



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

April 16, 2019

TO: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: **Measure:** Governor's Message No. 707
Hearing Date: April 17, 2019
Time: 2:45 p.m.
Location: Room 329

Description: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Advisory Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, BENJAMIN NAKI III, for a term to expire 06-30-2022.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good afternoon. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL strongly supports the confirmation of Mr. Benjamin Naki III to the Early Learning Board, for a term to expire June 30, 2022.

The Early Learning Board is EOEL's governing entity, and is tasked in statute with formulating statewide policy relating to early learning. We note that Mr. Naki's confirmation would not be to the Early Learning Advisory Board, but the Early Learning Board, due to the statutory change made in 2017.

The input of Head Start providers is critical as EOEL works to carry out its statutory responsibility to develop Hawaii's early learning system, which shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children. Our community-based providers have been the mainstay of early learning programs and services for decades. Included in EOEL's charge is to coordinate *all* existing early learning programs and services, whether publicly or privately run.

Head Start programs, which primarily serve children with serious socioeconomic disadvantages – often associated with poorer academic and other life outcomes – and wrap the children and their families with comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services, are an integral component of the early learning system (from prenatal care to kindergarten entry) that EOEL is charged with developing. As such, the Head Start provider agency representative on the Board carries an important role.

Mr. Naki's expertise on Head Start programs, as well as his almost two decades of leadership in the early childhood community especially with vulnerable children and families, has truly been and we hope will continue to be, a great asset to the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Mr. Naki's confirmation.



TO: Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: Wednesday, April 17, 2019; 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 329

RE: GM 707 TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BENJAMIN NAKI III FOR THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD

We support Benjamin Naki III, gubernatorial nominee, for the Early Learning Board. Ben is highly qualified to serve as a member of the State's Early Learning Board with his vast experience working within the sector of early childhood education and currently serving as the Vice President of Early Childhood Education Programs at PACT. He is also serving a current term on the Early Learning Board after previously serving for three years on the State's Early Learning Advisory Board. He also serves as a representative on the Native Hawaiian Education Council. His commitment to early learning is second-to-none and he brings a steadfast commitment to our communities and to the children and families of Hawaii.

Ben is an accomplished leader and has represented our State on the Head Start Association of Hawaii as well as on the Board of the Regional Head Start Association. He has been a mentor to new Head Start directors and continues to participate in various leadership capacities both locally and nationally. As a Head Start and Early Head Start Program Director for many years, Ben has a clear understanding of the needs of both our community and its consumers. Always a thoughtful listener, Ben is willing to hear all perspectives knowing that differing opinions often help to shape positive, collaborative and productive solutions.

Ben is well-respected and effective. He operates with honesty, humility and a sincere interest in making sure that our families, especially our keiki, have access to quality early learning opportunities. Ben elevates the community around him-- expectations are high, communication is clear and decisions are made with the utmost discernment and care. He is a grounding force-- working with integrity, an eye towards the mission and a keen sense of what is best for all constituents. Ben brings to the Early Learning Board a wealth of experience coupled with his

authentic, transparent leadership and knack for fostering collaborative, engaged communities committed to student and family success.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of Benjamin Naki III**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

April 9, 2019

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Education Committee

From: Michael Fahey, Chair Nominations Committee,
Early Learning Board

Re: **GM 707 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,
Gubernatorial Nominee, BENJAMIN NAKI III, for a 2nd term to expire 06-30-2022**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim and Committee Members:

It is with great gratification that I ask you to re-confirm Benjamin Naki for a second term as the Representative of a Head Start Provider Agency on the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELB) to expire 06-30-2022.

Ben has been a leader in the early childhood community for several decades. His expertise and leadership has ensured high quality services for low income children in their families in Hawaii. He is an administrator whose understanding of vulnerable children's development and care is a great benefit to our work on the Early Learning Board.

Ben has consistently been present at all ELB meetings over the years to help guide and advise us and he also volunteers on ELB committees. He is highly respected among his peers and has a firm understanding of ELB's goals, strategies and topics.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in strong support of Benjamin Naki III's confirmation to the ELB.

Sincerely,
Michael C. Fahey

HEICC Representative, Chair Nominations Committee,
Early Learning Board