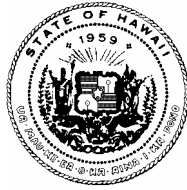


NEIL ABERCROMBIE
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 19, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Barbara Yamashita, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2768, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO KINDERGARTEN**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 19, 2014; 9:25 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purposes of this bill are to make kindergarten mandatory for a child who will be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year; requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Executive Office on Early Learning, to develop a statewide kindergarten readiness program; establishes an individualized kindergarten readiness assessment; and makes an appropriation to the Department of Education.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill and defers to the Department of Education and the Executive Office on Early Learning on the implementation of its provisions.

Act 169, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, established the existing child care assistance program, called Preschool Open Doors, as the statewide school readiness program to be administered by the Department of Human Services.

The Preschool Open Doors (POD) program serves low- to moderate-income families whose late-born children are affected by the change in kindergarten entry age in the 2014-2015 school year or whose children will be eligible for kindergarten in the following school year.

Requiring that kindergarten attendance be mandatory under the compulsory education law would require children enrolled in the POD program to attend kindergarten in the following year and will promote continuity of the children's early learning experiences and thus maximizing the value of the POD program. Children will have the needed school-readiness skills they experienced in a preschool setting through the POD program and will be ready to apply those skills in kindergarten.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

Personal Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 19, 2014, 9:25 am
by
Donald B. Young

SB 2768 SD1 RELATING TO KINDERGARTEN

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

My name is Donald Young. I am the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

On behalf of the College of Education, I support SB 2768 SD1. While we continue to struggle with how to provide quality early learning opportunities for all young children, it remains an anomaly that we do not require Kindergarten attendance. It is true that in Hawai'i a very large number of families voluntarily enroll their children in Kindergarten. However, leaving early learning to chance is unacceptable if we truly intend to create a literate, productive workforce and ensure all children have access to life opportunities they may wish to achieve.

Section 4 of SB 2768 SD1 calls for the development of an individual assessment system to determine a child's readiness for Kindergarten. I wish to respectfully remind the Committee that the College of Education has considerable faculty expertise in developing early learning systems, including assessment protocols and instruments appropriate for young children, that could contribute to fulfilling the intent of this bill.

I wish to also point out that several years ago the Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC) engaged in a statewide effort focused on the transition of young children into Kindergarten. In addition to the research conducted, there were two instruments developed, one assessing the readiness of groups of children to enter Kindergarten, and another assessing the readiness of schools to accept and provide quality educational services for them. I respectfully suggest that should SB 2768 SD1 pass that we re-look and build upon the earlier HEPC work rather than assuming that we are starting from scratch all over again. The reports can be found on the HEPC website.

- [Ready for Success In Kindergarten — A Comparative Analysis of Community Beliefs: Preschool and Kindergarten Parents, Teachers, and Administrators \[POLICY BRIEF ALSO AVAILABLE\]](#), (114 pp, 608K, PDF)
- [Development, Validation and Field Testing of Readiness Instruments: Schools Ready for Children and Children Ready for School](#)(83 pp, 764K, PDF)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2014

RE: S.B. 2768, SD1 – RELATING TO KINDERGARTEN

PERSON TESTIFYING: WIL OKABE
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Wil Okabe
President
Joan Kamila Lewis
Vice President
Colleen Pasco
Secretary-Treasurer
Alvin Nagasako
Executive Director

The Honorable Chair David Ige, The Honorable Vice-Chair Michelle Kidani and the Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) wholeheartedly **strongly supports S.B. 2768, SD1, Mandatory Kindergarten.**

HSTA is the exclusive representative of more than 13,500 public and charter schoolteachers statewide. As the state affiliate of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association, HSTA believes that kindergarten should be mandatory as well as adequate funding should be provided by the state so that kindergarten education will be available to all five year olds.

In last night's state of the union address, President Obama referred to the proliferation of pre-kindergarten programs. As such, kindergarten may no longer be the primary bridge between home and formal education. However, it still serves as an important transitional function as kindergarteners are expected to learn basic academic and social skills that prepare them for the demands of first and subsequent grades. In order to ensure that this expectation is met, kindergarten attendance should be mandatory, and Hawaii should offer a publicly –funded, quality kindergarten program.

HSTA supports full day mandatory Kindergarten programs. If early childhood education is a priority, then schools should have mandatory kindergarten in our compulsory attendance laws before a new project is started.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 2768.**



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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 19, 2014
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 211

SB 2768, SD1 – Relating to mandatory kindergarten

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the committee. Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) supports the intent of SB 2768, SD1.

Making kindergarten mandatory would demonstrate the state's continued commitment to quality early childhood education. HAEYC supports the use of an appropriate assessment system that is used to benefit the child, used in planning curriculum, and is not used for high stakes decisions. Data collected should be used appropriately to improve classroom instruction. Data used to evaluate teacher effectiveness must be carefully thought out and planned.

HAEYC also supports the reinstatement of a state level Early Childhood Specialist with appropriate support at the district levels.

HAEYC acknowledges the vision and courage it takes for legislators to enact laws that will come to full fruition after they leave office. Investing in early childhood development and education will be a lasting legacy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING
HONOLULU

GG WEISENFELD
DIRECTOR

Testimony in **Support** of
S.B. 2768 S.D. 1, Relating to Kindergarten
By GG Weisenfeld, Director

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 19, 2014
9:25 a.m., Room 211

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

The Executive Office on Early Learning is in support of Senate Bill 2768, Senate Draft 1.

The purpose of this bill is to make kindergarten mandatory for a child who will be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year. The bill further requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Executive Office on Early Learning, to develop a statewide individualized kindergarten readiness system and establish an individualized kindergarten readiness assessment system.

EOEL supports the provision to make kindergarten mandatory.

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.

EOEL also supports the requirement of this bill that EOEL cooperate with the Department of Education to develop a kindergarten readiness assessment system. As EOEL develops a prekindergarten program for four-year-olds, it is important that the School Readiness and Early Childhood Education programs align with the DOE kindergarten program. A kindergarten readiness assessment system is an important part of achieving this alignment.

EOEL recommends the following amendments to the bill:

- Page 2, lines 19-21: "... at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the school year ..."
- Page 3, line 9: "... least [~~six~~] five years[;] on or before July 31 of the school year, ..."
- Clarify the language of the bill to specify that DOE, in collaboration with EOEL, shall develop the statewide individualized kindergarten readiness **process**, and that an individualized kindergarten readiness assessment **tool** be established within DOE.

We also prefer the drafting found in H.B. 14 H.D. 1, relating to the provision to make kindergarten mandatory (e.g., repeal 302A-411).

EOEL respectfully asks that the committee move this bill forward with the suggested amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2768 on Feb 19, 2014 09:25AM*
Date: Sunday, February 16, 2014 9:53:59 AM

SB2768

Submitted on: 2/16/2014

Testimony for WAM on Feb 19, 2014 09:25AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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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Testimony presented before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 19, 2014 at 9:25 am
By Karen C. Lee, Ed.D.
Executive Director, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education

SB 2768, SD1: Relating to Kindergarten.

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

SB 2768, SD1 makes kindergarten mandatory for a child who will be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year. It also requires the Hawaii Department of Education, in collaboration with the Executive Office on Early Learning, to establish an individualized kindergarten readiness assessment system and makes an appropriation for the system to the Hawaii Department of Education.

Hawaii P-20 supports this bill. 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 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.

In particular, Hawaii P-20 strongly supports the creation of an appropriate individualized kindergarten readiness assessment system. Currently, schools create or adopt their own assessments in order to survey incoming students' readiness for school. Many of these tools are not developmentally appropriate, cumbersome to administer, and expensive. Moreover, they do not provide any uniform data to the Hawaii Department of Education about children's readiness or consistent feedback to early learning programs about their preparation of children or 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 funding of an appropriate assessment tool, as well as the ongoing training necessary on the chosen tool. The Hawaii Department of Education cannot be expected to implement a new statewide assessment system without adequate funding. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Hawaii P-20

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