



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

House Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 16, 2021
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309

House Bill 613, House Draft 1, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committees:

The Board of Education (“Board”) appreciates the intent of HB613 HD1 but has comments. HB613 HD1 would require the Board and Department of Education (“Department”) to use Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (“ESSER funds”) moneys to offset any budget reductions that would result in the reduction of personnel who are subject to a collective bargaining agreement and who are employed at the school level.

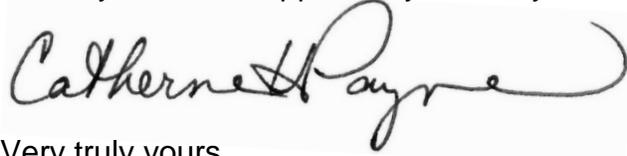
While the Board supports proposed legislation that preserves funding and resources for student learning at the classroom level, the Board has concerns with the Legislature directing the Board how to allocate federal funds, especially because the Board and Department, as the State Educational Agency and Local Educational Agency, are accountable for the proper expenditure of such funds.

Rather than directing the Board and Department on how to expend non-recurring federal funds, it is more suitable for the Legislature to determine how much general funds it can appropriate to maintain as many resources at the classroom level as practicable. Governor David Ige recently proposed to give back approximately \$123 million in general funds to the Department following the Council on Revenue’s revised revenue projections. The Legislature could ensure as minimal impact to the classroom level as possible by appropriating these previously unavailable general funds as necessary.

The Board appreciates the Legislature's eagerness to join the public conversation along with Hawaii State Teachers Association about the best use of the ESSER funds, and

the Board will be opening up that conversation with an opportunity at the Board's February 18 general business meeting for the public to provide comments on the Department's proposed plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Payne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Very truly yours,

Catherine Payne
Chairperson, Board of Education
Chairperson, 2021 Legislative Ad Hoc Committee