



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

September 16, 2020

Dr. Christina Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
PO Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Dear Superintendent Kishimoto:

RE: Department of Education's (DOE) response to COVID during the school year

Per our last conversation on September 11, 2020, the Senate Committee on COVID-19 has additional follow up questions regarding specific protocols for COVID-19, and ask that you respond to the following questions:

First, we ask that you provide details on the first contact made by the DOE to DOH regarding the Dole Middle School case.

1. Which DOE staff member contacted the DOH to notify the department and acquire guidance once the outbreak was disclosed?
2. Which health official in the DOH was contacted, and what was the date and time of this correspondence?
3. What was the specific guidance given by the DOH to the DOE during that communication?

During our September 11, 2020, meeting, you noted that DOH's contact tracing efforts were too slow.

4. Please provide a timeline of when DOH began its contact tracing efforts on this case, and to the best of your knowledge, when was it completed?
5. When were your employees notified that they were exposed to a COVID-19 positive case?

You noted that there is no consistent follow-up or guaranteed action by the DOH.

6. What are the DOE's protocols when there is not immediate follow up by DOH?

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7. How long does it take for the DOE COVID-19 Response Team to take action, and how is this response time monitored?
8. What happens if your department does not meet its own timeline requirements?

Per your testimony, DOH is creating a Contact Tracing Team dedicated to tracking school cases.

9. Are you aware as to when this team will be brought on board?

You mentioned there are levels of risk assessment before a school is closed.

10. What are these levels, and are they included in the Health and Safety Handbook?
11. Who in DOH is developing the metrics that will determine when a school will close or reopen?
12. Are there currently no metrics or handbook that determines when a school should close or reopen?
13. If there are no current metrics in place to determine the closure or reopening of a school, why not choose to close Dole Middle School in an abundance of caution?
14. Which DOH employee reviewed and approved the DOE Health and Safety Handbook created specifically for COVID-19?

We have seen instances across the country, including the listing of specific care homes within the state. This Committee believes that additional specificity in these cases is of benefit to the public.

15. Why are schools unable to be named when a positive case is identified on campus? Is this a HIPA or FERPA violation, as previously mentioned?

Finally, in our letter dated September 11, 2020, we asked that you provide the HSCDD will the necessary information to further its discussions with your department regarding the specific protocols pertaining to SPED students. We ask that you keep us apprised of those discussions.

The Committee requests that you provide documentation of the requested information by **4:00 p.m., Monday, September 21, 2020**. Please email your response to all Senate Special Committee COVID-19 members. Should you have any questions, please contact Duncan Osorio at 586-6800 or via email at d.osorio@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella

Cc: Senate President