



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING  
HONOLULU

GG WEISENFELD  
DIRECTOR

Testimony in **Support** of  
H.C.R. 78 / H.R. 52  
By GG Weisenfeld, Director

House Committee on Education  
March 17, 2014  
2:00 p.m., Room 309

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. I am GG Weisenfeld, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

EOEL is in support of House Concurrent Resolution 78 and House Resolution 52, which express the Legislature's strong support for the establishment of mandatory kindergarten.

Across the nation, most school districts require that a child be five years old before entering kindergarten or become five in the first month of school. In 2012, 39 states and the District of Columbia had cutoff dates of September (usually the first day of school) or earlier.

As we work to implement an early learning system in Hawaii, it makes sense to have mandatory kindergarten to promote the continuity of children's experiences from prekindergarten to kindergarten. While most children enroll in kindergarten, some families do not feel compelled to send their children to school on a consistent basis because it is not mandatory. Without the skills that can be gained through a kindergarten experience, these children may have to play catch up with their peers in first grade. This may leave the child feeling discouraged and put them in a position to fall further behind.

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten to grade 12, it is even more important now that kindergarten be made mandatory so Hawaii's children can meet the academic requirements of K-12.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on these measures.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/17/2014

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Resolution:** HCR 078/HR 52 SUPPORTING MANDATORY KINDERGARTEN.

**Purpose of Resolution:** Supporting mandatory kindergarten.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education (Department) is very appreciative of the support that is imbedded in HCR 78/HR 52 for mandatory kindergarten.

The Department is committed to a kindergarten system that balances quality learning experiences with developmentally appropriate practices in classrooms to support every child's journey towards a college- and career-ready future in Hawaii.



**HAWAI'I P-20**  
Partnerships for Education  
*Spark. Transform. Excel.*

Testimony presented before the  
House Committee on Education  
March 17, 2014 at 2:00 pm  
By Karen C. Lee, Ed.D.  
Executive Director, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education

HCR 78/HR 52 Supporting Mandatory Kindergarten

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno and Members of the Committee:

HCR 78/HR 52 strongly supports the establishment of mandatory kindergarten as well as the provision of adequate funding by the State to ensure that kindergarten is available to all five-year-old children.

Hawaii P-20 supports this resolution. As an organization that works in partnership with the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Hawaii Department of Education and the University of Hawaii, Hawaii P-20 works to improve the educational pipeline and facilitates seamless educational experiences across systems. Full-day mandatory kindergarten is essential to create the educational, socio-emotional and physical building blocks to success in latter years in the K-12 education system and beyond.

Although not mentioned in this resolution, Hawaii P-20 strongly supports the creation of an appropriate individualized kindergarten readiness assessment system. This assessment of each individual child will provide uniform data to the Hawaii Department of Education about the child's readiness, give consistent feedback to early learning programs about their preparation of children, and give feedback to parents and families about their child's learning and development. It is absolutely essential that the state begin to collect data about individual child readiness for kindergarten in order to improve the preparedness of children, aid teachers in providing differentiated learning techniques, and for longitudinal studies about education outcomes.

Furthermore, we strongly support the request for the adequate funding of kindergarten education as well as funding for an appropriate assessment tool and the ongoing training necessary on the chosen tool. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**Hawai'i P-20**

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Monday, March 17, 2014  
2:00 PM  
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON EDUCATION

**RE: HCR 78/HR 52 – Supporting Mandatory Kindergarten**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno, and members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt, Executive Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

**HAIS is in strong support of HCR 78/HR 52**, resolutions that will serve to enhance school readiness for all children, putting them on an equal playing field for future success in school and beyond. This will also set a much-needed precedent for the entire country by making kindergarten mandatory.

The passage of these resolutions will support the children of our most at-risk families; those who are most likely to enter school without the necessary foundational skills for learning that were missed by not attending preschool, as well as those who choose not to attend preschool and kindergarten at all.

We cannot stress the importance of establishing preventative measures in education that will save on remedial costs later in a child's life.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of these resolutions.

841 Bishop St., Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



Telephone: 808 926-1530  
Contact@HEECoalition.org

House Committee on Education  
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair

March 17, 2014

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno, and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in support for HCR78, relating to mandatory Kindergarten.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 40 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

The Coalition supports mandatory Kindergarten for our students. The Coalition in recent years has supported Early Learning legislation, as our members believe that the earlier a child is exposed to school, the better outcomes for student achievement. We believe that mandatory Kindergarten will help consistency from a pre-Kindergarten program to a Kindergarten program. We have heard from school administrators that while most children enroll in Kindergarten, because it is not mandatory, some families will not feel compelled to send their children to school on consistent basis. Along with the support for mandatory Kindergarten, we also recommend an outreach program be implemented to educate families about the importance of daily attendance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration. Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Member List

Academy 21

Academy 21

After-School All-Stars Hawaii

Alliance for Place Based Learning

\*Castle Complex Community Council

Center for Civic Education

Coalition for Children with Special Needs

\*DOE Windward District

\*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawaii

\*Good Beginnings Alliance

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

\*Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

\*Hawai'i Charter School Network

\*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

\*Hawaii State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Hawai'i P-20

Hawai'i 3Rs

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

\*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

Keiki to Career

Kupu A'e

\*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Our Public School

\*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

\*Parents and Children Together

\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Punahou School PUEO Program

Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

YMCA of Honolulu

Voting Members (\*)

## ohno2-Rexie

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 16, 2014 2:09 PM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Cc:** mghsmart@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HCR78 on Mar 17, 2014 14:00PM

### HCR78

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for EDN on Mar 17, 2014 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Smart	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: There are many bills proposing mandatory kindergarten this session. They must ALL be opposed for the following reasons: Children mature at different rates.

<http://healthland.time.com/2012/03/06/adhd-why-the-youngest-students-in-a-class-are-most-likely-to-be-diagnosed/> Starting educational programs too early are harmful.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/experts-warn-starting-school-too-young-harms-learning-wellbeing-20140125-31fp8.html> Many other articles advise against lowering the age for mandatory school. Quote: "Lowering the compulsory attendance age will prevent parents from determining when their child is ready for school. Research has also shown that by the 3rd grade there is no academic advantage for mandatory kindergarten programs."

<http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/ID/6161/Hawaii-Homeschoolers-Speak-up-Against-Mandatory-Kindergarten.aspx> Also quoted: "According to the 2005 NAEP test scores of children from states that have low compulsory school attendance ages (5–6) did not score any higher than children from the other states, and in some subjects their average was actually lower. Many education experts have concluded that beginning a child's formal education too early may actually result in burnout and poor scholastic performance later. Lowering the compulsory attendance age erodes the authority of parents who are in the best position to determine when their child's formal education should begin. A report published February 6, 2007 by the Goldwater Institute examines Stanford 9 test scores and finds Arizona kindergarten programs initially improve learning but have no measurable impact on reading, math, or language arts test scores by fifth grade. The data show that students in schools with all-day kindergarten programs have statistically significant higher 3rd-grade test scores, but there is no impact on 5th-grade scores. This finding is consistent with previous research. Forcing children into school early delivers short-term benefits at best. Another significant impact of expanding the compulsory attendance age would be an inevitable tax increase to pay for more classroom space and teachers to accommodate the additional students compelled to attend public schools." <http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/ID/12036/House-Bill-14-Mandatory-Kindergarten-Lowering-Compulsory-School-Attendance-Age-to-5.aspx> Mandatory kindergarten wastes time, money and possibly inhibits the education of children captured into this system. For these reasons and others, you must oppose all mandatory kindergarten legislation.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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