



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Education

Time: 2:45 p.m.

Date: February 1, 2017

Where: Conference Room 229

### TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk  
Kamehameha Schools

To: Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kahele, and Members of the Committee

RE: **SB 687 Relating to Early Learning.**

E ka Luna Ho'omalū Kidani, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalū Kahele, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Ho'ona'auao o ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha! My name is Ka'ano'i Walk and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst of the Kūamahi Community Education Group of Kamehameha Schools.

We are writing to **support SB 687**, relating to early learning, and offer the following comments:

This measure broadens the scope of the early learning program to include early childhood development. It expands the function of the early learning advisory board beyond an advisory capacity and amends the composition and powers of some board members.

Since its inception nearly 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 our work, 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. We have closely collaborated with the Early Learning Advisory Board and its predecessor and a Kamehameha Schools representative currently serves on the board. We believe that this bill is an important step to enhancing the effectiveness of the board and will help to achieve the state's early learning goals.

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 learners. We believe that by continuing to engage in dialog around important educational policy decisions, we can contribute in a positive and meaningful way. 'A'ohē hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.