



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

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 8, 2012

Ms. Marilee Fitzgerald
Director
Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)
4040 North Fairfax Drive
Webb Building
Arlington, VA 22203-1635

Dear Ms. Fitzgerald,

In November 2011, DoDEA released the results of the DoDEA University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMASS) Study, conducted in 2010, which examined the quality of education provided by the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) for military dependent students attending public schools in our state. Full title of the report is *The Performance of Hawaii's Military Impacted Public Schools: A Comparative Perspective*.

To reiterate the UMASS report findings:

- Hawaii is generally comparable to the other school districts studied as measured by student performance, educational programs, and services;
- Hawaii and the comparable districts are home to some excellent as well as challenged public schools;
- The data do not support the perception that Hawaii is not providing an appropriate education for school age dependents who reside on military installations in Hawaii;
- Therefore, there is no basis to support the establishment of DoDEA schools on military installations in Hawaii.

Overall, we are pleased with the results of the study; it provides information that strengthens our efforts to boldly transform Hawaii's public education system to ensure that every child graduates college- and career-ready.

Additionally, we appreciate your invitation to provide an addendum to the report based on our review of the study and its findings. Although we agree with the overall conclusions of the UMASS study, we disagree with some specific methods and findings. The regression model used to predict school test proficiency from a socioeconomic indicator is a much simplified version of methods proposed some years ago and tested by HIDOE as part of a school accountability program. That was prior to No Child Left Behind, which preempted all other accountability regimes. That work was done by Dr. Thomas Gans, now retired from the HIDOE. He agreed to critique the UMASS study, applying his extensive experience with educational databases and data analysis from his work in Hawaii, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Dr. Gans is intimately familiar with the HIDOE database and educational context. His critique is attached. It and this cover letter comprise the HIDOE Addendum to the DoDEA University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMASS) Study.

Based on the analysis by Dr. Gans, if such a study were repeated, we would require changes in the methodology to take into account the strength of relationships between variables and the uncertainty of achievement predictions. If such a regression analysis were to be undertaken, it should use sufficient data to account for at least half the variance of performance scores and should make inferences about school effectiveness only for schools whose performance lies outside the normal error range of prediction.

For comparisons of school districts serving military dependents, we would require that the Hawaii schools used in such comparisons be those in complex areas serving military families, rather than all public schools in the state. (Hawaii's fifteen complex areas are similar to local school districts on the mainland.) Schools in the five military impacted complex areas on Oahu that serve military families would be the most appropriate group to study.

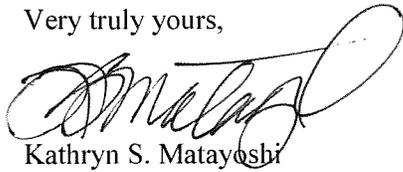
Finally, in any future study, the research design should include the selection and administration of a common test to students in all comparison jurisdictions. In the UMASS study, comparisons were made between districts using two different versions of the TerraNova test, making comparisons between districts dubious at best. Also, researchers should have the original student level test scores and not rely on the subject districts to provide them with school level summary data. That invites noncomparable treatments of data. Summary data used (such as means or medians) must be appropriate to the data analyzed. Means should not be used with ordinal data like percentile ranks.

The attached critique discusses these methodological concerns and some other issues from the UMASS study. The addendum will be posted on the Web for accessibility to interested readers and researchers.

Hawaii has had a partnership with the DoDEA leadership for over ten years, and we appreciate the continued efforts to support a quality education for all students in our respective systems. Although we are two very different entities, our goal is the same, and our collaboration is a win-win that benefits our schools, families, and students. We want to express our deep appreciation to former DoDEA Pacific Area Directors Dr. Nancy Bresell and Ms. Diana Ohman, as well as USPACOM DoDDS Pacific Liaison Ms. Jean Grice for their past support and guidance. We look forward to continued efforts to work together with DoDEA in support of providing a quality education for all Hawaii's students.

Mahalo for what you do to for our schools, families, and children.

Very truly yours,



Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent

KSM/RN:ci

Encl. HIDEOE Addendum Report

c: Senator Daniel K. Inouye, U.S. Congress
Senator Daniel Akaka, U.S. Congress
Representative Mazie Hirono, U.S. Congress
Representative Colleen Hanabusa, U.S. Congress
Honorable Neil Abercrombie, Governor
Senator Jill Tokuda, Hawaii State Senate
Representative Roy Takumi, Hawaii State House of Representatives
Representative K. Mark Takai, Hawaii State House of Representatives
Brigadier General (ret) Kathleen Berg, Commissioner, Hawaii State Council, ICEOMC
Ronn Nozoe, Deputy Superintendent
Patricia Park, Complex Area Superintendent
Teri Ushijima, Complex Area Superintendent
Suzanne Mulcahy, Complex Area Superintendent
Lea Albert, Complex Area Superintendent
Norman Pang, Complex Area Superintendent
Annette Nishikawa, Complex Area Superintendent
Calvin Nomiya, Complex Area Superintendent
Sandy Goya, Director, Communications
Cara Tanimura, Director, Systems Accountability
Cherise Imai, Military Liaison