



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

June 3, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hawaii State Board of Education

FROM: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senate Special Committee on COVID-19

RE: Request for Comments on the Reopening of Schools

We thank you for the invitation to provide comments and feedback ahead of the Board of Education discussion on reopening guidelines for the Department of Education. We appreciate the effort that the Board has put forward to lead the Department through the 4th quarter of school, summer learning, and reopening of school in August. The COVID-19 committee is eager to work alongside you in this process.

This COVID-19 pandemic has caused everyone to re-think the “new normal” of operations. We appreciate the magnitude of the lift that the Board and Department of Education are faced with in having to change how our students will receive the best education we can provide for them over the next two months. Our comments and questions stem from hours of conversation with teachers, principals, complex area superintendents, families, and community stakeholders from across our State.

We hope that you will understand that with the reopening of school just **9 weeks** away there is growing anxiety among students, parents, teachers, and school administrators with every week that guidance and a plan is not issued. This committee respectfully asks that the Board of Education make their number one priority in the discussion tomorrow a clear and concise timeline for the Department of Education for the guidance to reopen schools so that parents, teachers, and school administrators have the necessary amount of time to put in place their reopening plans. Please note that in the attached Appendix B this committee has included links to other States and County jurisdictions that have already issued their reopening guidance to schools.

For the purposes of consistency we have formatted our questions and feedback to match the discussion format you have issued in your memo to the Board. This can be found as the attached Appendix A to this letter. It is our hope that the Board will understand that the information in this letter is the start of a constructive conversation on how we can be partners moving forward.

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki Senator Kurt Fevella

Cc: Superintendent, Hawaii Department of Education
Complex Area Superintendents, Hawaii Department of Education
Senate President
All Senators

APPENDIX A

- People
 - Students:
 - When will DOE guidance be issued to Complex Areas and Principals on the new requirements for health and safety of students and staff?
 - What is the Department's plan when a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19?
 - Who will be in charge of testing at the schools?
 - Will the schools need to get parent consent for testing?
 - What will be the guidance for SPED students?
 - Family and Community
 - Will families and the community have a chance to express their health and safety concerns with the Department?
 - How will the DOE notify families and the community when a school has a positive COVID-19 case?
 - If schools opt for virtual learning, how will families plan around childcare needs?
 - Staff
 - When will DOE guidance be issued to Complex Areas and Principals on the new requirements for health and safety of staff?
 - Will this be part of collective bargaining with relevant bargaining units?
 - How will the Department address staff concerns regarding health and safety, and will staff not come back to work?
 - Board should issue a directive to encourage redeployment of staff from different schools to assist other schools, i.e., Grab n Go lunches.
 - What will the expectation for school administrators accessibility to the families and parents?
 - What are the training or professional development offered to teachers to prepare them for virtual teaching?
 - Can High School students be used to assist teachers with technology for virtual learning? Can they be eligible for school credit in doing so?

Place

- Physical Space
 - Will the Department provide PPE and sanitizing equipment and supplies to schools or will they be responsible for procurement individually?
 - What is the cost for the health and safety guidelines recommended by the DOE and DOH?
 - Will the Department issue guidance to schools on appropriate models for social distancing?
 - Because secondary students are better candidates for virtual learning than elementary students, has the DOE looked at utilizing middle or even high schools for elementary schools that cannot abide by social distancing guidelines within their own schools if high and middle schools are virtual learning?
- Virtual Space
 - How is the Department tracking the device and internet connectivity needs among each school?
 - Will the Department be procuring devices and providing internet access, or will it be on each individual school to do so?
 - Is the Department considering use of Public Libraries to provide access?
 - Will the Department be issuing a statewide plan or guidance around virtual learning that will be followed consistently by all schools?
 - How will the Department provide access for those who do not have devices or internet access?
 - Is Blackboard the only Learning Management System that the DOE is considering?
 - We are under the impression that teachers are already trained to use Google Classroom and Zoom.
- Where the People are
 - What is the Department's plan to address families who do not wish to send their student back to physical school due to health concerns?
 - What is the Department's plan to address parent and teacher childcare issues if a school opens under with students coming in less than 5 days a week due to physical space limitations?
 - What will the expectations of teachers and staff who are teaching virtually be? Will this be a consistent expectation statewide?
- School Design
 - Learning Design
 - Will professional development be offered to teachers who may need to teacher virtually for part or all the school year?
 - How will the Department address the needs of EL, SPED, and other vulnerable populations in their curriculum and instruction guidance?
 - How will schools make sure that substitute teachers have access to learning systems and curriculum when they are needed?
 - School Operations

- Does the Department have guidance for shifting education should the Governor raise the "threat level" from "new normal" to "act with care" or "safer at home"?
- What is the temperature screening protocol for students, staff, and visitors?
 - What staff on campuses are currently cleared to do temperature checks?
- What coordination is being offered with school and public libraries?
- Will the Department need to increase bus service due to social distancing and cleaning services?
- Support Services
 - What will be the Department guidance around extra-curricular activities, sports, and school clubs?
 - What will be the health criterion used to determine what activities are allowable?

APPENDIX B:

Arizona: Roadmap for Reopening Schools, published June 1st

https://www.azed.gov/communications/files/2020/03/FINAL-DRAFT-AZ-Roadmap-for-Reopening-Schools_6_1_20-1.pdf

Los Angeles: A Planning Framework for the 2020-2021 School Year, published May 27th

https://www.lacoe.edu/Portals/0/LA%20CO%20Schools%202020-21%20Planning%20Framework.pdf?ver=2020-05-26-161915-740&fbclid=IwAR1iRwVw5NAew1Yj2ZNSnhN3EjhZqdBH-RRTmKCeMyRL3tFHT_T4ww2OAZs

Colorado: Education P-12, published April 27th

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/sites/covid19/files/EDUCATION%20P-12-PHO%20Guidance.pdf>

Maryland: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education, published May 2020

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Documents/MSDERecoveryPlan.pdf>

Michigan: Learning at a Distance Guidance", published April 2020

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/LearningDistanceGuidance_686455_7.pdf