

April 5, 2021

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Morcado Kim , Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Robert G Peters, Chair,
Early Learning Board

Re: **GM 628 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,
Gubernatorial Nominee, Justina Acevedo-Cross, for a term to expire 06-30-2022**

Wednesday, April 7, 2021, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, 3:00 pm.

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members:

I am offering this testimony in support of the confirmation of the Governor's nomination of Justina Acevedo-Cross to serve a term on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on 06-30-2022.

Justina Acevedo-Cross currently holds the philanthropy seat on the Early Learning Board (ELB). She is a Program Director for Community Grants and Initiatives with the Hawaii Community Foundation. In that role, she has been closely involved with initiatives that affect young children and families, particularly related to social emotional issues such as trauma-informed care.

During her first term, Justina has been an active Board member serving on the Finance Subcommittee and currently the EOEL Director Search Subcommittee. In partnership with Dr. Terry Lock of U.H., she helped initiate our Workforce Equity Subcommittee which is engaged with a study of early educator qualifications, pay equity and strategies to build early learning workforce capacity. Attuned to issues of equity for families in our communities, Justina reminds our Board of the importance of keeping focused on how we serve *all keiki* with particular attention to underserved and at-risk populations.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of Justina Acevedo-Cross.

Sincerely,
Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board



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

April 6, 2021

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

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: G.M. 628 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JUSTINA ACEVEDO-CROSS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2022.
Hearing Date: Wednesday April 7, 2021
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: videoconference

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good afternoon. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the nomination and confirmation of Justina Acevedo-Cross to the Early Learning Board (ELB).

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that 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.

The ELB was established as a governing board through Act 202, SLH 2017, and is responsible for directing the EOEL on how best to meet the developmental and educational needs of children, from prenatal care to entry into kindergarten; providing recommendations to EOEL on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early learning programs; promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children; and appoint and evaluating the EOEL Director on an annual basis.

Ms. Acevedo-Cross is seeking appointment to the ELB as a representative of philanthropic organizations that support early learning. She has over eight years of experience in philanthropy and is currently the Program Specialist at Hawaii Community Foundation with a primary focus on early learning and workforce development. With her extensive experience in philanthropy and support of early learning initiatives, Ms. Acevedo-Cross satisfies the requirement of §302 L-1.6 and would be an asset as a member to the ELB.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify on this bill.