SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP

Draft Report
November 1, 2023

Purpose: To evaluate the strategies utilized to accommodate displaced students and staff to return to school, and to prepare recommendations for appropriate legislative action.

SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP
DRAFT REPORT NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Schools Working Group

SUMMARY

The Schools Working Group is comprised of Co-Chair Representatives Justin H. Woodson and Jenna Takenouchi and Member Representatives Mark J. Hashem, Sam Satoru Kong, Trish La Chica, Lisa Marten, John M. Mizuno, and Elijah Pierick. The purpose of the Schools Working Group is to evaluate the strategies utilized to accommodate displaced students and staff to return to school.

The Schools Working Group ascertained that it is prudent to incorporate community input at the beginning of the policy making process. After initial meetings contemplating various topics the Working Group believed required examination, a community listening meeting was held by the Working Group on September 28, 2023, in West Maui to hear directly from those most impacted by the wildfire, learn from their experiences, and verify that the Working Group's focus was aligned with that of the West Maui community. The Working Group not only desired to determine whether there was consensus for proposed policy prescriptions for West Maui, but to also determine the applicability of potential systematic changes statewide. The community listening meeting in West Maui largely substantiated the Working Group's thought process and the scope of its assignment.

Prior to evaluating the methodologies implemented to accommodate displaced students and Department of Education employees, the Schools Working Group determined that it was equally important to focus on whether current statewide practices are sufficient to address situations arising prior to or during an emergency.

Members gathered data by reviewing various federal and state emergency management documents, emergency proclamations, laws, and news articles, as well as by speaking with key stakeholders.

The Schools Working Group examined the state of displaced students and the Department of Education employees at schools in West Maui and the efforts to return students to those schools, identify gaps and inefficiencies in the process, and offer solutions to address these pressing issues.

SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP
DRAFT REPORT NOVEMBER 1, 2023

FINDINGS

Finding 1: Need for School Evacuation Plans

One of the most prominent areas of concern for the Schools Working Group, and ultimately shared by West Maui community members, is the adequacy of evacuation plans in place and the need for such plans to be practiced in order to ensure preparedness in the event of another natural or man-made emergency occurring during school operating hours. Since the Schools Working Group held its West Maui community listening meeting, other communities, such as Makakilo in West Oahu,[1] have also expressed similar concerns about evacuation plans for their public schools and the lack of available alternate escape routes.

As a result of the significant apprehension communicated at the Schools Working Group's West Maui community listening meeting, the Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Department of Education, private land-owners, and West Maui community members, developed an alternate evacuation route for the Lāhainā area public schools. Per the strong request of the West Maui community, the Department of Transportation completed the project prior to the reopening of the Lāhainā public schools. The Department of Transportation is also working on an additional emergency evacuation routes in the Lāhainā public schools area. This is an example of how, through collaboration, state government can be more responsive to community needs.

The working group recognizes that, according to the Department of Education Emergencies webpage, each public school statewide should have an operational Emergency Action Plan in place. The Department of Education's website indicates five categories of emergency drills conducted annually by each public school. These drill areas include evacuation, tsunami, earthquake, lockdown, and shelter-in-place. Lockdown drills simulate the possibility of an internal or external threat on campus, such as an unknown person that is perceived to be of danger on or near a Department of Education school campus. During this exercise, students and staff remain in classrooms behind locked doors until they are cleared to leave their secured areas. Shelter-in-place drills allow students and staff to practice sheltering from hazardous materials or extreme weather conditions. The evacuation drill prepares for dangerous conditions on the campus itself. The Schools Working Group finds to complement these evacuation drills, each school should also have a Pre-Designated Evacuation Site location to evacuate to in the case of an emergency.

[1] Honore, Marcel, *After Lahaina, Makakilo Residents Press Harder For Another Exit Off Their Hill*, Honolulu Civil Beat (October 13, 2023)

Two other campus drills are required in accordance with the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Fire drills must be practiced annually in each school, and most recently in 2023, the Legislature also mandated active shooter drills be developed for each Department of Education school.[2]

In addition to the potential issues of executing the actual Department of Education evacuation plans, the Department also has challenges effectively communicating those plans. The Schools Working Group received feedback that the Department of Education had difficulty communicating with parents and students about the evacuation plan during the crisis. This led to confusion and chaos, as people did not know where to go, what to do, and who to contact in the days that followed.

Finding 2: Learning Options for Displaced Department of Education Students

The Schools Working Group finds the Department of Education provided various instructional choices when addressing the displaced West Maui community's school needs. Distance learning, also referred to as online learning, was offered to families. Families were also provided an opportunity to attend public schools outside of the impacted areas. Bus service was ultimately arranged to accommodate transportation to and from these alternate school locations; however the Working Group notes that sending West Maui families outside of the area was not largely desired by the community. For those West Maui families that did not want to send their children to public schools in Central and South Maui, learning hubs were established in West Maui. These learning hubs were not designed to deliver education fully in the traditional sense but did provide a more structured learning environment for Department of Education students and were operated by Department employees. These learning hubs also provided services for those students with special needs and students from Kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion) schools. The learning hubs for special needs students were organized to more quickly get these students back into safe learning environments, and for Kaiapuni students by request of the West Maui Kaiapuni community.

There were also requests for school choice as an option, defined as the alternative to use public education funds to pay for private school tuition in West Maui; however, the Hawaii State Constitution prohibits the use of public funds for the support or benefit of any sectarian or nonsectarian private educational institution.[3]

[2] Act 53, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023

[3] Section 1, Article X, Hawaii State Constitution

The Working Group also finds in extreme situations of natural disaster designations, the Department of Education directly, or indirectly, has the ability to assemble temporary structures to hold public school classes in existing Department sites or in alternate locations. The United States Army Corps of Engineers is currently constructing a temporary public school at the Pulelehua planned community development site in Napili as a long-term interim option for students and staff of King Kamehameha III Elementary School. The interim school will be a fully functional Department of Education public school. Completion will take ninety-five days to six months. The Department of Education has also leased and purchased flex-space classrooms akin to classroom tents, but with hardwood floors, lighting, air-conditioners, and power generators. These flex-space classrooms are being leveraged to increase learning space capacity at Maui Waena Intermediate School in Kahului, Central Maui, and Princess Nahiʻenaʻena Elementary School in Lāhainā , West Maui.

Finding 3: Potential Health Hazards at School Sites and Monitoring Systems

Short-term health hazards during a fire include exposure to heat, explosions, carbon monoxide, ozone, chemicals released from products that burned, and accidents from damaged structures or traffic during an escape.

Long-term health hazards remain from exposure to chemicals and metals adsorbed in the ash left behind if they are inhaled, ingested or touched. The chemicals and metals released from burning of manmade infrastructure and materials may include:

- Heavy metals such as lead, mercury, copper, arsenic, chromium, cadmium, magnesium and nickel from burning buildings, cars and other products;
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons from burning fossil fuels as well as plastics, roofing materials and asphalt;
- Volatile organic compounds which are emitted as gases at ambient temperatures from certain solids or liquids;
- Aldehydes from burning plants, such as formaldehyde; and
- Asbestos from fire retardant materials in older buildings.

Very little is known about the health effects of exposure to chemical mixtures. It is unknown whether they can have synergistic effects that amplify exposure. There is also limited data on low-level exposure over time to the contaminants as studies focus on high short-term exposures.

Ash may become airborne in the form of small solid or liquid droplets of Particulate Matter (PM) and inhaled. PM10 (0.01 millimeters and smaller) does not pass the bronchi and is discharged.

PM 2.5 and smaller may reach the alveoli. Short term exposure to PM 2.5 can cause irritation of the eyes, throat, and lungs. Longer-term exposure can lead to the worsening of chronic respiratory diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease as well as heart attacks.

Water may be contaminated due to plastic pipe degradation or backflow from loss of pressure. Volatile organic compounds may be sucked into pipes and can leach into pipes if they remain there for an extended period of time.

The following actions were taken to address health concerns after the Lāhainā wildfires. Results of the testing are posted on DOE's website detailing progress reports on reopening Lahaina schools.

Soil Quality

Because there was no visible ash observed at the three schools after the fires, the Department of Health did not recommend testing the soil at the three campuses. However, out of an abundance of caution, the Department of Education hired an independent consultant on September 13, 2023, Ford & Associates, to conduct soil testing for heavy metals and dioxins at the three schools.

For the testing at Princess Nāhiʻenaʻena Elementary School and Lāhainā Intermediate School, the soil results were all within standards and are safe. For Lāhaināluna High School, the results showed an isolated finding in half the samples of a slightly elevated nickel level. The Department of Health said this is not uncommon in volcanic soil across the State, and the findings were still well below the United States Environmental Protection Agency threshold and considered safe.

Drinking Water Quality

The Maui County Department of Water Supply conducted water sampling from the treatment plant from above Lāhaināluna, which provides water to all three campuses. No destruction or fire damage to any of the properties in that water distribution area was found and there was no recorded loss of water pressure. Subsequently, multiple rounds of further water testing have all demonstrated the absence of any fire-related contaminants in the drinking water source feeding the three schools.

Currently, drinking water quality is not a stated concern and standard procedures will be maintained. Maui County's Department of Water Supply and the state Department of Health conduct regular testing on water and will remain the lead agencies if conditions change. Updated information is provided by the Maui County Department of Water Supply on its website.

Flushing of all water lines was completed on October 2, 2023. This is a standard procedure when campuses are closed for an extended period and water in the plumbing can become stagnant.

Air Quality

1. **Baseline air sampling** was conducted using specialized air monitors and air sampling. Air monitoring consists of using a AreaRae Pro Portable Monitor to measure contaminants. Air sampling involves collection of air for laboratory analysis using Summa Cannisters. The purpose of air sampling is to measure how much of a specific contaminant is present in the air over a period of time. For this response, samples were collected over time periods ranging from 12 to 24 hours and were submitted to a laboratory for analysis. Laboratory analysis was done for metals including lead and arsenic, asbestos, particulate matter, and 42 volatile organic compounds.

   Results showed that no metals or asbestos samples exceeded reference levels, and PM 2.5 was detected at low levels consistent with what is expected for this region of Maui under regular conditions. Three types of volatile organic compounds were measured at levels above EPA's Regional Screening Levels. The three volatile organic compounds measured at elevated levels are benzene, naphthalene, and carbon tetrachloride. They are commonly present in urban areas at the levels that were detected in these samples.

   - Benzene results from burning fossil fuels. Two of eight samples in Lāhainā and two of two samples in Kula were higher than the reference level for benzene; however, the levels detected are below levels expected in suburban and rural air.
   - Naphthalene is a combustion byproduct found in the emissions of fires and cigarette smoke, as well as vehicle exhaust and industrial sources. The levels were above the reference value found at most testing sites in Lāhainā and Kula are expected to diminish as the cleanup of the site continues. Levels are much lower than those known to cause acute health problems.
   - Carbon tetrachloride is a manufactured chemical that does not occur naturally and is commonly found in air, water, and soil because of past and present releases. One sample in Lāhainā and one sample in Kula were found to be above the reference level. However, the levels detected in Lāhainā and Kula were below background levels expected in cities.

The following is validated United States Environmental Protection Agency air sampling data, as conducted by Weston-TEchLaw JV, LLC:

- Analytical Report

- August 2023 Air Sampling Event
  - Validation Report 1
  - Validation Report 2
  - Validation Report 3

2. **Ongoing air quality** monitoring for PM 2.5 has been established and made publicly available. Following the wildfires, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Health installed 17 continuous real-time air monitors. There are 12 PurpleAir PM 2.5 monitors in Lāhainā and Upcountry Maui as well as five Environmental Beta Attenuation Mass (E-BAM) monitors in Lāhainā. E-BAMs are effective for measuring PM 2.5, having accuracy and precision consistent with U.S. EPA requirements, and results comparable to United States Environmental Protection Agency reference methods. The PurpleAir monitors provide additional geographical monitoring coverage within communities for possible ash and dust in the air. Real-time air monitoring data is available on the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map website through searching for "Lāhainā, HI". External sensors installed at Princess Nāhiʻenaʻena Elementary School, Lāhainā Intermediate School, and Lāhaināluna High Schools can be viewed on PurpleAir's website.

3. **Handheld air sensors** are provided to each school administrator to monitor trends in PM 2.5 levels indoors.

4. **High efficiency particulate air filters** are in all indoor spaces at school.

5. **Air Quality Action Plan: Guidelines** were created and made available to the public on school actions to be taken for different concentrations of particulate matter 2.4 microns or less. Air quality is always monitored and measures to reduce exposure are ramped up as PM 2.5 concentrations increase, as documented in the Air Quality Action Plan Lāhainā Schools, found in the Department of Education's Health & Safety Guidance for Reopening Lāhainā Schools.

6. **Future planned ash testing** will be conducted as soon as United States Environmental Protection Agency grants access to the Hawaii the Department of Health in early November. The Department of Health will sample ash from 200 spots in Lāhainā and send it to the lab to test for hazards.

Finding 4: Mental Health Support Services

The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Health, have several types of services to aid community members, families, and students dealing with mental health challenges in the wake of the West Maui wildfires.

Available pre-existing Department of Education resources include:

- School-based services for in-person mental health and well-being services available using the Hawaii Multi-tiered System of Support with continuum of care provided by school level staff, complex area school-based behavioral health personnel, and community partners;
- Virtual services via Hazel Health for tele-therapy sessions with licensed therapists; and
- Information on using Hawaii CARES via call or text to 988;

Additional support coordinated by the Department of Education to expand access to services includes:

- Community-based services for in-person visits at Lahaina Comprehensive Health Center, Maui Family Guidance Center in Wailuku, and a satellite clinic location set up at Kaanapali Beach Resort;
- Twenty-four/seven phone counseling service available to youth and families provided by HMSA and partner Carelon Behavioral Health, regardless of HMSA membership;
- Community liaisons tasked with providing ongoing outreach to students and families;
- Dedicated phone hotline and two-way texting support for students and families; and
- Staff training on providing additional student support.

The Department of Education advised that its Maui District staffed 133 mental health positions for all Maui County schools, including 17 school-based behavioral health staff for Hana-Lahainaluna-Lanai-Molokai Complex Area. Lāhainā campuses also staff four behavioral health specialists and 11 school counselors. Ahead of re-opening in October 2023, the Department of Education planned to send 20 additional mental health staff to Maui County, with 12 professionals dedicated to Lāhainā.

Teachers and Department of Education staff were also offered in-person and telehealth mental support options, including Extended Employee Assistance Program support to account for ongoing needs and healing.

While options were made available, the continuing mental health provider shortage in the State, and particularly on the neighbor islands, raises questions about actual access to, and connection with, a provider. The 2022 Access to Care Survey, compiled by Community First Hawaii, reported

78 percent of providers listed "mental health/counseling" as the most-needed medical specialty in short supply, followed by psychiatry at 73 percent.

At the Schools Working Group community listening meeting held in West Maui, parents voiced concerns about how the shortage of providers impacted not just accessibility to a mental health professional but raised questions about how best to get services with a provider who could connect with youth in ways that accommodated ethnic, cultural, and social considerations to achieve successful healing. Given the known shortage of providers, expanding access to mental health and trauma services is a necessity to ensure student wellbeing in the classroom.

Finding 5: Traffic Impacts in Reassigning Displaced Students and Staff

King Kamehameha III Elementary School was lost to the 2023 Lāhainā wildfire. Students and staff of the elementary school will temporarily hold school instruction at Princess Nahiʻenaʻena Elementary School in Lāhainā. All three remaining Lāhainā public schools are located in the same geographic area off of Lahainaluna Road. Holding all West Maui public schools in the same geographic location has raised concerns among community members about the imminent increase in vehicular traffic congestion.

Finding 6: Student Promotion and Graduation Timelines

Section 302A-251, Hawaii Revised Statutes, mandates that Department of Education elementary and secondary schools have 180 instructional days that include 1080 student hours. However, the statute also provides that the Board of Education may grant a waiver to any individual school and should adopt policies and procedures to do so.[4]

Pursuant to Board of Education policy, students also have minimum course and credit requirements to receive a high school diploma. Some students might be at risk of failing to pass particular required courses due to school disruption.

Finding 7: Displaced Students Faced Disruption and Challenges in School Athletics Programs

The Hawaii High School Athletic Association does not have guidelines within their governing documents or administrative rules specifying how to handle athletes that switch schools in

[4] Section 302A-251, Hawaii Revised Statutes

unplanned ways due to disasters. The default rules require student-athletes to be enrolled by certain deadlines and to sit out at least one year before playing the same sport at a new school.

The restrictions are waived for students who are moving into the State, moving between islands, and moving from a public to a private school. The federal McKinney-Vento Act also requires states and local educational agencies to eliminate barriers related to housing and location to ensure that students experiencing homelessness who meet eligibility criteria, such as academic and skill levels, can participate fully in athletic and other extracurricular activities.

"Disaster rules" by the local leagues are made only after a disaster is officially designated. In the case of the Puna volcanic eruption, maximum flexibility was given for student-athletes. In the case of the Lāhainā wildfire, the Maui Interscholastic League determined that students could not switch schools mid-season and that they should not join a team at the school they found themselves at if they wanted to keep the option open to play with Lahainaluna High School, should it reopen. At least one student had joined a team at King Kekaulike High School and wanted to switch to the Lahainaluna High School team when the student was notified of being able to return when the school opened. It is possible the student could have gotten an exemption from the start but was not given an exemption initially because the student did not request one. Later, the student was given an exemption. It is unclear if other students would have made different choices if provided with more flexibility.

Finding 8: Federal Hazard Mitigation Funding Opportunities for Schools

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers a variety of hazard mitigation funding opportunities that can be used to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to people and property from future disasters. These funding opportunities are available to counties, state departments, and certain private non-profits. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Developing hazard mitigation plans;
- Retrofitting existing structures to make them more resilient against wind and flooding; and
- Installing generators or microgrids.

For schools, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is the most relevant funding opportunity. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides funding for a variety of projects that can help schools to reduce their risk from natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and wildfires. Examples of eligible Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects for schools include:

- Reinforcing school buildings to make them more resistant to wind and earthquakes;

- Elevating school buildings to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Installing backup generators to ensure that schools can operate during power outages; and
- Creating safe rooms where students and staff can shelter during storms.

Other Federal Emergency Management Agency hazard mitigation funding opportunities that may be relevant to schools include:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Post Fire, which provides funding to help communities recover from wildfires and reduce the risk of future wildfires;
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, which is designed to support communities in developing and implementing long-term hazard mitigation strategies; and
- Flood Mitigation Assistance, which is designed to support communities in developing and implementing long-term flood mitigation strategies and reduce their risk from flooding.

Finding 9: Building and Rebuilding Resilient Schools

Upon review of the current school campuses, it was found that a number of components left facilities vulnerable to fire. Many school buildings in Hawaii are surrounded by landscaping that consists of highly flammable vegetation, which increases the risk of fires spreading quickly to school buildings during wildfire events. Additionally, a significant number of school buildings in Hawaii lack modern fire suppression systems, such as automatic fire sprinklers and fire alarms, leaving them vulnerable in the event of a fire. Fire suppression systems, when properly installed and maintained, can effectively control and extinguish fires, reducing property damage and the risk to students and staff during emergency fire situations. Many school buildings statewide also lack fire-resistant materials and construction practices, leaving them susceptible to rapid fire spread in emergency situations. It is necessary for Hawaii to improve the fire resilience of its school buildings to better protect students, staff, and the valuable educational infrastructure from the threat of wildfires and other emergency fire situations.

Finding 10: Funding Support for Schools

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has tasked the United States Army Corps of Engineers with designing and overseeing the installation of a temporary school campus for the Lāhainā community. The temporary school will serve as an interim solution after the loss of King Kamehameha III Elementary School and will be able to accommodate up to 600 students. The estimated amount for the school construction has not yet been determined, but according to the

Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, the cost share from the State will be a maximum of 10%. The percentage of the cost share will also be affected by the amount of the insurance proceeds that the State receives for the destroyed facility.

In addition, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency is currently getting capital improvement project funds, of approximately $1,000,000 to $3,000,000, for the Hawaii State Shelter Retrofit Program. This program is administered by the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency and provides funding to retrofit existing structures to make them more suitable for use as emergency shelters and is designed to increase the number of available emergency shelters in Hawaii and to improve the quality of those shelters. The program targets existing structures, such as schools, churches, and community centers, that can be retrofitted to meet the needs of emergency shelters.

The program provides funding for a variety of retrofitting activities, including:

- Strengthening roofs and walls to withstand high winds;
- Installing hurricane shutters and impact-resistant windows;
- Elevating structures to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Installing generators and other backup power sources; and
- Creating safe rooms where people can shelter during storms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Establishing Evacuation Plans and Expanding Campus Drill Plans

The Department of Education and Department of Transportation should assess all Department of Education school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes statewide. Emergency Action Plans for individual schools are not easily accessible to the public and state policymakers and should be made readily available. The Schools Working Group strongly suggests the public should have an opportunity to assess these plans for their adequacy as it relates to student and staff safety and operational readiness.

It is important for the Department of Education to also have a communication plan in place for evacuations. Schools can develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan for evacuations to help keep parents, guardians, students, and staff safe in the event of a wildfire. The school evacuation communication plan should include the following components:

- **Identify key stakeholders and communication channels:** This includes parents, students, staff, and emergency responders. The plan should identify how the school will communicate with each group before, during, and after an evacuation.
- **Develop a communication protocol:** This includes establishing clear and concise messages and identifying who is responsible for communicating each message. The plan should also include a process for updating the communication protocol as needed.
- **Test the communication plan regularly:** A report from the Department of Education to the Schools Working Group found that it required significant effort to try to reach the entire student population. Testing the communication plan, similar to a drill, will help to ensure that the plan is effective and that everyone involved knows their roles and responsibilities.
- **Use multiple communication channels:** This includes using social media, email, text messaging, and phone calls. The plan should also identify alternative communication methods in case of power outages or other disruptions.
- **Be culturally responsive:** The plan should be translated into multiple languages and should be accessible to students and individuals with disabilities.
- **Involve the community:** The plan should be developed with input from students, parents, guardians, staff, and emergency responders. This will help to ensure that the plan meets the needs of the community.

The school evacuation communication plan should be shared with all students, parents, guardians, and staff at the beginning of the school year through posting on the school's website and social media pages and sending a copy home to parents and guardians. Schools should collect and maintain up-to-date contact information for all students, parents, and guardians. This information should be collected at the beginning of the school year when the plan is distributed to students, parents, and guardians and updated as needed, sending a reminder each year for parents and guardians to update their contact information.

Recommendation 2: Ready Alternate Learning Options and Student Support for Displaced Students

The Schools Working Group recommends creating a process to quickly hire or reposition Department of Education personnel to better accommodate distance learning and learning alternatives so families can take advantage of these choices more expeditiously. Underutilized Department of Education classroom space should also be known by the Department prior to a

displacement event occurring. This will assist a more rapid response to better support displaced students and staff.

The Department of Education should monitor student progress throughout the school year to see if the disruption caused by the wildfire or any other disruption caused by manmade or natural disasters puts some students at risk of failing to progress. If so, resources need to be in place to offer additional instructional hours or support during, or after school hours, or offer the needed courses in summer school.

Recommendation 3: Monitor Potential Health Risks

The Department of Education and Department of Health have collaborated closely and effectively to test for contaminants and provide a safe environment for reopening. However, it will be faster, more efficient for the administration of both Departments, and easier to communicate plans and actions in a timely manner if a pre-existing protocol is in place for all future disasters.

1. **Create a universal checklist to clear all schools for re-opening or staying open following a disaster.** The Department of Health and Department of Education can work together to make a comprehensive universal checklist that defines conditions to be met in order to clear a school for reopening following a disaster. The checklist should include acceptable temporary disaster alternatives to meet the condition when possible. Examples include portable latrines in place of a functional wastewater connection, or drinking water brought in instead of potable piped water. The checklist should include, but not be limited to: Potable water, clean air, human waste management, food safety, hygienic facilities, safe soil for walking, power, internet, absence of exposed physical hazards, management of standing water in case of floods. The status of each checklist item should be publicly available on the Department of Education's website as efforts progress.

2. **Make all testing data and all future testing plans publicly available on the Department of Education's website as it becomes available.** Parents and community members want to see the results and assess the entities conducting the tests themselves. Complete transparency will prevent misinformation from spreading. If future testing is planned, knowing about it will alleviate concerns that may otherwise result in much public energy going into demanding such tests.

3. **Minimize ash contamination to schools from clean up in Lāhainā.** In the case of the Lāhainā wildfires, the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Education should communicate before removal of ash commences to discuss strategies to minimize downwind contamination of schools. Strategies may include physical barriers around cleanup sites, use of misters or sprayed water, changing location of work depending on the predictable morning and afternoon wind patterns, and commencing clean up far from the schools while monitoring air for contamination downwind to assess whether further measures are needed before working upwind of the schools.

Recommendation 4: Increase Mental Healthcare Access

The Legislature needs to continue efforts to expand the number of mental health professionals within the State to be able to adequately serve students in times of crisis. Ongoing efforts to incentivize local providers to stay or return to the State, expand current pipelines to train professionals, and efforts to improve access are necessary.

Recommendation 5: Traffic Mitigation for West Maui

The Schools Working Group recommends the Department of Education monitor traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the Lāhainā schools area and take mitigating action to help relax increased ingress and egress to the West Maui Lahainaluna Road. Two possible remedies include the utilization of Maui Police Department Traffic Guards to help control traffic flow and potentially implementing staggered school start times to reduce vehicular traffic. The Working Group finds these two strategies have proven effective across the State. Staggered school start times have been primarily used for public schools with large student populations in Central and West Oahu public schools. In multiple scenarios, the positive correlation between the increased number of students and increased traffic congestion holds true. Therefore, the Working Group finds varied start times a viable solution.

It is also important to note that if there are proposed changes to school start times, the proposed start times may be outside of the existing collective bargaining agreements between the Department of Education and the exclusive representatives of the applicable collective bargaining units. Therefore, changes to school start times may need to be agreed upon by all relevant parties.

Recommendation 6: Student Athletics Consideration

The Schools Working Group recommends that the Hawaii High School Athletics Association craft guidelines for blanket waiver of restrictions to give student-athletes impacted by a disaster complete flexibility to continue participating at their sport as they are moved between one or more schools as a response to a disaster, be it due to changes in school options or changes in their living situation. It is also recommended that the Hawaii High School Athletics Association create a process for impacted member leagues of the Association to petition for adjustment of those rules as needed for specific situations.

Recommendation 7: Building Resilient Schools

To improve safety and modernization of our public school facilities, the following changes are recommended:

1. Develop and enforce regulations and guidelines for fire-resistant landscaping around school buildings. This would include encouraging the use of fire-resistant plant species and establishing defensible zones by creating a buffer of non-combustible materials, like gravel or concrete walkways, between vegetation and school structures. Regular maintenance of these landscapes to remove dead vegetation and reduce fire fuel is essential.

2. Retrofit older school buildings with fire suppression systems and ensure that all new school construction projects incorporate these systems.

3. Enforce building codes that require the use of fire-resistant materials in the construction and renovation of school buildings. This includes fire-rated walls, doors, windows, roofing materials, and insulation.

4. Retrofit older school buildings to improve their fire resistance by upgrading materials and adding fire barriers. Regular inspections and maintenance should be carried out to ensure that these fire-resistant materials remain effective.

Recommendation 8: Maximizing Use of Federal Funds

The Department of Education should carefully review the eligibility requirements of federal programs to determine which programs are the best fit for the Department's needs. The Department should also consider applying for Federal Emergency Management Agency hazard mitigation funding. This funding can help schools make necessary investments to reduce their

risk from natural disasters and protect the safety of their students and staff in the event of a future disaster.

The Legislature should also consider appropriating additional funds to help extend the aid that may expire from federal disaster assistance programs.