



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMAMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health
Thirtieth Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Baker and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: GM 592 - State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Gubernatorial Nominee Michelle Arakawa

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS GM 592** to confirm the nomination of Michelle Arakawa for a term to expire June 30, 2022.

The Council's Federal mandate (P.L.106-402) is clear in determining the composition of this body to ensure that all the players involved in the development, implementation, and use of DD supports are represented. The law specifically requires; each Council shall include representatives of relevant State entities, including State entities that administer funds provided under Federal laws related to individuals with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.). The Governor's nominee meets all the Federal requirements for Council membership.

Ms. Arakawa's appointment to the Council would fulfill the Federal requirement for a representative of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. She is currently an Educational Specialist with the Department of Education (DOE). We look forward to Ms. Arakawa's contributions to increase coordination and collaboration between the Council and DOE. Her participation on the Council's Transition and Employment Committee would assist the Council to address its State Plan and carry out activities relating to increased access to information on supports needed to prepare students for the transition from high school to adult life.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our **strong support for GM 592** to confirm the appointment of Michelle Arakawa to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



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

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

September 12, 2019

Ms. Sharon Ibarra
Director of Boards and Commissions
Office of the Governor, State of Hawaii
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Michelle Arakawa Serving on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Dear Ms. Ibarra:

I am writing to express my support and recommendation of Ms. Michelle Arakawa to serve as the representative for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Currently, I supervise Ms. Arakawa in her position as the Educational Specialist II, Specialized Program Support for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Visually Impaired, and Multiple Disabled specialized programs for the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE). My recommendation for Ms. Arakawa is based upon my experience working with her over the past year. Based upon this experience, I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Arakawa to represent the HIDOE on the State Council.

Ms. Arakawa has advocated for children and youth with developmental disabilities for over 15 years. Over the years, she has provided services and advocated for students as a preschool teacher, special education middle school teacher, special education department chair, student services coordinator, and educational specialist. During her time with the HIDOE, Ms. Arakawa has strived to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities in a professional and collaborative manner.

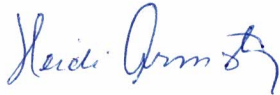
Over this past year, Ms. Arakawa has developed a statewide communication access contract for the American Sign Language interpreting services in our schools, worked with schools on inclusive practices, provided resources for special education teachers, provided professional development for teachers across the state, worked with the University of Hawaii – Manoa on a funding opportunity through a Memorandum of Agreement for our certified teachers to obtain a master's degree in Special Education with an emphasis on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and attended the National Deaf Education Conference to collaborate with other states on transitioning our deaf/hard-of-hearing students after high school.

Ms. Sharon Ibarra
September 12, 2019
Page 2

Ms. Arakawa is collaborative, supportive, and a strong advocate for all students. Therefore, I strongly recommend her for this position.

Please feel free to contact me at 808-305-9750 or via email at heidi.armstrong@k12.hi.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heidi Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and "A".

Heidi Armstrong
Assistant Superintendent

HA:ma

Roxanne M. Rokero
46-048 Aliikane Place, #2212
Kaneohe, HI 96744

March 16, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is my personal and professional recommendation for Mrs. Michelle Arakawa to be a member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have worked with Mrs. Arakawa for the last eight years as both a colleague in the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), Windward District, and most recently as an administrator with the HIDOE, Office of Student Support Services, Exceptional Support Branch (ESB), Special Education Section. While working with Mrs. Arakawa in her current position as a State Educational Specialist with ESB, I found her to be knowledgeable and exceptionally skilled in the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, assessment and programming for students with developmental disabilities, and navigating the federal/state/district/school level systems. Mrs. Arakawa is a compassionate educator and lifelong learner, tackling all assignments with dedication and a smile.

Besides being a joy to work with, Mrs. Arakawa is an analytical person who is able to problem solve and develop creative solutions. She has independently and successfully expanded several programs for students with developmental disabilities at school, district, and state levels, which resulted in increased inclusion and improved student outcomes. Programs included implementation training provided to district and school-level personnel regarding inclusive education; and improving functional academic and daily living skills for our students with developmental disabilities. Most recently, Mrs. Arakawa organized and facilitated the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Work Group, which resulted in increased collaboration and satisfaction amongst all stakeholders with the goal of developing statewide educational programs and services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing including those with visual impairments student populations.

Though she is an asset to our efforts to expand and improve services to students, school-level personnel, parents, and community members, Mrs. Arakawa is also extraordinarily helpful in other areas of the HIDOE, such as researching and writing effective policies and guidelines for the field to implement. Therefore, I highly recommend Mrs. Michelle Arakawa for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. She is inquisitive, intellectual, highly motivated, and a committed public servant. I am confident she will continue to make a huge impact in serving those with developmental disabilities and improve their quality of life for which she has demonstrated the ability to do so in her years with the HIDOE.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 305-9806 or via email at roxanne.rokero@k12.hi.us.

Sincerely,



Roxanne M. Rokero