

LATE TESTIMONY

Date: 03/09/2010

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2068, SD2 Relating to Early Education

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a pilot program making junior kindergarten and kindergarten attendance mandatory in one public school complex on each island.
Requires DOE to report to legislature. Sunsets 5/31/2013.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports SB 2068, SD2 which provides that "a child who will be at least five years of age on or before August 1 of the school year may attend a public school kindergarten." By revising the date for determining the eligibility of a child to attend kindergarten from December 31 to August 1, this bill will bring Hawaii in line with other public school systems on the mainland and some private schools in Hawaii.

The Department continues to support the kindergarten system that balances quality learning experiences with developmentally appropriate practices. The Department has developed appropriate assessment protocols that inform teachers of a child's readiness and skill/knowledge development. Distribution of the assessment toolkit is currently being planned for May, 2010.

The Department expresses its support and continuing belief that quality early education is important. The Department also commits to building the foundation for developing the supports for early education and a quality early learning system as set out in the responsibilities of the Early Learning Council when the state economy improves.