



Hearing date:
Tuesday, Mar 1,
2011; 9:20 a.m.,
Senate Committee
on Ways and
Means
Room 211

To: Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2011, 9:20 a.m.
Conference Room 211

Subject: **SB 1487 SD1: Authorizes the department of education to close or consolidate existing schools in conformance with applicable administrative rules adopted pursuant to chapter 91, HRS. Requires the department of education to give notice to affected schools of closure or consolidation; provided that an affected school may remain open if it meets certain requirements within one year of the notice of closure or consolidation.**

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The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop. Good Beginnings is also a member of One Voice for Hawaii's Children (www.onevoiceforchildren.net), an alliance of organizations and individuals committed to the development of an effective and equitably funded early childhood system that gives all young children the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten safe, healthy and ready to succeed. The following information is provided to help you in your decision-making process.

We laud the Legislature for considering other potential uses for current public school facilities. As our state moves closer towards a 21st Century learning perspective, we believe the inclusion of public-private early learning programs will be a major step forward in our quest for educational excellence. The cost of construction is often a major expense in building and/or expanding early learning programs. In Hawaii, the preschool attendance rate for public school kindergarten students has decreased each of the last two years. Thus, the sharing of current underutilized public school facilities will help our early learning providers expand access to their programs by more of Hawaii's keiki – helping them better prepare for entry into kindergarten.

Mahalo for your consideration. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502; Ichun@goodbeginnings.org