Our monthly Ho'oha'aeo newsletter will temporarily transition to a COVID-focused weekly edition as we strive to provide updates and helpful resources. As students are kept at the forefront of all that we do, we want to ensure employees and school communities are informed. Please keep an eye out for this weekly digital update.

Updates from Interim Superintendent Hayashi

Aloha!

In our second weekly edition, we continue the effort to keep our HIDOE community informed on important announcements and what we are working on. We appreciate your trust and continued support as we work together to prioritize the safety and learning of our students.

Deep Appreciation for our HIDOE ‘Ohana

» I want to again extend my sincerest gratitude to our HIDOE staff across the system, and especially our employees working the front lines in our schools. I know the workload and demands that have been placed on our schools amid this latest surge are unprecedented and intense. Please know that we are actively exploring strategies to help provide relief and recognition for the work that you do every day on behalf of our students.

COVID Test Kits for Schools

» This week, it was announced that multiple efforts are being made on a federal level to provide our communities greater access to COVID test kits. The Department is working hard with state and federal partner agencies to ensure that a sufficient supply of these federally granted tests are designated to staff and students in our public schools.

» The Department currently offers school-based testing programs on over 150 campuses.

Positive Case Dashboard

» As an extended courtesy, the Department has been providing daily updates on our dashboard of all positive COVID cases across the public school system.

» Due to the recent surge of cases, there has been a delay of case reports by some schools. Prior to omicron, there were very few, if any, instances of delayed reporting on the dashboard.

» To be clear, reporting of cases to the Department of Health and notifications to families and close contacts was never compromised. Schools are the direct line of communication with their school communities and have been prioritizing the immediate identification and notification of close contacts to keep campuses safe.

» We remain fully committed to the intent of Act 4, which requires school case counts to be published on our website weekly. We are revisiting our process to avoid future delays in reports.
HIDOE Case Counts

A total of 3,672 confirmed or probable cases were reported across Hawai‘i’s 257 public schools from Jan. 10-14 for a daily average of 734.4 cases (as of Jan. 18). For the latest case count information, visit bit.ly/HIDOECOVID-19Updates.

January 10-14

Questions of the Week

Q: Where can students and staff access tests?

A: To find a COVID-19 community testing location near you, click here. It is now also possible to order FREE home tests via the US Postal Service. School-based testing efforts will continue to expand in upcoming weeks through collaboration with the state Department of Health, federally funded programs and community health partners. Additional information on school-based testing opportunities can be found here.

Q: Do schools supply all students and staff with KN95 masks?

A: While some schools do have a supply of KN95 masks, based on the state Department of Health and CDC guidelines, the inventory remains prioritized for employees in health-related or higher-risk positions. Schools continue to have disposable surgical face masks on hand for students or staff who may have forgotten their mask at home or who need a replacement mask during the day. The Department is working closely with community partners to increase PPE supplies within our school communities.

ICYMI

» Kailua Intermediate’s Eric Stinton published his commentary in Civil Beat. Stinton shared
his experiences of what it's like to be a public school teacher in these difficult times.

» Find out how to be part of a movement that will make a difference to future generations at the It’s Great to be a Teacher Event! Learn more about how to become a teacher in Hawai‘i.

» Just a reminder, HIDOE families and students can call the Hawai‘i Keiki Health Hotline to receive quick and confidential health information at no cost. Connect with a nurse or APRN on your child’s medical and/or mental health and well-being.

Stay Informed

The Department will be presenting a COVID-19 update to the Board of Education during its General Business Meeting tomorrow, Jan. 20. Register via Webex here to tune in at 1:30 p.m.

HAWAI‘I STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Keith Hayashi
Interim Superintendent

Phyllis Unebasami
Deputy Superintendent

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

Heidi Armstrong
Student Support Services

Sean Bacon
Interim Talent Management

Brian Hallett
Fiscal Services

Randall Tanaka
Facilities and Operations

Christine Shaw
Acting Information Technology Services

Cara Tanimura
Interim Strategy, Innovation and Performance

Teri Ushijima
Interim Curriculum and Instructional Design

HoOohaOaheo
PUBLIC SCHOOL PROUD

Nanea Kalani
Executive Editor

Chanel Honda
Managing Editor

Sara Miyazono
Creative Director

Derek Inoshita
Contributing Writer

Krislyn Yano
Contributing Writer

Cara Phillips
Contributing Writer

CONNECT WITH US » HawaiiPublicSchools.org

1390 Miller St. Honolulu, HI 96813 | Phone: (808) 784-6200 | Fax: (808) 586-3234
Email: newsletter@k12.hi.us

This email was sent to all HIDOE staff and subscribed readers.