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Executive Director

August 3, 2022

Via Email

Mr. Randall M. Tanaka  
Assistant Superintendent  
Office of Facilities and Operations  
State of Hawaii  
Department of Education  
[randall.tanaka@k12.hi.us](mailto:randall.tanaka@k12.hi.us)

**Re: Response and Request for Information Regarding Ventilation SY 22-23**

Dear Mr. Tanaka:

Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) confirms receipt of your July 26, 2022 letter regarding classroom ventilation and partial response to HSTA’s request for information sent to the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) on September 22, 2021.<sup>1</sup> While the HSTA appreciates your communication outlining the broad efforts of the HIDOE to support increasing fresh air exchange and adequate ventilation on campuses, answers to critical questions we asked a year ago remain unanswered. Further, with the recent relaxation of the mandatory masking on school campuses, assessing the levels of fresh air exchange and ventilation in HIDOE workspaces and classrooms, has become of greater importance as a mitigation strategy in school year 2022-2023.

Since the return of students to campuses in the spring of 2021, we have repeatedly asked for information regarding the ventilation in Hawaii’s public schools including but not limited to ventilation reports including their metrics and standards. In particular, we have continued to seek clarity regarding the data dashboard on the HIDOE’s website, which lists 1319 classrooms as “not properly ventilated.”<sup>2</sup> Further, in 2021 the HIDOE OTM office provided HSTA with some data which appeared to identify some schools and classrooms as not meeting all ventilation metrics. However, despite HSTA’s monthly requests for clarification, the HIDOE has left HSTA with many questions that continue to be unanswered.

Thus, HSTA requests the following:

1. A detailed explanation of the HIDOE’s definition of classrooms which “meet all ventilation metrics”, or alternatively the standard being used to determine if a space has adequate fresh air exchange and ventilation. Note: the link on page 8 of HIDOE’s Health and Safety guidance does not meet this request.<sup>3</sup>
2. Confirmation of HIDOE Assessments for adequate fresh air exchange and ventilation.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CC-HSTA-Ventilation-Metrics\\_09.22.2021-1.pdf](https://www.hsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CC-HSTA-Ventilation-Metrics_09.22.2021-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/Return-to-Learn---Metrics.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/COVID-19%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Guidance.pdf#page=8>

- a. Has the HIDOE assessed all classroom spaces, determining if they have adequate ventilation and fresh air exchange? If no, please provide a list of schools and classrooms not assessed.
  - b. Has the HIDOE assessed all non-classroom workspaces such as libraries, offices, and non-school worksites, determining if they have adequate ventilation and fresh air exchange? If no, please provide a list of non-classroom worksites and spaces not assessed.
3. Specific to your July 26, 2022 letter, please provide a detailed list of the 335 schools or worksites and room number identified. In addition, provide a list of schools, worksites with room numbers or any other locations identified as having inadequate ventilation and fresh air exchange.
  - a. Please confirm which classrooms and workspaces on the list have and have not received corrective measures to ensure adequate ventilation and fresh air exchange.
  - b. What is the timeline to retrofit, modify, or make changes to classrooms to meet the adequate ventilation standard?
  - c. Are additional layering strategies deployed in classrooms with inadequate ventilation and fresh air exchange? If yes, what additional strategies are added and enforced?
4. Communication to the Board of Education (BOE), employees, and families.
  - a. Please confirm if individual administrators with facilities responsibilities have been provided the above information.
  - b. Have bargaining unit 05 employees working in spaces with inadequate ventilation and fresh air exchange been informed and provided guidance on how to address the situation? If yes, please provide the name(s), worksite, room number, and a copy of the communication.
  - c. Have parents and guardians of students who are assigned to classrooms with inadequate ventilation and fresh air exchange been informed and provided guidance on how the HIDOE will address the situation? If yes, please provide the name of the school and copy of the communication.
  - d. Has the BOE provided any updates beyond the HIDOE dashboard of 1391 classrooms as being “not properly ventilated?” If yes, please provide a copy.
5. Lastly, the HIDOE issued a press release on August 2, much of the information in the press release was identical to your July 26 letter, except in two areas, please provide the following:
  - a. 73 rooms at 7 schools are identified as tier 4 or 5 which will receive additional attention to increase outside airflow, please identify the specific classroom numbers for each of the affected rooms by school.
  - b. The press release indicates the HIDOE will only focus on rooms in tier 4 and 5, yet the July 26 memo to HSTA states the HIDOE Office of Facilities and Operations will focus on tier 3, 4, and 5. Please explain the difference and why.

HSTA requests the HIDOE provide the above information as soon as possible. HSTA also requests that the HIDOE continue to update the HSTA on any modifications or changes to its practices and guidance via the consultation process. The HSTA continues to reserve its right to continue comment should there be further questions or concerns, with the understanding that it does not in any way negate the

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collective bargaining rights of bargaining unit 05 employees. The information can be transmitted via e-mail at [aeshelman@hsta.org](mailto:aeshelman@hsta.org) or regular US mail.

Sincerely,



Andrea Eshelman  
Deputy Executive Director

C: Bruce Voss, Chairperson, Hawaii Board of Education  
Keith Hayashi, Superintendent, Hawaii Department of Education  
Heidi Armstrong, Interim Deputy Superintendent  
Sean Bacon, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Talent Management  
Ainoa Naniole, Personnel Director, Office of Talent Management  
Ann Mahi, Executive Director, HSTA