
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that early childhood
2 education helps build physical, linguistic, cognitive, and
3 social skills in children and can prepare a person for success
4 in life. The HighScope Perry Preschool Study found that
5 children enrolled in a quality preschool program became adults
6 who were more likely to graduate high school, earn a higher
7 salary, and become home owners compared to their peers who were
8 not enrolled in a quality preschool program. This study shows
9 that early childhood education is not just beneficial to the
10 child, but to the entire community. Providing opportunities for
11 some four-year-olds to engage in early learning is an important
12 step toward meeting early childhood education needs in Hawaii.

13 The legislature finds that reinstatement of the junior
14 kindergarten program is necessary in light of the failure of a
15 constitutional amendment that would have allowed state funding
16 to private preschools. There are currently few options for
17 children to attend public school before their fifth birthday.



1 Reinstating the junior kindergarten program will give any child,
2 who turns five between August 1st and January 1st of the school
3 year, the chance to enroll in public school at age four and be
4 promoted to first grade after completion of one year, if
5 appropriate, or continue in kindergarten, if needed. At no
6 other time in a child's school years is such flexibility
7 available without the social or emotional risk associated with
8 keeping a child from being promoted to the next grade. Junior
9 kindergarten is a unique opportunity to arm children with
10 skills, confidence, and the best preparation possible for first
11 grade.

12 The purpose of this Act is to reinstate the junior
13 kindergarten program in the State's public schools.

14 SECTION 2. Section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended to read as follows:

16 "§302A-411 [~~Kindergarten~~] Junior kindergarten and
17 kindergarten program; establishment; attendance. (a) The
18 department shall establish and maintain junior kindergartens and
19 kindergartens with a program of instruction as a part of the
20 public school system; provided that:



1 (1) Attendance in kindergarten shall be mandatory, unless
2 exempted by subsection [~~(b)~~] (c) or section 302A-1132;
3 and

4 (2) Charter schools shall not be excluded from mandatory
5 participation in the program.

6 (b) The department shall establish a two-tier junior
7 kindergarten and kindergarten program to support the range of
8 developmental abilities of children in junior kindergarten and
9 kindergarten. Schools shall not move students between junior
10 kindergarten and kindergarten, except in cases where the
11 movement is warranted and based on appropriate assessments
12 determined by:

13 (1) A qualified teacher with early childhood education
14 background or experience; and

15 (2) The formative and summative assessment of a student's
16 academic, physical, social, and emotional abilities,
17 provided that, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the
18 department shall use successful assessment tools and protocols
19 for determining a student's initial placement and for decision
20 making about a student's movement between tiers and into grade
21 one. Junior kindergarten students may graduate directly to



1 grade one when promotion is based on appropriate assessments and
2 other progress data collected over time.

3 ~~[-(b)-]~~ (c) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, any
4 parent, guardian, or other person having the responsibility for,
5 or care of, a child who will be at least five years of age on or
6 before July 31 of the school year shall enroll the child in a
7 public school kindergarten unless the child is enrolled at a
8 private school or the child's attendance is otherwise exempt
9 under section 302A-1132. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school
10 year, any parent, guardian, or other person having the
11 responsibility for, or care of, a child who will be at least
12 five years of age on or after August 1 and before January 1 of
13 the school year may enroll the child in a public school junior
14 kindergarten.

15 ~~[-(e)-]~~ (d) The department may accept gifts to establish and
16 maintain kindergartens."

17 SECTION 3. The department of education shall create a
18 strategic plan for the implementation of junior kindergarten
19 programs within three years of the effective date of this Act.
20 The strategic plan shall include but is not limited to:



1 (1) A timeline for the implementation of junior
2 kindergarten within three years of the effective date
3 of this Act;

4 (2) A list of schools whose facilities can support the
5 addition of a junior kindergarten program;

6 (3) Discussion of the costs associated with implementing
7 junior kindergarten in existing facilities; and

8 (4) A list of schools not able to accommodate a junior
9 kindergarten program in existing facilities, detailing
10 the infrastructure needs preventing each school from
11 implementing a junior kindergarten program.

12 The department of education shall submit a report, including the
13 strategic plan and any proposed legislation, to the legislature
14 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
15 session of 2016.

16 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2016-2017 for the reinstatement of junior kindergarten



1 programs in schools that administered junior kindergarten
2 programs prior to 2012.

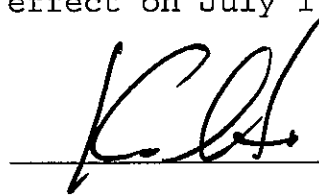
3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of education for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
6 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
8 provided that section 4 shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

9

INTRODUCED BY: _____



JAN 26 2015



Report Title:

Public Schools; Early Childhood Education; Junior Kindergarten;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes junior kindergartens to provide schooling for children who turn five between August 1 and January 1 of a given school year, and would otherwise be required to wait until after their fifth birthday to enroll in kindergarten. Requires the department of education to create a strategic plan for implementation of junior kindergarten programs and report findings to the legislature. Appropriates funds for the reinstatement of junior kindergarten programs in schools where the programs were administered prior to 2012.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

