



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Executive Office on Early Learning**  
1390 Miller Street, Room 303  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 22, 2017

**TO:** Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

**FROM:** Lauren Moriguchi, Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT: SB 687, SD 1 – Relating to Early Learning**  
**Hearing Date:** February 23, 2017  
**Time:** 9:30 a.m.  
**Location:** Conference Room 211

**Purpose of Bill:** Broadens the scope of the early learning program to include early childhood development. Expands the function of the early learning advisory board beyond an advisory capacity and amends the composition and powers of some board members. Allows the board to appoint the director of the executive office on early learning.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION:** The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) **supports** HB 498 with recommendations for amendments.

In addition to transforming the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB) into a governing board, this legislation proposes to redefine the definition of "at risk" to include children whose family income is no more than "three hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level." EOEL proposes that consideration be given to include children whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level on page 3, lines 12-13. While this will allow EOEL to extend the Public Pre-Kindergarten Program to working class families, EOEL recommends that priority should be extended to those who may not otherwise be able to afford a high-quality pre-kindergarten program for their child. EOEL respectfully proposes that the language on page 19, lines 3-5 be revised to, "The program shall serve children in the year prior to the year of kindergarten eligibility, with priority extended to those whose family income is below two-hundred and fifty percent of the federal poverty level."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz,, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 687 SD 1, Relating to Early Learning -- Hearing  
February 23, 2017, 9:30 AM, Conference Room 211

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Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert G. Peters and over the past 10 years, I have served as a Chair of the Early Learning Task Force, the Early Learning Council and currently as Chair of the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB). Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of the ELAB in support of SB 687 SD 1, relating to early learning, which broadens the scope of the early learning program to include early childhood development, expands the function of the Early Learning Advisory Board, and allows the Board to appoint and evaluate the Executive Director of Early Learning.

Act 178 established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) as an office of the Governor, created the ELAB and provided for the EOEL to become an attached agency to the Department of Education for administrative purposes beginning in 2015. The ELAB's function has been strictly an advisory one and the EOEL has lacked an oversight board This legislation seeks to change the ELAB's role by giving it authority to appoint and evaluate the director of the Executive Office on Early Learning, set the Director's salary and the power, in accordance with the law, to formulate statewide policy relating to early learning.

The EOEL is charged with the development and administration of a high quality early learning system for Hawai'i's children from birth until they enter kindergarten. This legislation would provide the oversight and authority of a board to guide the strategic direction of that system development while supporting and holding the EOEL accountable for designing a high quality cohesive, comprehensive and sustainable system . It retains the diverse public/private membership to assist these efforts but reduces the number of voting members. In the end, this bill will address the one missing link in governance for the P-20 continuum, a board for early learning to complement the BOE and the Board of Regents.

This legislation proposes to redefine the definition of "at risk" to include children whose family income is no more than "three hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level." EOEL proposes that consideration be given to include children whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level on page 3, lines 12-13. While this will allow EOEL to extend the Public Pre-Kindergarten Program to working class families, EOEL recommends that priority should be extended to those who may not otherwise be able to afford a high-quality pre-kindergarten program for their child. EOEL respectfully proposes that the language on page 19, lines 3-5 be revised to, "The program shall serve children in the year prior to the year of kindergarten eligibility, with priority extended to those whose family income is below two-hundred and fifty percent of the federal poverty level."

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the ELAB which strongly encourages the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Robert G. Peters, EdD  
Early Learning Advisory Board, Chair



February 21, 2017

To: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director  
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **SB 687 SD 1 – Relating to Early Learning**  
**Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, February 23, 2017, 9:30 AM**

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**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to support SB 687 SD 1 – Relating to Early Learning.**

This bill will widen the scope of the early learning program to include early childhood development, expand the function of the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB), and allow the ELAB to appoint and evaluate the Executive Director of Early Learning.

The Executive Office on Early Learning's (EOEL) mission is to develop and administer a high-quality early learning system for Hawaii's children from birth until they enter kindergarten. In 2015, the EOEL shifted from being an office of the Governor to become an attached agency to the Department of Education. The same act that established EOEL also created the ELAB, whose role has been strictly advisory. **SB 687 SD 1** seeks to change the ELAB's role by giving it the authority to appoint and evaluate the director of the Executive Office on Early Learning; allowing it to set the Director's salary; and providing it the power, in accordance with the law, to formulate statewide policy relating to early learning.

**SB 687 SD 1** would provide the oversight and authority of a board to guide the strategic direction of the system development while supporting and holding the EOEL accountable for developing a high-quality, cohesive, comprehensive, and sustainable system. The ELAB would retain the diverse public/private membership but reduces the number of voting members. In the end, this bill will add a key aspect needed in governance for the P-20 continuum, a board for early learning to compliment the Board of Education and the Board of Regents.

Another important facet of **SB 687 SD 1** is the amendment of the “at risk” definition to include children whose family income is no more than “three hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level” rather than current statute designation of “two hundred fifty percent.” This change will expand opportunities for families currently excluded to gain access to early learning programs. Providing many more children the opportunity to benefit from quality early learning experiences leading to school and life success.

**For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee pass this bill.**

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii’s children by improving their safety, health, and education. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2017 Hawai’i Children’s Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2017policyagenda>.



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Date: February 23, 2017

Where: Conference Room 211

### TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk

Kamehameha Schools

To: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee

RE: **SB 687, SD1 Relating to Early Learning.**

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Tokuda, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Dela Cruz a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike o nā Loa'a a me nā Ho'olilo 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, SD1**, 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.

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.