

Date of Hearing: March 17, 2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2878, S.D. 2, SSCR 2851, Relating to Early Learning

Purpose: Establishes an early learning council to govern the state's early learning system. Establishes an early learning system.
Establishes the keiki first steps pilot program.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in support of S.B. 2878, S.D. 2, SSCR 2851, but prefers the House version (H.B. 2973, H.D. 2) as it more quickly advances the implementation of the Early Learning Educational Task Force recommendations.

The Department welcomes the opportunity to continue working with its early childhood partners, in both public and private settings, to ensure universal access to quality early learning opportunities. Our collective efforts will help young children to be at optimal levels of readiness for learning, particularly as they make the transition into a K-12 learning system.

Every year, approximately 13,300 students are enrolled in the Department's two-tiered kindergarten. It is estimated, that four out of ten, or roughly 5,320 kindergarteners are not at optimal levels of readiness—academically, socially, emotionally—to

meet the rigor of a standards-based classroom for our youngest learners. As more attention is provided to the early learning needs of children, prior to entering kindergarten, we would be better poised to effect a smoother transition into the Department's community of learning and supports for our youngest learners. On a larger scale, our collective work would serve to ensure that all students in the public education system are able to meet the Department's Vision of a Public High School Graduate.

In general, the focus and language included in the current House draft is in concert with the vision of the Department. As such, the Department recommends that the elements of the House draft be adopted, with some revisions to the special fund provision and the focus on three- and four-year olds.

The Department acknowledges the time and thought that the Early Learning Task Force has devoted to the outcomes in their report and Keiki First Steps proposal. Rather than implementing a pilot program, the Department would propose that the first phase of the plan developed by the task force be funded and implemented. Collectively, we are aware of the benefits of early learning opportunities, we need to take action to implement planned proposal as outlined in Keiki First Steps.

In addition, it is the Early Learning Council, rather than the Department, who should be guiding the implementation plan, assessment of funding, and staffing requirements, as stated in Section 6. The Department is currently examining facilities on public school campuses and will ensure that this information is provided to the Early Learning Council. Beyond public school facilities, the Council may also explore other appropriate facilities, both public and private, in communities throughout the state.

The Department also suggests that the definition of “at-risk children” be revisited, so it does not unintentionally exclude those young children whose parents are simply not able to afford the center-based program of their choice. In addition, it is prudent to identify those areas throughout the state that have limited access to early childhood programs.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 107
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412
EMAIL: oip@hawaii.gov

To: House Committee on Education

From: Paul T. Tsukiyama, Director

Date: March 17, 2008, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 309

Re: Testimony on S.B. 2878, S.D. 2
Relating to Early Learning

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H.B. 2878, S.D. 2.

The Office of Information Practices ("OIP") takes no position on the substance of this bill, which would, among other things, establish an Early Learning Council, but seeks clarification of the provision stating that

All meetings of the early learning council shall be exempt from chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

First, this only exempts the council's meetings from chapter 92; arguably the council members would still be required to, for instance, refrain from discussing council business with one another outside a meeting. Second, the Sunshine Law is only part I of chapter 92. Parts II through IV of chapter 92 relate to non-Sunshine Law issues, such as boards' general powers and quorum requirements, copy charges for public records, and publication of legal notices. If the intent of this provision is to exempt the council from the Sunshine Law, OIP recommends that the bill state that the council itself "shall be exempt from part I of chapter 92."

OIP would, however, recommend that this Committee carefully consider whether it is good policy to exempt the council from the Sunshine Law in light of the express policy and intent of the statute.

In a democracy, the people are vested with the ultimate decision-making power. Governmental agencies exist to aid the people in the formation and conduct of public policy. Opening up the governmental processes to public scrutiny and participation is the only viable and reasonable method of protecting the public's interest. Therefore, the legislature declares that it is the policy of this State that the formation and conduct of public policy - the discussions, deliberations, decisions, and actions of government agencies - shall be conducted as openly as possible.

Haw. Rev. Stat. §92-1 (1993).

The matters the council is charged with deciding are important to and will affect the public at large, and the public will in all likelihood want the kind of public scrutiny of and participation in the council's discussions and decisions that the Sunshine Law is intended to provide for government boards in general. In the absence of a compelling reason to exempt this particular board from the Sunshine Law, such an exemption is contrary to Hawaii's general policy of openness as expressed in the Sunshine Law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Robert Peters
Co-Chair, Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

Date: March 17, 2008
2:00 PM, Room 309

Subject: SB2878 SD2, Early Learning System; Early Learning Council; Keiki First Steps

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB2878 SD2. I am Bob Peters, Co-Chair of the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force and Headmaster of Hanahau`oli School. I strongly support the intent of this bill.

The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force has truly proposed a high-quality early learning program for Hawaii's 4-year-olds, which culminated in the task force's final report to the Legislature in December 2007. These principles of quality, such as degreed teachers and administrators, appropriate teacher-student ratios, accredited programs, or curricula that meet the Hawaii Preschool Content Standards are "must-pay" foundational elements for our keiki to succeed in school and in life.

I support most of the language contained in HB2973 HD2 and recommend much of it be inserted into SB2878 SD2. I'd like to note that the Task Force did an excellent job in coming to consensus and making recommendations that will best meet the needs of our young children. Hawaii needs your full commitment to establish the Early Learning Council and the Keiki First Steps Early Learning System, and not just the Council and a pilot early learning program. Additionally, I recommend your serious consideration of three key components of this bill:

- 1) Creating an Early Learning Council that is autonomous and only administratively attached to a state agency, an agency that will have no potential conflict of interest with the Council. This will allow the council to create the early learning system policy that will best meet the needs of Hawaii's keiki.
- 2) Ensure an equal balance of both public and private representation on this council similar to the Act 259 Task Force membership. This will ensure appropriate neighbor island representation.
- 3) Funding workforce development or scholarship opportunities for our early childhood education professionals to pursue the college degree requirements proposed by the Task Force. With the average preschool teacher salary at approximately \$26,000 a year and our associate teachers earning much lower salaries, it is very important that these professionals receive the support to achieve the desired level of excellence.

Our children need and deserve the best start in life to become contributing citizens and leaders in our communities, state and nation. I strongly urge you to support this bill for the good of all of Hawaii's children.

From: Elaine Yamashita, Maui Community College, representing the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges on the Act 259 Task Force, co-chair of Professional/Workforce Development Subcommittee. Phone: 808-984-3208, email: yamash@hawaii.edu

To: House Committee on Education, Chair Roy Takumi
March 17, 2008, 2 p.m.

Re: SB 2878 SD2

5 copies requested by the committee

Honorable Chair Takumi and Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB2878 SD 2.

I appreciate the effort to fund the Early Learning Council. As a neighbor island resident and co-chair of the Professional/Workforce Development Subcommittee, I would ask that you consider amending the composition of the Council to more closely resemble that of the Act 259 Task Force. I understand the concerns about a larger number as unwieldy, but would like to point out the outstanding work that the Task Force accomplished in the last year and a half, thanks to funding provided by the Legislature. Because the Professional/Workforce Development subcommittee had wide stakeholder input from *across the state*, people felt included, their voice was heard, and are fully prepared to back the Task Force recommendations. It was also a public-private effort, and that aspect should be preserved in the proposed Council. Most of our early childhood programs are private, and are a crucial component of the proposed system.

It will also be crucial that the Early Learning Council have the *authority* to allocate the distribution of funding for early education and care. The Task Force committed to collaboration, and building on current departments' funding streams, rather than taking away from departments. It is hoped that the proposed Council would follow the same principles.

As a community college professor, I have to speak up for my adult students who want to make early childhood education their profession. They are hopeful that in the future, if the Keiki First proposal is fully implemented, they can *afford* to stay in this field, providing education and stable relationships for keiki and their 'ohana. However, they need scholarship help to accomplish their goals. Please consider adding scholarships to the bill so that we can build the high quality workforce to provide the best for Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana. You are in a great place to make decisions for Hawai'i's keiki that will have a long-range impact. Mahalo for the support for our keiki and their 'ohana.



To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Liz Chun
Executive Director, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, March 17, 2008
2:00 pm, Room 309

Subject: SB 2878 SD 2, Relating to Early Learning

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the House Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 2878 SD2. I am Liz Chun, Executive Director of the Good Beginnings Alliance.

I wish to direct my remarks to five specific items in regards to the development of legislation for Hawaii's early learning system.

Governance and Early Learning Council

It is critical that Hawaii's early learning system have a governance structure that has authority and accountability. It is also essential the early learning system focuses on the child – and developing the best learning environments and practices for the child.

Dr. Stephanie Feeney's third edition of **Continuing Issues in Early Childhood Education** will contain a chapter on governance written by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Kristie Kaurez from Teachers College, Columbia University. Their chapter titled Governing American Early Care and Education: Shifting From Government to Governance and From Form to Function offers a review of current early childhood governance mechanisms and provides lessons for Hawaii.

The authors remind us that the choice of governance is important as it has the power to determine the level of "efficiency, outcomes, equity, excellence, and individuality" our early learning system will include. They conclude that governance cannot actualize deep policy changes needed to unify early care and education into a structured system until the governance has both fiscal and performance accountability.

According to Kagan and Kaurez, governance entities must possess:

- Fiscal authority - the ability to garner fiscal resources and then to administer, allocate, and manage the funds.
- Authority to collect, store, track, and analyze data.
- Authority to budget and allocate resources - and accountable for ensuring that programs and services remain fiscally responsible

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- Oversight to programs directly or provide for the provision of such oversight.
- Monitor the capacity of the workforce to deliver the intended quality of services to children and their families.
- Ensure that children are making developmental progress toward achieving the state's proscribed early learning standards.

Hawaii's governance structure for early learning must be attached to a public agency which will allow both authority and accountability to rest with this new entity. This public agency must share a determination to focus on the early learner and not be bound by conflicting mandates.

Composition of Early Learning Council

It is also important that governance be collaborative in its decision-making. Public funding for young children is now run through four public departments; however, the majority of direct services are conducted by the private sector. Therefore **we encourage you to include representation from counties as well as those public and private agencies knowledgeable about Hawaii's early childhood programs and professional development.**

We recommend the following members be on this Council:

1. The superintendent of education or the superintendent's designee;
2. The director of human services or the director's designee;
3. The director of health or the director's designee;
4. The president of the University of Hawaii or the president's designee;
5. The director of the head start state collaboration office or the director's designee;
6. The chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools or the chief executive officer's designee;
7. The executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools or the executive director's designee;
8. The executive director of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children or the executive director's designee;
9. A representative of the Child Care Business Coalition;
10. A representative of the organization of native Hawaiian community-based programs for early childhood education;
11. The executive director of PATCH Hawaii or the director's designee;
12. The executive director of the Good Beginnings Alliance or the executive director's designee;
13. A representative designated by the chancellors of the University of Hawaii community colleges;
14. The director of the city and county of Honolulu department of community services, or the director's designee;
15. The director of the county of Kauai office of community assistance, or the director's designee;
16. The director of the county of Maui department of housing and human concerns, or the director's designee;

Good Beginnings Alliance

17. The director of the county of Hawaii department of parks and recreation, or the director's designee;

This number is large; however, governance decisions need to be informed by those knowledgeable in the field. To ensure that such knowledge is included, a mandatory attached advisory body would be a compromise solution.

Interdepartmental Coordination and Utilization of Resources

It should be noted that the Act 259 Task Force Report to the 2008 Legislature recommended on page 79 that in the **near term that current authority for services targeting young children remain with the administrative agencies responsible** for them, so that Hawaii's children do not suffer reduced access to these services. This approach enables the state to begin by first adding capacity for 4 year-olds in early learning programs, while efforts to develop a coordinated system continue.

The Task Force also recommended that mechanisms be established so that administrative agencies will be able to identify and resolve potential overlaps in service. We recognized "a long-term commitment among the agencies to pursue joint planning through a public/private planning group with representation from all the public departments as well as private funders." These statements align with the development of a governance structure as described above.

Referring again to Kagan and Kauerz, they remind us that the new governance structure must be "given adequate time to become well-established and to work out the inevitable kinks that change brings."

Pre Plus

Pre Plus is now a very successful public/private partnership. Private agencies are contracted to operate the preschool programs on public school land. This model provides the opportunity for a true P-3 environment to be created. Preschools and kindergarten through third grade learning can be aligned. If done right, this partnership will support the positive transitions of children into the elementary school and will provide important shared learning for both preschool and early elementary school teachers.

However, it is essential that if we create new facilities through expanding **PrePlus** that we also ensure funding for the educational services conducted within these facilities. **PrePlus** only provides for construction of facilities. **Funding for programs to provide services to three and four year old children educated within these facilities must also be included in this expansion.**

Professional Development

One of the most crucial elements for early education is the building of a qualified work force. We have estimated that beginning with an allocation of \$2, 255,000 would allow 200 new and existing early education teachers to be recruited, receive scholarships, have advisors and mentors, receive remediation and tutoring, and increase the locations for delivery of early education courses.

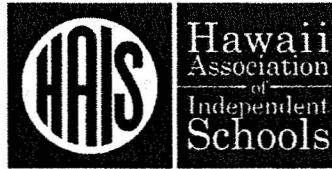
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Direct Services

If direct services can begin the Task Force believes that \$1,800,000 will allow 500 low-income high risk keiki to be served from March through June in full day programs. This will allow time for the governance and oversight structure to become operational.

It is important that we think of this process as a beginning. We must not be intimidated by the long term costs. So many children will benefit if we begin. The journey to reach all eligible children may take many, many years. However to not begin for even a few, will hold back so many children from this crucial first step.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we offer our help to the Committee to craft this bill to best meet the needs of Hawai'i's young children.



March 17, 2008
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB2878 SD2 – Relating to Early Learning

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and, as executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), I am here today to testify on behalf of the Association's board of directors and its 96 member schools.

We are in strong support of the proposals outlined in Senate Bill 2878, Senate Draft 2, and the similar proposals outlined in its companion House Bill 2973, House Draft 2. As an active participant in both the work of the Act 259 Task Force and the efforts which led up to its establishment, the HAIS Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the Task Force's recommendations regarding the establishment of an early learning system in Hawaii and to utilize the public dialogue initiated by both the Task Force's January 2008 legislative briefing and this bill as an opportunity to engage all sectors of the private school community in discussion about our state's urgent need for high-quality early learning opportunities.

Our association is proud to be a regular contributor in the educational dialogue of our community. We believe that the betterment of humankind is inherently possible, and that education is prominent among the forces which can stimulate positive change. Furthermore, we have always been passionate advocates for early childhood education, have supported measures before this committee in the past that have advanced efforts to address the needs of young children, and have partnerships with such early childhood organizations as Good Beginnings Alliance, the Keiki Childcare Coalition, and others.

"First steps" is an apt metaphor. Yes, it calls to mind the first steps of children, but let us take our own first steps and resolve to make a commitment to all of Hawaii's keiki by approving a measure by the end of this session that will allow us to create a universally accessible, comprehensive and instructionally rigorous early childhood system.

This session we will strongly advocate for the allocation of \$10 million to mobilize the development of a comprehensive early learning system for children from birth to five years of age, beginning with the establishment of the Keiki First program, which, in its initial stages, will give priority to those children who are at-risk and underserved.

We also recognize that there is essential work that needs to get underway immediately to build capacity for an expanded early education teaching profession for Hawaii. Let's act now to support the growth and development of those already in the profession, and to recruit, train, and retain newcomers to the field of early education.

As an organization comprised of private educational institutions, HAIS strongly recommends that the structure created to support Hawaii's early education system reflect a council model, perhaps with membership along lines of the existing Task Force. In future discussions concerning the governance of such a system, we will also recommend that it be designed as a public/private partnership with authority and autonomy, while attached appropriately to an existing department of state government for administrative purposes. Such a public/private model would support and enhance the contributions of private providers, an essential component of existing early education programs in Hawaii.

In summary, our association believes the time is NOW to commit to a statewide comprehensive early learning system. We will encourage policy makers during this session to agree on a long-term vision for early education, to identify or create a dedicated funding source, and to define a structure for stewardship.

We believe that such a vision and an investment in early learning by the state will very positively impact the success of children in our elementary and secondary schools, and thereby support the goals of the state's P-20 collaborative to significantly increase the percentage of adults in Hawaii with four-year college degrees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this urgent matter.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS
Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Hearing Date: Monday, March 17, 2008
2:00 p.m. – Conference Room 309

By Christopher Pating
Vice President, Strategic Planning & Implementation
Kamehameha Schools

Monday, March 17, 2008

Re: **SB 2878, SD2** - Relating to Early Learning

Good afternoon Chair Takumi, Vice-Chair Berg and members of the Senate Committee on Education. My name is Christopher Pating and I am Vice President, Strategic Planning & Implementation for Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on **SB 2878, SD2**.

Kamehameha Schools applauds the legislature for its interest in establishing an early learning program and to enhancing the early education opportunities of children across the state. We have been participating extensively in the Early Learning Education Task Force established by the legislature and strongly support the Task Force's report. We look forward to participating in on-going dialog on this critically important matter and ask you to support advancing this measure.

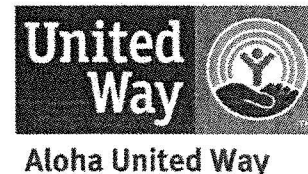
Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is a statewide educational system supported by a trust endowed by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian children through education. We serve 5,400 K-12 students through campus programs on O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui, and 1,317 three-and-four-year-olds at 31 preschool sites statewide. Last year, we provided \$4.4 million in scholarships to 850 keiki attending community preschools.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, the Kamehameha Schools Early Childhood Education (ECE) Division has provided more than 11,000 keiki with their first preschool experience. Early childhood education and parental support is the cornerstone of the Education Strategic Plan adopted in 2005, which seeks to foster long-term intergenerational change in the way Native Hawaiian families approach learning. Research demonstrates that early education is a key factor in lifelong success for all children, and we strongly urge the legislature to promote, enhance and support the efforts of the State of Hawai'i to appropriately address the needs of Hawai'i's pre-kindergarten children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha United Way

200 N. Vineyard Blvd., Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-3938
Telephone (808) 536-1951
Fax (808) 543-2222
www.auw.org



March 14, 2008

House Committee on Education:
Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Monday, March 17, 2008, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

SB 2878, SD2 Relating to Early Learning- Support

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha United Way strongly encourages your favorable consideration of SB 2878, SD2 which creates the Early Learning Council and the state's early learning system known as Keiki First.

Keiki First is the outcome of the Act 259 Task Force and is the first step in a process that will create a comprehensive early learning system for Hawaii's children. An alarming 40% of our children arrive at kindergarten so far behind their peers that their success in our education system is questionable. When children don't succeed in school they require additional services, are over represented in the juvenile justice system and fail to achieve the skills necessary to live a self-sufficient life as adults. An early investment in our children will significantly reduce the added cost to society in future years – national studies indicate that a \$1 investment in early childhood development will save \$7 in future costs.

Aloha United Way is cognizant that 2008 will be a difficult year financially. We fully understand that the legislature will have to make some very tough choices. We believe that Keiki First deserves the highest priority because it addresses at its the root a key cause of poor school performance – a lack of readiness for school.

Simply put, Keiki First presents the legislature with the opportunity to positively and significantly impact our future – our Keiki. We must begin this long process of establishing our early learning system. To help inform this process, Aloha United Way has produced a report with the UH Center on the Family entitled School Readiness in Hawaii. We hope you will find it helpful as you consider this important issue. Aloha United Way thanks you for your consideration and we strongly encourage favorable consideration of SB 2878, SD2.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Doyle".

Susan Doyle
President & Chief Professional Officer