

7 April, 2022
3PM
Conference Room 229

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

Re: GM 566/GM567 Nomination to the Early Learning Board, Nominee Ka'iulani Laehā

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ka'iulani Laehā, the Chief Executive Officer of 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. I was recently appointed by Governor Ige to serve on the Early Learning Board as the representative of Hawaiian Language Medium Early Learning providers.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is the sole statewide provider of early child care and learning in the medium of Hawaiian. We operate statewide Hawaiian medium infant toddler and preschool centers, Hawaiian medium teacher training and advocacy efforts in language revitalization. I have a strong desire to ensure equitable access for our keiki and 'ohana to Hawaiian language medium early care and education. Building on the 'Aha Pūnana Leo's 39 years of work to reestablish a 100% Hawaiian language medium education, I am working to sustain and expand its foundational program, the Pūnana Leo preschools, and create innovative platforms to further normalize 'ōlelo Hawai'i in our daily lives.

I am a graduate of Kamehameha Schools and hold a bachelor's of science degree in business administration with a major in finance as well as a master's degree in business administration. My previous experience includes senior non-profit management as well as a diverse background in ayouth programming and fund development. My professional qualifications stem from field experience as a peer leader in youth education programs and has grown into executive leadership positions. In all of my professional roles, I have held sincere dedication to preparing younger generations for a productive and fulfilling life in Hawai'i and beyond.

I was born and raised in Kuli'ou'ou on the island of O'ahu. Growing up my sister and I were taught Hawaiian values and lifestyle that were rooted in the importance of 'ohana. Our family gatherings remain great memories for me and I am raising my own children with these same values. Upon graduation from Kamehameha where Hawaiian language learning was a natural fit for me, I pursued my degrees in areas of interest however I longed for the opportunity to live and use 'ōlelo Hawai'i in daily life. Becoming the CEO of 'Aha Pūnana Leo is a calling I feel that merges my business talents with my love of my kūpuna and honoring my ancestors and being able to support the mission and vision of 'Aha Pūnana Leo.

During my tenure, my goal is to provide just representation of the Hawaiian language medium education pathway to ensure quality and fairness in the state early learning systems. I plan to work toward the integration of early learning and development standards that are appropriate and relevant to Hawaiian medium and immersion schools including curriculum adaptation, student assessment, and practitioner workforce and professional development for all of Hawai'i's keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration of my confirmation to serve on the Early Learning Board as a representative of the Hawaiian Language Medium Early Learning Providers.

Mahalo nui,



Ka'iulani Laehā

April 8, 2022

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 567 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,
Gubernatorial Nominee, Kaiulani Laeha, for a term to expire 06-30-2024**

Monday, April 11, 2022, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, 3:00 pm.

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members:

I am offering this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of the Governor's nomination of Kaiulani Laeha to serve a term on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on 06-30-2024.

Kaiulani Laeha joined the ELB as an interim member in 2021. She is well qualified to fill the Hawaiian Language Medium Provider seat on the Board as a graduate of Kamehameha Schools and currently the Chief Executive Officer of Aha Punana Leo, Inc., the sole statewide provider of Hawaiian medium infant toddler and preschool centers. Kaiulani oversees fourteen licensed child care facilities across the State.

Kaiulani's extensive business background and experience with non-profits serving our community help to inform her contributions on our Board. In the time, Kaiulani has served in the interim role, she has demonstrated her commitment to Hawaii's *keiki* and the work of the ELB/EOEL as it develops a statewide system of early care and learning. Her contributions to our deliberations as a Board are thoughtful and perceptive, reflective of both the Hawaiian Medium Providers she represents and the broader goals of the Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in strong support of Kaiulani Laeha's continuation as an ELB Board member.

Sincerely,
Robert G. Peters, Chair



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11 April 2022
 3PM
 Conference Room 229

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

Re: GM566/GM567 Nomination to the Early Learning Board, Nominee Ka'iulani Laehā

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kauanoë Kamanā, 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. board president. I write to support the nomination of Ms. Ka'iulani Laehā to the Early Learning Board. Ms. Laeha is applying to serve as the representative of Hawaiian Language Medium Early Learning providers.

Ms. Laehā serves as the Chief Executive Officer of 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. She oversees 'APL programs that include infant toddler and preschool centers, curriculum development and teacher training and advocacy efforts in language maintenance and revitalization. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is the sole statewide provider of early child care and learning in the medium of Hawaiian. Ms. Laehā has been mentored by the founders of the Hawaiian language revitalization movement and senior staff and understands the desire to ensure equitable access for our keiki and 'ohana to Hawaiian language medium education.

Ms. Laehā was brought on board in 2018 as a new leader in a role that the board deemed necessary to ensure a thriving organization whose vision of a living Hawaiian language to uphold the pioneering efforts of its founders. Ms. Laehā is a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools where her love for learning Hawaiian language began. She excelled in her learning while a student. Upon graduation she attended Hawai'i Pacific University and graduated with a Master's in Business Administration. She applied her knowledge from business degree to local non-profit efforts in communication and sustainability. She came to the 'Aha Pūnana Leo eager to support our mission and vision and to become a part of our 'ohana. She continues to develop her language proficiency and is actively using Hawaiian in her own home.

Ms. Laehā will bring her valuable personal and professional experience to the Early Learning Board.

I highly recommend Ms. Ka'iulani Laehā to the Early Learning Board.

Mahalo nui,

Kauanoë Kamanā



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

April 10, 2022

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

FROM: Coleen Momohara, Interim Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: **Measure:** G.M. 567 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND
CONFIRMATION TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL
NOMINEE, KAIULANI LAEHA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2024.

Hearing Date: Monday, April 11, 2022

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: videoconference & Room 229

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Aloha. I am Coleen Momohara, Interim Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the nomination and confirmation of Kaiulani Laeha 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 appointing and evaluating the EOEL Director on an annual basis.

Kaiulani Laeha is seeking appointment to the ELB for the Hawaiian Medium representative seat. Kaiulani Laeha has extensive experience implementing culture-based programs and administering Hawaiian Medium early learning programs. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Aha Punana Leo, Inc. With her experience and knowledge, Ms. Laeha 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.