

## NEWS RELEASE

NEIL ABERCROMBIE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 3, 2012

### **Governor Abercrombie Responds to HSTA's Letter**

HONOLULU – Governor Neil Abercrombie today responded to a letter received by the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) last night. HSTA president Wil Okabe sent a letter which notified the Governor of HSTA's intention to seek ratification of the January 2012 proposed agreement that was previously rejected by its members.

Prior to this letter, negotiations have been ongoing based on HSTA's February 28, 2012 proposal and the State's March 19, 2012 settlement offer.

Governor Abercrombie stated:

**"What Mr. Okabe has proposed to HSTA members is a decision made solely by HSTA leadership. This is entirely an internal union action in which we have had no participation. The letter that we received from HSTA last night was unsolicited.**

**"According to the Attorney General the agreement which was rejected in January 2012 has no legal standing. In addition, in February, HSTA submitted a comprehensive proposal, which has not been withdrawn.**

**"We look forward to crafting an agreement with the HSTA to be submitted to teachers for ratification that is clear, current, and correct.**

**"As the school year ends, we appreciate the work that our teachers have done for student achievement and we look forward to resolving this labor dispute with their union."**

The letter from HSTA and the Governor's response are attached.

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For more information; contact Donalyn Dela Cruz, Deputy Director of Communications, (808) 586-0012



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR

May 3, 2012

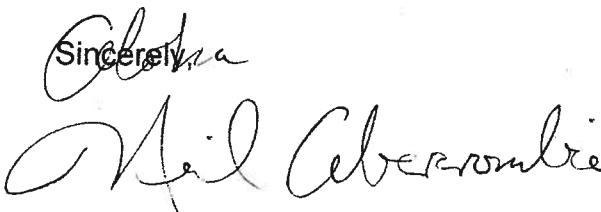
Wil Okabe  
President  
Hawaii State Teachers Association  
120 Ala Kapuna Street  
Honolulu, HI 96819

Dear Mr. Okabe:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, 2012. I note that the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) has recognized the state's prior proposal, which included compensation tied to effective teaching, was acceptable.

Thank you for also acknowledging that the Employer has bargained in good faith. The Employers' bargaining team looks forward to crafting an agreement with the HSTA to be submitted to teachers for ratification that is clear, current, and correct.

Chief Negotiator Neil Dietz will be available to meet as scheduled on May 7, 2012 to address any necessary revisions in that regard.

*Sincerely,*  
  
NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor, State of Hawaii



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow

May 2, 2012

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie  
Governor, State of Hawaii  
Executive Chambers  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Governor Abercrombie,

After careful deliberation, I wish to inform you that the HSTA Board of Directors has accepted the previous tentative settlement agreed to in January 2012 and has decided to hold a vote of our membership to ratify that settlement, or to pursue other action.

As I have previously and publicly acknowledged, HSTA rushed a ratification vote of the proposal which we had reached in good faith with BOE Chairman Don Horner, Tammi Chun from your office and Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi.

Following the rejection by the teachers, results of our internal polling and by the Castle Foundation indicated that teachers lacked the information and time to consider the agreement.

We are taking careful steps to remedy this by holding a series of membership informational meetings throughout the state.

This decision is driven by the urgency to preserve the \$75 million Race to the Top grant for Hawaii. We have an unquestionable mutual interest to secure the federal grant for the benefit of Hawaii's children. Much of the reason the U.S. DOE placed Hawaii's Race to the Top grant on "high risk status" was the lack of a collective bargaining agreement to demonstrate true stakeholder support.

We are hopeful this will be the first step in rebuilding trust.

Sincerely,

Wil Okabe  
President

cc: Chief Negotiator Neil Dietz, BOE Chair Don Horner, Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, Education Advisor Tammi Chun

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**Wil Okabe**  
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**Karolyn Messman**  
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**Jean Kamila Lewis**  
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