



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

May 17, 2021

Aloha HIDOE Parents and Guardians,

As the 2020-21 school year comes to a close, I would like to first mahalo you for being a partner in your child's education in a very challenging school year. I would also like to update you on plans for the upcoming academic year.

Improving conditions in our communities along with a growing body of science-backed research and updated health guidance have allowed us to increase in-person learning opportunities over the past two months at our elementary schools. I have been visiting schools statewide and it has been a great source of joy to hear the sounds of students engaged in learning and interacting with their peers and teachers again.

Our schools have proven to be safe spaces throughout this crisis. Despite more than 800 cases reported by schools and offices since June 2020, consistent adherence to safety protocols has meant that – to date – no transmission of the virus has occurred at a Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) facility.

These protocols include enforcing three essential strategies the Hawaii State Department of Health advises schools implement in every situation: Directing students and staff to stay home when sick, consistent mask-wearing, and proper hand hygiene.

We also now have an added layer of protection with COVID vaccinations more widely available and the recent approval of the vaccine for adolescents ages 12 and older. All of our high schools have been paired with health care providers to offer vaccinations to interested students and families, and we are now focusing on our middle school campuses. Additionally the Department is finalizing plans for weekly COVID testing at select pilot schools to further contain spread in our school communities.

With these systems in place, we are optimistic we can sustain positive changes and start to resume a sense of normalcy in the fall. **For the 2021-22 school year scheduled to begin on August 3, all HIDOE schools will be fully open for daily, in-person learning.** This includes resuming co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as clubs, band and athletics.

Thank you for continuing to prioritize your child's education amid these challenging times. We are ready and eager to welcome all of our students back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christina M. Kishimoto".

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent

CMK:nk