

SB289

Date:

Committee:

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0289 Relating to Education

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds for the Families for R.E.A.L. program and professional and curriculum development in parent involvement for the department of education and the early learning council; requires the program to develop a plan to cover an unspecified percentage of the program costs through fees, grants, and private donations, beginning July 1, 2013; requires report to the legislature and governor.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports SB 0289 as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2011-2013. Parents play a critical role in preparing their children to enter school, which may have a significant impact on their children's future academic success. However, there are few programs available to equip and empower parents to raise their children effectively and prepare them for entry into academia. Funds provided would preserve the program, so that its resources, experience, institutional knowledge, and expertise gained over the program's 23 years of existence would be shared statewide through the increased focus on providing early childhood support. If funded, two program sites would serve as resource centers for both their communities and the entire state. They would continue to offer classes, but would also transition into an expanded role that would provide resources for training parents of young children and school personnel who work with parents of young children, as

well as materials (e.g., newsletters, training materials, videos) available to families statewide. Families for R.E.A.L. would serve as one of a limited number of resources available to assist parents in supporting their children's successful transition from early childhood into Hawaii's public schools.

The program is requesting \$300,000 each year to maintain its current sites. In addition to the requested funding, the program is exploring the securing of other sources of income, including adopting a sliding fee schedule for participants, seeking scholarships from early childhood/parenting education entities, and foundations. Developing a sliding fee schedule based on family income is being explored. However, there are concerns about setting a fixed percentage of costs to the program, as external sources of funding, including grants, private donations, and other sources, may vary from year to year.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

Hearing Date: Friday, February 11, 2011

1:15 p.m. – Conference Room 225

SB 289: Relating to Education

Dee Jay Mailer, Chief Executive Officer
Kamehameha Schools

Good afternoon Chair Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Education. My name is Dee Jay Mailer, Chief Executive Officer of Kamehameha Schools.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 289, relating to education.

Kamehameha Schools supports the efforts of the legislature to enhance the early education opportunities of children across the state through the Families for R.E.A.L. program which offers professional and curriculum development for parents in order to improve outcomes for our keiki through the Department of Education and the Early Learning Council. In order for the Department of Education and the Council to work effectively, they need resources and therefore Kamehameha Schools strongly supports efforts to prevent any lapse of funding needed to fulfill their education priorities.

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. In 2004, the ECE Division also began serving keiki from birth to three years old, as part of its Hi‘ilani Early Childhood Collaborative program. We also provide scholarships to keiki attending other pre-schools and provide funding for child-family interaction programs that have filled a great need in rural communities.

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 Hawaii’s pre-kindergarten children.

Even with all of our efforts and all of the efforts of the public and private child development communities, our children and families still remain underserved and at risk. We support the

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reinstitution of funding to quality programs in order to not lose further ground on a foundation that is already shaky for a growing number of our youngest and most vulnerable learners. Remember, a child's loss of learning is a lifetime set back.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with the legislature, the Department of Education and other public and private stakeholders in the community for the benefit of the children of Hawai'i.

**Submitted Testimony:
Sandra E. Wood, PT**



**SB 289, Relating to Education
Sen EDU, Friday, February 11, 2011
Room 225, 1:15 pm**

Position: Strong Support

Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Sen EDU Committee:

I am Sandra Wood, P.T., member of HAPTA's Legislative Committee. HAPTA represents 250-300 physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed in hospitals, nursing homes, the Armed Forces, the Department of Education and Department of Health (DOH) systems, and private clinics throughout our community. Physical therapists work with everyone, from infants to the elderly, to restore and improve function and quality of life. We are part of the spectrum of care for Hawaii, and provide rehabilitative services for infants and children, youth, adults and the elderly. Physical therapy services are a vital part of restoring optimum function from neuromusculoskeletal injuries and impairments, improving wellness, and teaching prevention.

Physical therapists (PTs) who work in early intervention recognize the need to support and empower families to provide a developmentally appropriate home environment during the early years. We refer clients to the Families for REAL programs, work with children who attend these programs, and aware of the long waiting list and limited service to the population. Through this association with the Families for REAL programs, PTs recognize the need for professional and curriculum development in order to provide appropriate support to families

We support this request for funding to develop a plan for alternate sources of revenue and for continuation of the program during this biennium. We note that difficulty with transportation and time constraints often make it difficult for young families to participate. As such, we encourage services to be provided within the home community so that services are easily accessed and user friendly.

I can be reached at (808) 754-0979 if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 10, 2011

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 289, which would provide funds for the Families for R.E.A.L. program and professional and curriculum development in parent involvement for the Department of Education and the early learning council.

My name is Ruby Hiraishi, a retired Department of Education teacher, resource teacher, vice-principal, principal, windward district's deputy and superintendent. I am writing this testimony in support of the Families for REAL program to receive funding so that it may continue to make a positive impact on the families of our community. As a former principal of Kapunahala Elementary School, I was asked to initiate this program in 1991. I was honored and excited to implement this program since it was a response to the community vision of healthy children and families. Being in the department for 30 plus years in various positions, I continuously saw the extreme need to support, enable and encourage parents to create healthy and productive family environment. Here was a great opportunity for our school to fulfill some of the family needs with this program.

As I recall, the implementation of this program went very smoothly and was received with terrific responses by the community at large. I remember the staff had wait lists since more parents signed up than they could handle. I was also very impressed that parents from the northshore as well as in town would travel over many miles to attend the classes. Their positive evaluations and responses were "It's worth it". Needless to say, this program has proven its worth by the number of families it has served overtime and the effectiveness and satisfaction received from parents and families. Indeed the program's goal to empower parents in their nurturing and teaching roles was a reachable reality. Families for REAL should continue to strengthen the family unit and to further develop our community.

The program model is an effective one having goals for parents as well as for children. I recall parents expressing their doubts, questions and concerns as they participated in the adult discussions over a variety of child development issues. "It's always great having others to talk to and see that they also have similar fears and concerns" was a common statement heard in the classroom. The

environment created by the staff was cordial, respectful and safe, which made discussions productive and effective. Another valuable support for parents via this program was the sharing of available resources including various children agencies to support parents and children. The dissemination of information on child development was invaluable to many parents. There was no doubt in my mind that the Families for REAL would continue to positively impact parents and families for many years to come.

Upon my retirement I was able to experience the benefits of Families for REAL as a grandparent. I enrolled my two grandsons for several sessions and I got first-hand experience as a participant. It was their "first" school experience which offered positive transitions to their preschool education. Although years have passed, both boys often talk fondly about their first school, Families for REAL.

Although I knew the program model, its goals and objectives very well, it was truly a unique experience being a participant as part of the class. I met and interacted with families from other cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds which further broadened my scope of our present community. I learned so much from the presentations and discussions as we brought different points of view to child development issues. As I exited the sessions I had this awesome and satisfying feeling that this program was on the right track in making a difference in the lives of our children via supporting, educating and enabling adults to be effective parents.

At the end of last year I received information that the funding for the program was eliminated from the department's budget. I was taken aback by this decision and this is why I have written this testimony.

I always believed that children who are ready to learn as they enter our schools come from healthy and positive home environment. Effective parenting is the **key** to creating these positive environment. Families for REAL is a program which is critically needed to continue this much needed emphasis on effective parenting which is the basis for productive families. Families for REAL has been successfully implemented for the past 29 years and it **should** continue to serve its community for **many more**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for SB289.

February 10, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My name is Ray Sugai, a retired educator, who served as principal at Waiahole Elementary School (1986-1990) and at Pearl Ridge Elementary School (1990- 2004). I am testifying in support of SB 289 regarding the appropriation of funds for the Families for R.E.A.L. program.

In SY 1986-87, Waiahole School was a pilot site for the Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) program which evolved into the very successful state wide program. The Families for R.E.A.L. program started in 1988 with one of the sites located at Kapunahala Elementary School also in the Windward District. As a principal, I have been highly involved with the PCNC program and the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I have experienced the valuable impact of parent and community involvement on students over the past 20+ years.

The Families for R.E.A.L. program focuses on Early Childhood education (ages 0-5) and parent/family education. This program has been very successful and effective in meeting the needs of children and families in Hawaii. Educational research supports programs, such as Families for R.E.A.L. As an educator, I have personally experienced how preschool age children and their parents have benefited from this program as they enter kindergarten and move up to the next grades. My hope is that the Families for R.E.A.L. program would be expanded to address the needs of more children and parents/families.

My wife, Carole Mitsuyoshi-Sugai, also a retired educator, and I have had the opportunity to experience the Families for R.E.A.L. program as grandparents. Three of our grandchildren and their parents have participated and benefitted from Families for R.E.A.L.

We know that children are born with innate potential and capacities. They depend on their parents and other caregivers to provide a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment to help them learn, grow, and exercise their potentials. The first years are the formative years when children learn to adapt and confidently explore their environment. Without an adequate nurturing and supportive environment, children are at a disadvantage when they enter school.

As new mothers, both of our daughters realized the importance of providing this positive and nurturing environment for their babies. During the first few month of infancy, the babies' needs were easily met with milk, sleep, and cradling, however, as they approached the toddler or "terrible 2's" years, there were more occasions for our daughters to question their parenting techniques and strategies for managing their child's behavior. After each incident or behavior outburst, they would worry if they were "good" parents, which caused them much stress.

One of our grandchildren is adopted from China, so our daughter (her mother) had the added stress of being the "perfect" parent to her child, whom she waited so long to have. Families For R.E.A.L. program at Pearl City Highlands Elementary was the answer they were seeking. This program provided the valuable opportunity:

- To observe their child interacting with other children their age under the guidance of trained professions (teachers), who were able to immediately answer their questions regarding a behavior,
- To observe other children at play, which gave them some assurance that their child was “normal,”
- To observe the techniques the teachers used to teach songs, give directions for the art projects, and read stories,
- To sing and work on art/craft projects with their child,
- To participate in parent sessions where they received information on parenting skills,
- To participate in field trips, emphasizing the importance of broadening their child’s experiences,
- To interact with other parents and to discuss common concerns, and
- To have their child play with other children.

Families For R.E.A.L. gave our daughters the support and confidence they needed and at the time they needed them - when our grandchildren were entering their “terrible two’s” age. Two granddaughters smoothly adjusted to preschool and then to kindergarten, and one grandson is fortunate enough to presently be enrolled in Families For R.E.A.L.

There is definitely a critical need for the Families for R.E.A.L. program to continue and eventually expand to serve the children and parents/families of Hawaii. On behalf of these children and parents, I humbly ask for your support and consideration on this manner. Thank You.

Sincerely,

Ray Sugai, retired principal (2004)

675 Hoomoana St.

Pearl City, HI 96782

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Email: raysugai@hawaii.rr.com

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF: **SB289**

My name is Loimata Soa and I would like to express my heartfelt support for Families for R.E.A.L. and the passing of **SB289**. As the parent of a 2 year old toddler who has just completed a program with Families for R.E.A.L. (which involved 10 sessions of parent-child activities and information sharing), I can honestly say that both my daughter and I have benefited tremendously from this valuable program.

For my daughter, she was encouraged to interact with other peers and learn new skills under the supervision of a caring and knowledgeable staff. As for me, I found the parent sessions informative and helpful as parents, grandparents and staff were able to share ideas and concerns in a relaxed atmosphere. I know that the program that we attended was only one of the many that are offered by Families for R.E.A.L. throughout the state and am certain that there are many other parents who would share my sentiments.

Coming from Waimanalo, on the beautiful Windward side of the island I have to admit that the services that are available there for keiki 0-3 years are limited and for many of us unaffordable. Therefore, at a time when the education of our keiki here in Hawaii has come under such fire I feel that the free programs and services that Families for R.E.A.L. offer the keiki in our community are even more crucial. They encourage all our parents, grandparents and guardians to instil a love for learning in our keiki from the time that they are born. Please, I urge all of you to pass **SB289** and support future funding for Families for R.E.A.L. so that they can continue to support all of us.

THANK-YOU

Dear Ms. Ryan and Mr. Chong:

We are writing to support SB289 and the Families For R.E.A.L. program. We were fortunate enough to be able to put both our young children through this program and have found it to be a priceless experience for both the children and ourselves. The boys benefited from a preschool-like experience that acclimated them to a school environment and structure. They made obvious progress with social interaction and cooperation, as well as developmental issues such as motor skills and verbal communication. Just getting children used to a school setting is worth having the program.

However, it's not an exaggeration to suggest that the parents benefit just as much from Families For R.E.A.L. Child care services are always expensive and in short supply. Families for R.E.A.L. not only provides a crucial break for busy parents, it also gives us a support group that can help provide advice and emotional support. This was invaluable while we were trying to figure out how to raise our first child, and we like to think that we were able to help the other new parents when we took our second child to the program.

We're not ashamed to admit that parenting is hard. The first few years of a child's life are critical, and everyone benefits from providing assistance to new parents, rather than letting them figure it out as they go. Families for R.E.A.L. is worth far more than the trivial amount of money it costs. We strongly believe that the Families for R.E.A.L. program should be supported, if not expanded. We hope you will support SB289.

Very respectfully,

Matt and Vivian Dicksion

cc: Jill Tokuda

February 7, 2011

SB 289

Education Committee

Friday, February 11, 2011

1:15 P
To Whom It May Concern,

I am a concerned parent who currently has a child who attends the Lecward Families for R.E.A.L. class. I sincerely hope that SB 289 will be passed for future funding.

The Families for R.E.A.L. class we have been attending has been Therapy for my son. My son, Ethan, has a Sensory Processing Disorder. This Disorder affects almost every area of Ethan's life. Ethan is only 22 months old.

Ethan's Occupational Therapist highly recommended he attend Families for R.E.A.L. class. Ethan has responded wonderfully to his Toddler 1 class. Not only has it given him a chance to play with other kids, but also more importantly it has helped him get used to being around several adults in a small confined area. I also have benefited personally from our class. It has given me a chance to learn from other parents as well as from our two wonderful teachers. The class has given me the opportunity to do things with Ethan that I never would have been able to on my own.

I hope that I can convince you to do all that you can to support Families for R.E.A.L. I know that this program has helped our family tremendously and I hope it can continue to help other families who are in difficult circumstances like our family.

Thank you so much for your time and support.

Sincerely,



Brandi M. Picardal
94-1415 Welina Loop Apt.8B
Waipahu, HI 96797
808-741-2283

Senator Jill M. Tokuda, District 15
415 S, Beretania Street
Hawaii State Capitol, Office Number 218
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Post-It® Fax Note	7671	Date	2/10/11	# of pages	1
To	SEN. TOKUDA	From	Adams Family		
Co./Dept	Office # 218	Co.	Kailua		
Phone #	587-7215	Phone #	262-8065		
Fax #	587-7220	Fax #	262-8065		

Support for SB 289

Families For R.E.A.L. Program
The Hawaii Department of Education
Ben Parker Elementary School

February 3, 2011

Dear Senator Tokuda:

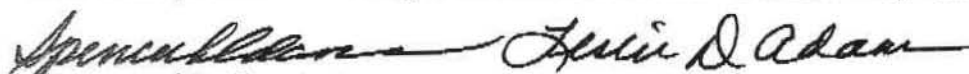
Our Family has participated in the Families For REAL Program at Ben Parker Elementary School in the Toddler I Program for children 15 to 23 months. Paxten Makana was 19 months old when he started the program in January and had not had the experience of being with similar age children. Mom a first time single parent, did not have a peer (moms') support network. Grandma and Grandad, had not been parents for 30+ years.

The Families For REAL Program provided our family with the resources, parenting and learning skills, and family support necessary to support Paxten's development during this crucial period of his life.

Families For R.E.A.L. is an exceptional program and we hope to continue with the Toddler II program to help us as a family to support Paxten's development.

We would be at a loss without this program in our community. Please provide funding so that families like ours will continue to have the support they need to help our keiki to have a rich early childhood development.

Mahalo for your continued help to Hawaii's Children and Families early childhood needs!



Spencer and Leslie Adams
871 Maluniu Avenue, Kailua, Hawaii 96734

cc:
Kimberly Pescaia
Paxten Makana

Wayne T. & Karen A. Yamada
45-441 Leleua Loop
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744-2122

February 7, 2011

Senator Jill N. Tokuda
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Room 218
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Tokuda:

We are asking for you to support SB 289 which funds Families for R.E.A.L.

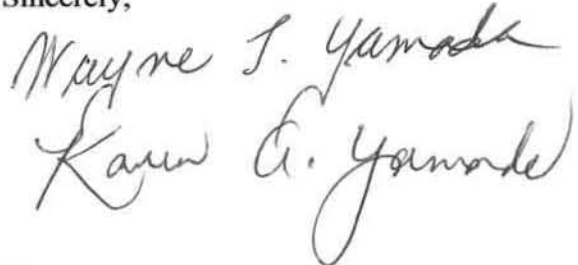
As grandparents and participants in Families for R.E.A.L. program we appreciate the tremendous help, support and guidance in helping our 2 year old granddaughter mature and grow.

She has thrived and we as grandparents have learned so much. It has been an invaluable experience.

We know of no other program available for children in their early developmental years such as this.

Again, we sincerely ask for your support for SB289

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Wayne T. Yamada and Karen A. Yamada in cursive script.

Wayne T. & Karen A. Yamada