



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Education and Human Services

Time: 2:45 p.m.

Date: March 20, 2017

Where: State Capitol Room 16

TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

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

RE: **HB 499 HD1, Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program**

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Green, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Chang, ka Luna Ho'omalua Kidani, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Kahele a me nā Lālā Kenekoa o kēia Kōmike, 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.

HB 499 HD1, relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program repeals the priority given by the preschool open doors program to children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date. We are writing in **support** of this measure.

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 our 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.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.