

## LATE TESTIMONY

Date of Hearing: March 20, 2009

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 1329, S.D. 2 (SSCR 0682) Relating to Early Learning

Purpose: Authorizes the Governor and Hawaii Council of Mayors to name designees for their representatives on the early learning council; changes the name of the keiki first steps trust fund to the early learning trust fund; and specifies that moneys in the trust fund should not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) is in full support of S.B. 1329, S.D. 2 (SSCR 0682). In view of the current fiscal situation, this bill will allow the work of the Early Learning Council (Council) to continue, and ultimately ensure that the developmental and early learning needs of young children are equitably addressed throughout the state.

The Department thanks the previous Senate committee for the amendments made to the original bill; however, the language in S.B. 1329, S.D. 2 still needs clarification. On the first provision, as stated in Section 1 of the bill, the Council is asking that all members of the council be allowed to designate an alternate, in the case that they cannot attend a scheduled meeting. The current

language in the S.D. 2 defers the naming of designees to only the Hawaii Council of Mayors.

An additional clarification is needed on the fourth provision, as stated in Section 1 of the S.D. 2. The Council is requesting that the unencumbered, unexpended funds in the current appropriation be allowed to lapse into the Early Learning Trust Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

The Department respectfully requests that the language in the bill be revised to reflect these two (2) points.

The Department sincerely thanks the Legislature and the Governor for 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.

As appropriate, the Department respectfully requests that this bill be expedited so that actions may ensure that unexpended and unencumbered funds are secured in the trust fund at the closing of the fiscal year in June 2009.