



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 04/04/2025

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Bill Title:** GM 0776 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Education, Gubernatorial Nominee, SYLVIA LEE, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

**Purpose of Bill:**

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports GM 776, which nominates Ms. Sylvia Lee for the Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE). Her lifelong dedication to Hawaii's public education system and extensive leadership experience make her an excellent addition to the BOE.

Ms. Lee's career spans decades of service as a teacher, principal, and district specialist, including her work on the Race to the Top grant implementation. In the rollout of the Race to the Top grant, Ms. Lee assisted nine schools in coordinating the sharing of data benchmarks to ensure timely action around goals and next steps. She also served as vice principal and supported the separation of Kea'au Elementary and Intermediate School into a distinct elementary and middle school. Her leadership in school administration, strategic planning, and data-driven decision-making demonstrates her commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students.

Ms. Lee has also played a pivotal role in developing innovative programs and fostering collaboration within the educational community. Her breadth of experience as a teacher, registrar, school administrator, and district-level leader has resulted in a deep understanding of Hawaii's public school system and her passion for student success will benefit the BOE.

The Department strongly recommends the committee confirm Ms. Lee's nomination. Her expertise will be invaluable to the BOE and Hawaii's students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on GM 776.

# SUSAN M. ICHINOSE

*Attorney at Law*

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April 2, 2025

The Hon. Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Hon. Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Education

**Re: GM776 Relating to State Board of Education Nominee Sylvia Lee**

Hearing Date: April 4, 2025  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Senator Kidani, Senator Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

This testimony is being submitted for your consideration of the nomination and confirmation of SYLVIA LEE to a seat on the Board of Education for the State of Hawai`i.

## **BACKGROUND**

Sylvia Lee has been one of my best friends for all but the first few years of my life. We met in the third-grade classroom of Mrs. Yamada at Manoa Elementary School. We have been fast friends ever since---through our years at Manoa, Stevenson Intermediate School, Roosevelt High School, the University of Hawai`i, and throughout all the decades after. We have shared time on the playground, in the classroom, at dining tables in our family living rooms, and at the births and weddings of our respective children. I know her.

Over these decades, I have witnessed her blend her personal skills and experience as a loved and respected teacher to become exceptionally versed in her ultimate professional position as an administrator with the DOE. She has spent her entire working life in the service of and furthering public education in the State of

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The Hon. Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Hon. Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education  
April 2, 2025  
Page 2

Hawai`i. She has done so with a no-nonsense but down-to-earth *mana`o*, and a common sensibility

Please know that Sylvia is a strong and principled individual, but that she has a down-home personality and sense of humor that she carries with her everywhere she goes. Whatever her responsibilities, she takes them---and her friends, family, and colleagues---seriously; but collegially as well. Her professional background speaks for itself; and as her lifelong friend, I can vouch that she is as good as it gets.

I cannot think of a better person to sit on the Board of Education at this crucial time in our State's --- and this nation's--- economic and educational environment. I urge you to advance her nomination to the Senate and advocate for her confirmation. You may rest assured that she will serve the State and its people well on the Board.

I would like to present my testimony in person or virtually, but unfortunately I have a previously scheduled interview of a key witness to conduct beginning at 2 p.m. on April 4, 2025. It is likely to go longer than 3 p.m.. I will do my best, but if I am unable to attend your hearing in person or via Zoom please know that it will not be for lack of trying.

Mahalo, me ke Aloha Pumehana,



***Suzanne T. Terada***  
*Charles R. Kendall Building*  
*888 Mililani Street, Suite 300*  
*Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813*

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*sterada808@gmail.com*

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Education Committee  
Thirty-Third Legislature  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Sylvia B. Lee  
Board of Education, Hawai'i County

Dear Senators:

I write *in support* of the confirmation of Sylvia B. Lee for the Hawai'i County seat of the Board of Education.

I first met Sylvia in, or about, 1977 at a family party and we subsequently became friends. I have not crossed paths with her in the educational field but I anticipate that she excels at all of her endeavors. She is smart - with a sense of humor - and will be an asset to the Board of Education.

Again, I *strongly* support the confirmation of Sylvia B. Lee.

Very Truly Yours,

Suzanne T. Terada

STT:pm

**GM-776**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:02:04 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
scott furusho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**March 31, 2025**

**Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County, GM 776**

**Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,**

**I am writing to express my personal support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education.**

**I have worked with Sylvia as Principal and District Ed. Specialist for many years to automate administrative processes at the school and district levels. I am impressed by her passion and commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawai'i. Her experience with the challenges in rural communities as an educator and administrator is invaluable for the Board of Education.**

**In summary, I believe Sylvia has the dedication and experience necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Scott Furusho**



**STATE OF HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO**  
HILO-WAI'AKEA COMPLEX  
75 AUPUNI STREET, RM. 203  
HILO, HAWAI'I 96720

**April 1, 2025**

**Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my strongest support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. My 19-year professional relationship with Sylvia has provided me with a unique perspective on her staunch commitment to public education in our state.

From her early days as Principal of Mountain View Elementary, where I served as the School Renewal Specialist for the Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area, it was immediately clear that Sylvia possessed an exceptional ability to connect with and lead her school community. Her colleagues held her in high regard, and her dedication to student success was palpable.

Sylvia's career trajectory, encompassing roles as Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist, has equipped her with a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. Her experience spans both urban and rural settings, from Honolulu to Honoka'a, Ka'ū, Kea'au, and Pāhoa, providing her with an invaluable statewide perspective crucial for effective Board of Education membership.

What truly sets Sylvia apart is her remarkable ability to analyze complex issues and develop collaborative, data-driven solutions. I vividly recall her capacity to synthesize principal concerns during meetings and translate them into accessible data, fostering collaboration across schools to benefit all students. Her focus on leveraging data to tell a story and understand the bigger picture demonstrated her profound commitment to equitable outcomes. Furthermore, her empathetic leadership, exemplified by her inclusive approach to school culture (like the holiday office visits), showcases her deep understanding of the diverse needs within our school communities.

In a time when the state faces unique educational challenges, primarily an unpredictable and constantly changing national landscape, it is critically important for the Hawai'i Department of Education to Ne'epapa for our students. Sylvia's proven ability to listen, analyze, and develop practical solutions makes her an ideal candidate. She understands the importance of aligning educational policy with the needs of our diverse communities.

Sylvia Lee possesses the integrity, experience, and vision necessary to serve as an outstanding member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board would be an invaluable asset to our state's educational leadership.

Mahalo for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Esther Kanehailua  
Complex Area Superintendent

March 31, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for  
Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

We would like to express our ardent support for Sylvia Lee to serve on the Hawai'i County Board of Education. My husband and I have known Sylvia for 7 years, as the neighbor that is friendly to all, thanked essential workers during the pandemic with banners on her front picture window, and gets everyone in the spirit of all the holidays with her rotation of festive home decorations. She doesn't have to, but she always does.

Through our many conversations, we learned of her many years as an educator. We could understand the perfect fit. The educators and students who were touched by her were fortunate. Sylvia is one to lead by example with her many positive traits: work-ethic, critical-thinking, organizational skills, excellent communicator, thoughtful, smart, genuinely curious, life-long learner, can-do attitude, and solid integrity – attributes we want in our students, and more importantly, our fellow citizens and contributors to society.

The recipes she shares are concisely detailed, as a good, skilled educator's instructional would be. There are notes on different brands of ingredients, photos of cooking containers that worked best, descriptions of consistency and anticipated outcomes – a sharing of knowledge, teaching moments from a natural educator.

Sylvia will be an asset with her leadership and many practical skills to keep guiding and supporting Education in this formal role. She doesn't have to work for Education at this point in her life, but she always does.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ann  
Friend of Sylvia Lee

**GM-776**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 3:43:17 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rae A Yamanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 3, 2025

Rae A. Yamanaka

94 Kekela St.

Hilo, HI. 96720

Senator Ron Kouchi

Hawai'i State Senate

RE: Testimony in support of Sylvia Lee for the Hawai'i County Board of Education position,  
term: 2025-2028

To the Honorable Senate President Ron Kouchi and the esteemed members of the Senate;

I am very pleased to submit my letter of support for Sylvia Lee. I am a retired teacher who taught at Waiakea High School for 19 1/2 years and most recently was the East Hawai'i Hawai'i State Teachers Association UniServ Director for 15 years before retiring. I am currently the president of the HSTA Retired Association for Hawai'i District.

It was during my tenure as the HSTA UniServ Director that I became acquainted with Sylvia. She was the principal of Mountain View Elementary School. As the union agent responsible for the East Hawai'i schools from Naalehu to Laupahoehoe, my job was to support and uphold the union contract and due process rights for all my teachers. Mountain View Elementary was one of my 32 schools.

I worked closely with all my principals on issues brought by either teachers or administrators. Although Sylvia and I often had opposing viewpoints, more often than not, we were able to successfully resolve many of the problems without the filing of grievances. We learned to respect each other and our positions.

I am positive that Sylvia will bring her wealth of educational expertise, personnel management and leadership capabilities to the issues that come before the Board of Education. She will help guide the Board in formulating the best possible outcomes for public education in Hawai'i. Sylvia's heart is always with the students, teachers and educational staff of Hawai'i. She will be fair and make responsible decisions.

I very much support Sylvia Lee's nomination to the Hawai'i Board of Education, Hawai'i County

position for the 2025-2028 term.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts.

Aloha and Mahalo to all State Legislators for your unselfish service for Hawai'i's people.

Sincerely,

Rae A. Yamanaka

Retired Teacher and HSTA UniServ Director

Currently the Hawai'i District President for HSTA Retired

April 2, 2025

- **Subject: Letter of Support for  
Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for 8 years, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawai'i.

Sylvia has held multiple positions: Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Pahoa. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawai'i public education that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

Our paths crossed when Sylvia and her husband, Ford, moved into our tiny cul-de-sac of 6 homes. A natural go-getter, she made cakes and visited her neighbors to introduce herself. Caring and socially responsible, Sylvia and Ford made lives in our little group of neighbors so much richer and better through the difficult years of the pandemic. They fed us, and checked on everyone to make sure her neighbors were okay. I particularly grew to appreciate her company, as I, too, was an educator in nursing. We shared many lovely hours over tea discussing everything from health care to children's literature. I enjoyed her wide knowledge and curiosity about the world – she asked pertinent questions about my experiences living abroad. Always full of energy and creativity, her garage looked like a library, organized and filled with the most amazing holiday decorations. Her love for children is demonstrated in the time she takes and effort she makes in setting up the most amazing light displays during the holidays for children. We have since moved away from the old neighborhood, but we stay connected with shared interests in being active in social causes. Sylvia is, no doubt, someone who is committed in doing the right things for her community. She talks the talk, AND walks and walk. I have much respect for her.

In summary, Sylvia possesses the experience, attributes, and character necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board of Education would be invaluable. I recommend Sylvia for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Chenit Ong-Flaherty, DNP

**GM-776**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 7:42:54 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Reed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for almost 70 years, all outside of her career and work arena.

Since I was in kindergarten, I have looked up to Sylvia and been thankful that she has been in my life. She has guided myself and others in so many ways, but especially in her ability to listen, really listen, to all sides of a problem or situation before making a decision. She asks pertinent questions to truly understand a position. She is super organized and focused, task-oriented, and relentless in getting things done. She has been the best friend anyone could hope for and I consider her my idol. When I grow up I want to be just like her!

I highly recommend her for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa L. Reed

April 1, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County, GM 776**

To Hawai'i State Senators,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic and unwavering support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. As a School Administrator who has had the opportunity to be mentored, observe and interact with Sylvia Lee from 1999-2013, I am deeply impressed and inspired by her exceptional leadership and dedication to the school community and public education.

As an Educational Officer, Sylvia has consistently demonstrated the following qualities that makes her an invaluable asset to public education:

- **Instructional Leadership:**
  - Sylvia has a strong understanding of what effective learning opportunities can provide for our students. As a school Administrator, she actively worked to improve the learning experiences of students.
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia was dedicated to the academic success of all students, and she consistently used data to drive decision-making and ensured that every child reached their full potential.
- **Mentorship and Support:**
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia excelled in mentoring faculty and staff, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment.
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia provided guidance, resources, and professional development opportunities that empowered educators to grow and thrive.
  - Sylvia understands the importance of building strong relationships with all members of the school community.
- **Visionary Leadership:**
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia had a clear vision for the future of public education and was committed to implementing innovative strategies to achieve that vision.
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia was proactive in identifying and addressing the needs of her school community, and she was always looking for ways to improve school programs and services.
- **Community Engagement:**
  - As a School Principal, Sylvia actively engaged with parents, families, and community members, building strong partnerships that benefited students.
- **Ethical and Dedicated:**
  - Sylvia always acted with the highest level of integrity.
  - Sylvia was always deeply committed to the well being of the students, and staff of her schools.

Sylvia Lee's practical ability to resolve complex situations is impressive. She consistently applied fairness and compassion, backed by solid data analysis. As Program Manager for the Ka'u-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex, she assisted with the implementation of innovative school practices and ensured that schools were successful by assisting with diligent data tracking, progress reporting, and strategic next steps

The Board of Education would derive considerable advantage from the appointment of Sylvia Lee. Her extensive experience as a retired HIDOE Educational Officer, with expertise in school funding, program development, and facilities operation and management, is particularly relevant during periods of economic instability. Moreover, her demonstrated capacity to cultivate trust and facilitate collaborative governance will serve the interests of the public education system effectively. Therefore, I recommend Sylvia Lee without reservation

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Ken K. Watanabe  
Principal  
Waiākea Elementary School



**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**WAIAKEA HIGH SCHOOL**

155 W. KAWILI ST.

HILO, HAWAII 96720-5038

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Website – <http://waiakeahigh.k12.hi.us>

MR. KELCY KOGA  
PRINCIPAL

April 1, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawaii County. GM 776

Dear State of Hawaii Senators:

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawaii County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia since 1997, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serve public schools in the State of Hawaii.

Ms. Lee has held multiple positions in education, such as Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Pahoa. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawaii's public education system that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

Our paths have crossed on numerous occasions, with Ms. Lee always demonstrating the highest levels of integrity and work ethic both as a supervisor and later as a colleague.

Ultimately, Ms. Lee possesses the attributes and character necessary to serve as an effective member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board of Education would be valuable. I highly recommend Sylvia for this vital position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelcy Koga", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr. Kelcy Koga, Principal  
Waiakea High School

April 1, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for  
Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with ardency that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for 20 years, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawaii.

Sylvia has held multiple positions: Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Pahoa. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawai'i public education that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

Our paths crossed when Sylvia became the principal of Mt. View Elementary School in 2005. I was employed at the school as the Student Services Coordinator. During our time working together, she became an influential mentor to me and supported my work with the Hawaii Department of Education. Her years of experience, intelligence, and insights impressed upon me and inspired me to pursue a leadership role. As a result of her mentorship, I became a HIDOE principal. I cannot fully express my adoration of her and appreciation for what she has done for me personally and my career. Not only is she adept in her knowledge of the educational environment in Hawaii, she is also an empathetic and caring educator at heart. This commitment to education stays with her even after her retirement. Her greatest skill set is in organization, technology, and thoughtful decision making.

In summary, Sylvia possesses the attributes and character necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board of Education would be valuable for all of our haumana. I recommend Sylvia for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elna M. Gomes

Hawaii Department of Education Principal, Retired

**GM-776**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 9:31:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Kaaiakamanu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3/31/25

Subject: Letter of Support for

Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776

Dear State of Hawaii Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for 32 years, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawaii.

Sylvia has held multiple positions: Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Paho. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawai'i public education that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

My best friend is Sylvia's oldest daughter Tiffany and by extension she became a second mother to me growing up. I have deep respect and love for Sylvia the mother and friend, but even as an adolescent I could recognize that Sylvia's contribution to the DOE was impressive and inspirational. I have many memories of the delicious meals she made and the laughs we shared. As a mother, she single-handedly raised two incredibly intelligent and successful daughters, who happen to be my life-long friends. She set high standards and supported my education and career. Sylvia and her entire ohana celebrated many milestones along side my ohana, including watching my basketball games, graduating from high school, going to college, getting a master's degree, and eventually becoming a Behavioral Health Specialist in the

Department of Education, a position that I've held in Pahoa for the last 11 years. Sylvia's had an immense impact on my early life which guided me toward dedicating the last 20 years towards improving the mental health of Hawaii's keiki.

I did not have the opportunity to work with Sylvia professionally, but many of our mutual colleagues speak highly of her ability and innovation. She is a computer whiz and loves organizing complicated data, cataloging history/photos, and developing databases for easy access to information. Even in retirement, Sylvia's work ethic is unmatched and something that is frankly quite rare in our current workforce. The Hawaii Board of Education would be lucky to have her experience, knowledge, and tenacity. I feel confident that Sylvia's contribution to the BOE would be in the best interest of Hawaii and it's students.

In summary, Sylvia possesses the attributes and character necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board of Education would be valuable. I wholeheartedly recommend Sylvia for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kaaiakamanu, MA MFT

State of Hawaii Department of Education

Kea'au-Ka'u-Pahoa Complex/Pahoa High & Intermediate School

Behavioral Health Specialist IV

March 31, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawaii County. GM 776

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter in strong support of Ms. Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawaii County seat on the Board of Education. I have had the pleasure and privilege of working with Ms. Lee for the school years 2008-2011. I taught Kindergarten and First grade at Mountain View Elementary School where she was the principal.

Ms. Lee is the perfect candidate for the Hawaii County seat on the Board of Education because for those years we worked together, her main passion was to ensure that all students would be prepared for the future.

To accomplish this, she did 3 things. First, she articulated a shared vision of what school wide instruction looks like and supported teachers in achieving this goal. She implemented America's Choice School Design for English Language Arts; Building Foundations (Phonemic Awareness) and Investigations for Math. All three curriculums focused on student engagement and high expectations for student performance using active thinking and problem solving through rigorous instruction, flexible learning procedures, and classroom discussions that showcased students' understanding and fluency. To execute these rigorous curriculums, Ms. Lee offered and funded teachers' relevant professional development opportunities, in-service training sessions, and educational technology. She also hired highly qualified academic coaches to provide the right support and partner with classroom teachers in identifying goals and best practices in the classroom.

Second, Ms. Lee had strong administrative skills for managing budgets, resources, hiring, and maintaining facilities. During her time as principal, she provided resources, materials, and support for classroom management. We teachers had what we needed and wanted in our classrooms. Our students had school supplies and technology. We always had a healthy amount of copy paper and working copying machines. She invested in books. Students had guided reading and independent reading books, while teachers had professional resources to help them. We had a 16-18 to 1 student/teacher ratio in the classroom. Educational Assistants and tutors were always available to support students and teachers. Our school facility was clean, organized, and well maintained.

Third, Ms. Lee established an open-door policy and encouraged active listening. She kept lines of communication open for all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents) to voice their concerns, ideas, suggestions, and observations. As a result she addressed difficulties proactively and collaborated with stakeholders to identify and implement solutions.

In conclusion, it is for these reasons that I highly recommend Ms. Lee for the Hawaii County seat on the Board of Education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ana Concessa P. Bingham NBCT  
Reading Interventionist/EL Coordinator/Teacher  
Mountain View Elementary School

**GM-776**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 9:27:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gwen A Kobayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 2, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 766

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have know Sylvia for more than 30 years, all outside of her career and work area.

Our paths have crossed because of the many years I have taken care her Family and her hair needs as their Hair Stylist. Of which both of us have been captive audience to each other as she has sat in my chair for many hours. We both have experienced major events and happenings of which we have shared with one another. There have been many very thought provoking and entertaining conversations! She always kept me on my toes about why things are done the way we do it. It kept me wanting to learn and make sure I always have the right answers for her.

I have learned alot from her on how the educational needs of children continue to change and why it needs to keep progressing. I would always question her on why things are so different from when our children were in school.

My reasons for supporting Sylvia are simple. She has always been very dedicated to her students and her family. Sylvia is going to make sure the educational system is the best for all the Children of Hawai'i.

I recommend her for this important position.

thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gwen Kobayashi

Owner, Hilo Style



April 2, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is both an honor and pleasure that I write to support Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for over 25 years, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawaii.

Sylvia has held multiple positions: Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Pahoia. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawai'i public education that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

I first met Sylvia at Kea'au Elementary School in 2000 as a number of Hawai'i District administrators, including Sylvia and I, volunteered to install the network throughout this brand new campus. Although it was just a brief encounter, I was immediately struck by Sylvia's passion, impeccable work ethic, and commitment to serving all students' needs.

I had the privilege to work with Sylvia again from 2011 to 2013. During that time, Sylvia was appointed as District Educational Specialist to manage the Race to the Top project for the Ka'u-Kea'au-Pahoia Complex Area and I was hired as the Personnel Regional Specialist for the same complex area. We worked very closely with each other due to the nature of our positions and because we shared the same office space. To say the tasks Sylvia and the rest of the team were presented with were challenging would be a gross understatement. There was no playbook for this project, expectations were extremely high, and timelines were extremely short. Sylvia's ability to organize, synthesize data, and develop systems played a vital role in the complex area's successes. Throughout this high stakes project, I was most impressed by Sylvia's steadfast commitment to her na'au (core) - THE STUDENTS.

In summary, Sylvia possesses the attributes and character necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her many experiences will be an asset to the Board as she will be able to view issues from a wide variety of perspectives. Most importantly, all students will benefit. I recommend Sylvia for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shane M. Saiki

Retired State of Hawaii Department of Education, Educational Officer

April 3, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for  
Sylvia Lee, Board of Education, Hawai'i County. GM 776**

Dear State of Hawai'i Senators,

It is with enthusiasm that I write to express my support for Sylvia Lee's candidacy for the Hawai'i County seat on the Board of Education. I have known Sylvia for [number] years, during which time she has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to serving public education in the State of Hawaii.

Sylvia has held multiple positions: Teacher, Registrar, Vice-Principal, Principal, District Educational Specialist, and State Educational Specialist. Each position demanded a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Department of Education. She has served in the heavily populated urban area of Honolulu as well as the rural communities of Honokaa, Kau, Keaau and Pahoa. This diverse experience has equipped her with an overarching perspective of Hawai'i public education that is invaluable for effective Board of Education membership.

Our paths crossed more than 15 years ago when we served as administrators in the Kea'au, Ka'u, Pāhoa Complex Area. During that time, I had the privilege of working alongside her, and it was immediately clear that she possessed a deep commitment to education and the well-being of the students and staff in our district. Her leadership style was collaborative and always focused on improving the learning environment. Her greatest skill set, however, was her exceptional organizational abilities and attention to detail. She had an innate ability to manage multiple tasks and priorities while ensuring that nothing was overlooked. Whether it was planning complex events or overseeing day-to-day operations, she handled it all with precision and grace. Even after all these years, I continue to admire her passion, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to education.

In summary, Sylvia possesses the attributes and character necessary to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Board of Education. Her addition to the Board of Education would be valuable. I recommend Sylvia for this important position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Michelle Payne-Arakaki

Retired Principal