn't call), I would have been at work until at least four more days until when the DOH finally contacted me and possibly longer because I would still have been a "contact of a contact" until I was able to get him tested and get his results. That's four days during which I would have been contagious but totally asymptomatic. I am so relieved that I took action quickly and was supported by my administrators in doing so. The DOE can NOT rely on the DOH for effective contact tracing or guidance. At a minimum we need to do in-house contact tracing which I would happily volunteer to be trained for.

The DOE needs to seek guidance from another qualified source and should be allotted funds to do so if we want our students to safely return to campus (and we all do, we really and truly all love those kids and want them safely back in the classroom). As an example of what this could look like, I know the San Diego
Unified School District has guidelines developed with UCSD health experts.

Thank you for your time and service, nothing is easy right now but we can do better and we have to do better.

72. I am a support staff educator at the District level and I am in regular contact with teachers all around the district. The situation is not great. People are struggling and stressed. I believe the DOE's lack of transparency and communication is one of the key problems and creators of this stress. My key points of concern are:

1) Where are the metrics for if/when schools will reopen for in person learning? We all recognize and appreciate that things are fluid, but people feel the massive uncertainty and stress of NOT KNOWING what is coming next. This lack of honest and clear communication is a major problem and has been a consistent theme from the DOE.

2) Recent reporting in HawaiiNewsNow indicated that the State doesn't even know if the recent results of the surge testing on Oahu can even be trusted because of the amount of known and unknown false positives and negatives. How can we base reopening schools decisions on data that is potentially faulty?

3) My local schools are doing the best they can and I trust the Admin in those schools; they have the best interests of everyone in mind and heart. But the inconsistency between schools on our side of the island - that every Admin can essentially do what they see fit - and thus creating these vastly different experiences for students and parents from school to school. Having a one size fits all approach won't work of course, but this massive range of how long kids and teachers are online every day is unsettling and upsetting to many people.

4) Where is the support for teachers who are also parents of school-aged children? Again, some schools are helping those staff by letting their children do online learning in school learning labs - which is effectively providing child care in the absence of allowing teachers to teach from home and manage their jobs professionally while still taking care of their own children. It's CRAZY that some state workers can work from home but teachers cannot. Where is the consistency and what is the rationale?

5) What happens when flu season gets underway and schools have been reopened? How many people will get sick and be out to school? How on earth will those teacher absences for flu and Covid be covered when we ALREADY had a
massive substitute teacher shortage before Covid? It simply will not work and there is no plan that I can see. This will cause massive stress to the system and the people in it.

6) Acellus? Yikes. What else can be said? The Asst Superintendent could not even say WHY Acellus was contracted despite the fact that the reviewers delivered a scathing report on its content?

7) Lastly, trusting the DOE to accurately report positive cases in our schools is no longer possible for many of us, in part because we also no longer trust the DOH.

I would ask the BOE to announce ASAP that schools will be totally virtual until at least January so that we can credibly experience and interpret how Covid and the flu will evolve over the fall. And so teachers and students can settle into distance learning and try and get something accomplished and mastered. Everyone deserves this opportunity to know NOW, what is coming down the pike - and plan for it.

73. I work for the District Office in Social Emotional Learning. Over the last month I have been engaging in conversations with both teachers and parents, where I have been really trying to listen to the experiences they are having right now. Through these conversations I have been very discouraged hearing the struggles that people are facing. In particular, hearing the lack of grace that is being offered to teachers during this time from administration. Especially with teachers who are parents of school aged children. I have heard stories that make me question the focus of our education system. I personally got into education to serve our keiki, however when we do not support our teachers who are also care providers for our keiki- I feel that somewhere we have lost our way as educators. I feel that there is no reason for teachers to be denied the request to telework, it is time for us to be both creative and innovative in delivering education, while recognizing humanity first.

74. I do not want school to open! I am currently teaching virtually, but have 4 students attending because of special needs and vulnerable (homeless.). I don't feel safe the the following reasons: not everyone is wearing their masks correctly, adults are not making kids social distance, I only got a spray, towel, gloves, and a shield. There are no shields for my students desks, room is not being sprayed daily, no sanitizers in high track ares (xerox machine, library, cafeteria tables, etc., there are 1700 quarantining right now, but who knows it they are actually isolating
themselves, masks not available for students (when I asked for refills, office said this is all we have --20 in a ziploc bag). I don't understand why we cannot teach remotely. I cannot be exposed to COVID due to the fact that I am a caregiver to my soon to be 89 year old mother and my husband has underlying conditions. Our union needs to follow what the other island are doing, especially if we pay union dues every paycheck, which is going to be raised just because we are having our last 3.5% raise on our contract. I am hurt that I will not see any compression pay after teaching nearly 30 years. I am considering retiring if we do not get the support. Teachers cannot be on the front lines right now. Lastly, if we do test positive will the union say that our health coverage will not pay it because it's not proven that a teacher caught it at the work place? I don't want teachers to be treated the same way as the officers and guards at OCCC. That is just not fair.

75. Aloha, I have been an ELA teacher at my school for 16 years and have seen many changes throughout the years. None so great as what is currently happening in our educational landscape. At my school alone we have "pivoted" from one plan to another within hours, and as an educator, it was put on my shoulders to reach out to the parents of my Advisory students to inform them of this change. Personally, I stayed at work until 4:30 doing this. I know that many of my colleagues use their own time over the weekend to get this done. In no way is this acceptable, the DOE and school-level leadership has no right to infringe upon teachers' personal time beyond contract hours. Unfortunately, time and again I have experienced and witnessed teachers being put into this unfair position. Furthermore, I have told by my administration that room cleanings will only occur twice a week, Wednesday and Fridays, between student Groups A and B. I have asked my administration why sanitation isn't being done on a more consistent basis for teacher safety during this time and have yet to be given a clear answer.

76. Since the start of school in August, many of us at our school on Kauai still have many health and safety concerns. That not have been addressed or fixed by our Principal. Today, Sept. 16th is the first day our HSTA APC will meet with the Principal to address our concerns. I am a Kindergarten/SPED Inclusion teacher. Overall, I do not feel like Kauai is ready to open doors to students on campus, face to face. Even though there has been 0 cases reported (which I find very questionable), we are not safe on campus. Some classes got caught teaching with teachers and students with NO MASKS or face shields. Thank you for your support BOE members.

Disinfecting and Cleaning- The classroom cleaner that is assigned to our
Kindergarten building and two buildings does not follow the daily COVID cleaning schedule. I am constantly asking her to vacuum, mop, disinfect. The Custodial Supervisor is aware of the situation, but this concern is ongoing. I am wiping desks before and/or after each school day. I have asked other teachers if they have seen them disinfecting the water fountains and stairwell railings and other high touch areas around campus, and we have not seen anyone wiping or spraying.

Social Distancing- 6ft social distancing is still a concern on the playground and campus. The vulnerable students are on campus, they share a recess and are from 5 classes, they all play together, and physically touch each other. I reminded their homeroom and adult recess supervisor of our safety rules, but children have a difficult time staying away from each other.

Teachers were asked to open car doors and buckle/unbuckle students from their car seats. This is not safe for families and teachers. After telling the Principal I am not comfortable doing this, she said she will do this. (Everyday for +200 students). She was not able to do drop off or pick up on somedays, and the parents were told it is a rule for them not to leave their vehicle. We just stare at our students and yell at them through the window to unbuckle (not safe for students in carseats) and open their doors. We also need a designated space for parents to park to buckle their child in to their carseats, not drive off with their students not buckled.

PPE- I have been asking for alcohol wipes for our iPads to disinfect the screens. My Kindergarteners are not able to log in to programs and teachers need to type in their passwords for them. Gloves do not work on the touch screen. The Principal just said use what we used to use before COVID, no one used to clean the iPads this often.

Teaching on-line with students in room- Teachers are asked teach online as well as teach and help vulnerable students in the classroom. This balancing act is not fair to all parties involved. If a student needs help, teachers need to leave their computer and walk over to help students in class.

Substitute Teacher- There is no plan for attendance or grab and go food count if a teacher is absent. What happened to our online classes? Teachers are not going to give their WebEx and Google Classroom passwords which are our State ID numbers. Admin needs to be prepared.

Telework- We were told by our Superintendent and Principal that all telework will be turned down. He shared which positions he had accepted to telework and these
are positions for those who work in the district office who normally do not interact with students.

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