



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

**Date:** 03/11/2021  
**Time:** 02:00 PM  
**Location:** 309 & 430 Via  
Videoconference  
**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Resolution:** HCR 0055 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUEST A FEDERAL WAIVER FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on HCR 55.

While the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has indicated it will not be offering states the opportunity to seek a waiver from administering standardized assessments during the 2020-21 school year, it has released guidance for states to apply to waive federal accountability determinations that will be based on assessment results. USED has indicated "its focus on assessments [is] to provide information to parents, educators, and the public about student performance and to help target resources and supports."

The 2020-21 Smarter Balanced Assessments, also known as "SBA," have been shortened and take less time to administer than in previous years. Statewide testing results will provide valuable information on the differential effects of learning loss across student demographic subgroups, including at-risk and high-need students. The Department will analyze this information to best target resources to address student academic needs.

Currently, the Department is working on its federal accountability determinations waiver application.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION and THE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

RE: HCR 55 / HR 44 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
REQUEST A FEDERAL WAIVER FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, Chair Tarnas, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** HCR 55/ HR 44, urging the Department of Education to request a federal waiver from standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our current testing culture was developed under the federal No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top initiatives, in which test scores were viewed as the best determinant of school performance. **Studies show, however, that test scores strongly correlate with socioeconomic status: rich schools do well, while poor schools struggle. Because of the pressure to perform well on tests and their inability to control the socioeconomic status of their students, struggling schools cut back on arts and cultural education, career and technical courses, electives, and more, so that greater resources could be spent on prepacked programs and consultants meant to boost test scores.**

However, efforts to limit testing have become an accelerating national movement. In October of 2015, former President Barack Obama proposed limiting testing to 2 percent of schools' total instructional time. Since then, numerous states have enacted or are considering enacting similar proposals. In 2018 Maryland passed HB 461, "eliminating more than 700 hours of unnecessary district-mandated testing," according to Maryland State Education Association President Betty Weller. Similarly, Texas and Georgia lawmakers are considering legislation to dramatically slash the number of tests given in their states to increase personalized learning opportunities and broaden curricular offerings. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham ordered the state's Public Education Department to immediately take the steps necessary to terminate New Mexico's use of the Partnership for Assessment of

Readiness for College and Careers standardized test, commonly known as PARCC (similar type of standardized test, based on Common Core, as SBA that we use in Hawaii). Lujan Grisham, in an executive order, called on the department to immediately begin working with key stakeholders to identify and implement a more effective, more appropriate and less intrusive method for assessing school performance that is compliant with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

A typical student takes over 100 mandated standardized tests between pre-kindergarten classes and 12th grade, recent studies have found. These include universal screeners such as STAR, iReady, Achieve 3000 etc. By contrast, **most countries that outperform the United States on international exams test students only three times during their entire school careers.**

This request is to urge the Department of Education to move Hawai'i toward its international peers by requesting a waiver from state testing, to allow our teachers to focus on actual teaching and learning, not test preparation, especially during this pandemic.

Life is not a standardized test. We support the authentic learning experiences happening in our classrooms, currently virtual and in person, for all of our students, not a focus on standardized testing, thus we ask your committee to **support** this resolution to urge the Department of Education to request a federal waiver from standardized testing for this school year.

**HCR-55**

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:15:20 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

I believe that if more school districts like ours asked for the waivers, the Feds. would have to agree (as they seem reluctant at this moment). I also believe that EVEN IF the Feds, do not give the waiver, we should do what we know is right. Yes, we are short funds this year but the loss of federal dollars vs. the pain, suffering and trauma for our students and educators having to give standardized tests is worse. There is no reason, other than supporting testing corporations, to administer the tests. "Learning Loss" are two words used by adults to ensure that \$\$ are made by those folks. Any perceived data gained by testing would be skewed and not in the favor of our keiki. If you listened to the Supt., she said that there were 25,000 students who might be considered for tutoring due to that perceived learning loss. My belief is that tutoring, extra help and the standardized testing will not help. WHY? Because we have not as a community addressed the real issues, poverty, inequitable resources and racist policies and procedures. We should not be administering standardized tests to all children this year or frankly any year. Let's do better.

**HCR-55**

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:32:50 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
MaryAnn Omerod	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HCR 55 - URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUEST A FEDERAL WAIVER FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

**HCR-55**

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:48:37 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, as a former Hawaiian Studies kumu for the DOEs Kupuna program I support HCR 55. Our kids need your help. Please support HCR 55 for their sake. Mahalo.

**HCR-55**

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 5:05:32 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
maelani Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I hereby support HCR55.



**HCR-55**

Submitted on: 3/10/2021 11:31:27 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support the Department of Education requesting a waiver from standardized testing for the school year 2020-2021.

This annual testing is precluded by weeks of test preparation which is stressful for both teachers and students in a "normal" school year. With all the upheaval of this year, concerns for safety, social distancing, adequate PPE and cleaning supplies, budget cuts, teachers fearful of losing their jobs or being placed in another position/location, mixed communication between the state level, complex level and school level directions and actions, it is imperative that adding another layer of stress will just cause more of the same.

Currently complexes and schools have been directed to "bring back as many students to in person instruction" as you can. There are even proposals to decrease the social distancing of 6 feet to "as best as you can."

Contradictions between the constantly changing CDC guidelines and our own DOH guidance, cloud the safety issues that the schools are facing. In an effort to open schools "any way we can," are we throwing out the baby with the bathwater?

At this point in time, the drive to bring back students to in-person instruction appears to be driven by completing these tests.

These tests are not going to tell us any more than we already know. Student's learning has been monitored through the use of IReady for Math and English, since the beginning of the school years. These are called universal screeners. They gauge where a student is on their learning spectrum.

So what are we trying to find out by using a standardized test? Proof that the universal screeners are accurate? Plus or minus 5 confidence level? Does this matter at this time?

The Department of Education has already identified "learning loss" as a manor result of the COVID effect on education for this year. Plans to address this are already being discussed.

Let's please "as least defer" testing as long as possible to give the US Department of Education time to reconsider their stance on standardized testing for this school year. Rather than insisting that the testing be done by a certain date, at least provide an alternative plan to request the extension of completion until the fall. It's the least we can expect, that is in the parameters the US DOE is allowing currently.