

LATE

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



KATHRYN S. MATAYOSHI
SUPERINTENDENT

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

Date: 02/13/2015
Time: 01:30 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0863 RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the executive office on early learning prekindergarten program, to be administered by the executive office on early learning and provided through public schools, including charter schools.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education recognizes the importance of early childhood education, as well as its impact upon our children's future outcomes and the state's economic growth. We offer the following comments and amendment suggestions.

Our mission is to ensure Hawaii's public school students receive a quality education. As such, the Department is tasked with providing education for students in grades K-12 and its expertise and priorities lies therein. Furthermore, our current infrastructure with regards to early childhood recruitment, certification, capacity-building and resources to lead and support early learning is limited and underdeveloped.

The Department recognizes the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) as possessing the early childhood expertise, including but not limited to comprehensive early childhood development and learning. Therefore, any early childhood programs should be under the management and operational oversight of the EOEL.

We respectfully request that the language in this measure (p.19, lines 10-11, Section 2 (a)(1)) be revised to read, as follows: "Be provided through ~~public schools~~ the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) who may partner with the department of education,...."

Further, additional language (p. 21, lines 16-17, Section 2 (h)) be amended to reflect the following: "The department of education and any charter school existing pursuant to chapter 302D ~~shall~~ may use available classrooms for public preschool classrooms statewide".

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

LATE

TO: Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Honorable Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Education

DATE: February 13, 2015
TIME: 1:30 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 229
Hawai'i State Capitol

FROM: Kamehameha Schools

RE: SENATE BILL 863, RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 863, relating to early childhood education. Kamehameha Schools offers comments in support of establishing the executive office on early learning prekindergarten program, to be administered by the executive office on early learning and provided through public schools, including charter schools.

Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian children through education. We serve K-12 students through campus programs on O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui, and three-and-four-year-olds at preschool sites statewide. In 2004, the Early Childhood Education 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 preschools 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 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 Hawai'i's pre-kindergarten children.



February 13, 2015

To: Sen. Michelle Kidani, Chair
Sen. Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

RE: Support for SB 844 – Relating to Public Early Childhood Education
Support for SB 863 – Relating to Early Childhood Education

Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) is in support of SB 844, Relating to Public Early Childhood Education, and in support of SB 863, Relating to Early Childhood Education, which would establish the Executive Office on Early Learning Prekindergarten Program to be administered by the Executive Office on Early Learning and provided through Department of Education public schools and charter schools.

GBA is Hawaii's leading policy and advocacy non-profit organization on children's health, education and safety. We build a united voice to educate and advocate for Hawaii's children.

Hawaii is among the least affordable states for childcare, which is a significant financial hardship for many families. The average cost of childcare at \$8,172 in 2012 represents 9% of the median income for a family in Hawaii. According to the Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment for 2012-13, more than 40% of children entering kindergarten had not attended a pre-kindergarten program and more than 90% of students in DOE classrooms did not meet benchmarks in all dimensions of school readiness. This trend is alarming, but it can be reversed.

Brain research has proven that the first few years of life are a crucial time for brain development. Brains are built from the bottom up and continue to develop into adulthood. According to a Harvard study on child development, early experiences affect the development of brain architecture, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Just as a weak foundation compromises the quality and strength of a house, adverse experiences early in life can impair brain architecture, with negative effects lasting into adulthood.

The research is clear that when children are provided a high-quality early childhood education, they are more likely to succeed academically in school, reach higher levels of educational attainment, have a higher income and even live healthier lives. A study commissioned by GBA in 2008 found more than \$4 in return for every \$1 invested in early childhood education in Hawaii. Preparing our young children to be ready to learn and thrive before they reach kindergarten not only helps to improve their lives as individuals, it improves the lives of our communities.

Both SB 844 and SB 863 would make early education accessible for children and their parents, who may not otherwise be able to afford a high quality early education program. These bills would help build capacity to serve pre-kindergarten 4- and 5-year-old children and establish a high-level quality instruction program tied to educational outcomes.

While both bills generally would establish similar programs for pre-kindergarten 4- and 5-year-old children, we do prefer the prioritization of underserved or at-risk children, which is a provision in SB 844, Section 2. (b), given the current funding level for this program. Further, SB 844, also defines “underserved children,” which we recommend be tiered to families with incomes no more than 250% of the poverty level.

These measures are critical to insure that the Executive Office on Early Learning effectively continues its work to serve our youngest children.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge committee members to advance authorizing legislation to establish Executive Office on Early Learning Pre-kindergarten Program this session.