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United States Senate

December 17, 2021

Keith Hayashi
Interim Superintendent
Hawaii Department of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Interim Superintendent Hayashi:

I write to make you aware of new “test-to-stay” (TTS) guidance released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for K-12 schools. I encourage the Hawaii Department of Education to adopt TTS policies as appropriate and feasible, and to work with the Hawaii Department of Health in providing TTS guidance to complex areas and schools.

TTS policies will allow students to stay in school even if they are exposed to COVID-19, thereby minimizing the number of days students would otherwise miss and helping to reduce the learning loss that can occur during traditional quarantine at home. As the CDC notes, specific TTS policies may vary, but they follow the same principles: a combination of vaccination of eligible students and staff, frequent testing, contact tracing, masking inside schools, distancing between students, ventilation, handwashing, and staying home when sick. Taken together, exposed students can remain in school in lieu of quarantining at home. Initial data from case studies show that schools with TTS policies have similar transmission rates as non-TTS schools.

The CDC’s science brief with the recent TTS updates can be found here:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html.

The CDC’s guidance on COVID-19 testing in schools can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/what-you-should-know.html>.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and your collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator