

**TO:** Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

**FROM:** Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

**SUBJECT:** **Measure:** SCR 34, SD 1  
**Hearing Date:** Thursday, April 14, 2022  
**Time:** 2:00 P.M.  
**Location:** Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

**Description:** Requesting the Early Learning Board to evaluate and report to the Legislature regarding the Board's composition and charter and to develop a strategic plan.

**Early Learning Board Position:** Support Intent/Comments

Aloha. I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board, offering testimony in support of the intent of SCR 34, SD 1. The Early Learning Board was established by Act 202 in 2017, transitioning from an Advisory Board (2014) to a Governing Board. Along with appointing and evaluating the Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Board was tasked with formulating statewide policy related to early learning. The size of the Board was reduced from 21 to 17, with 13 voting members with varied term limits, 4 non-voting public agency representatives and two permanent voting members (the KS CEO and the HAIS Executive Director or his/her designee).

Guided by the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan (2019-2024) and its Strategic Implementation Plan, the ELB sets annual priorities in support of moving the development of a statewide early learning system forward and promoting achievement of the "Building Block" goals set by the State Plan, including expansion of quality early care and learning opportunities across our State. Among the priorities for 2021 – 2022, is the exploration of the Board's organization, structure and membership in light of system governance needs and to enhance Board capacity to support the goals identified in the State Plan. Combined, these are its strategic initiatives.

The ELB supports the intent of SCR 34/ SR 30 to evaluate its charter in light of the Board's stated strategic priorities, along with a "look forward" to achieving the outcomes of the State Plan and the Strategic Implementation Plans. The results can be used to inform the determination of effective Board composition and any legislation required if changes should be recommended in either the charter or the Board's composition.

The ELB's monthly meeting is today and conflicts with this hearing; therefore only written testimony can be provided. I would be happy to answer any Committee member questions at another time. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SCR 34, SD 1.



# Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Education

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Date: April 14, 2022

Where: Conference Room 309

## TESTIMONY

By Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona  
Kamehameha Schools

**RE: SCR 34, SD1, Requesting the Early Learning Board to Evaluate and Report to the Legislature Regarding the Board’s Composition and Charter and to Develop a Strategic Plan**

E ka Luna Ho‘omalū Woodson, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalū Kapela, a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Ho‘ona‘auao o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka‘āinana, aloha kākou! My name is Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, Vice President of Hi‘ialo at Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools **supports** SCR 34, SD1, which requests that the Early Learning Board evaluate and report to the Legislature regarding the Board’s composition and charter and to develop a strategic plan.

The enactment of Act 46 (2020) was a pivotal step forward and we must remain steadfast in our commitment to this future in Hawai‘i. With the power to formulate statewide policy relating to early learning, we strongly believe that the Early Learning Board (ELB) has a critical role to play in achieving the vision and goals of Act 46 (2020).

We support this measure and its charge to the ELB to evaluate the current composition and charter of the board, in relation to the development of a five-year strategic plan and to propose any amendments to the Legislature prior to the start of next year’s legislative session. It is a critical time to reflect on our work and determine the ideal board composition and charter that will serve all families and keiki well.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an educational organization striving to restore our people through education and 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. Hānai i ke keiki; ola ka lāhui.

‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou. There is no success without preparation. **Please advance this measure.**



Hawai'i  
**Children's Action Network Speaks!**  
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To: Representative Woodson, Chair  
Representative Kapela, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education

Re: **SCR 34 SD1, Requesting The Early Learning Board To Evaluate And Report To The Legislature Regarding The Board's Composition And Charter And To Develop A Strategic Plan.**  
2:00 PM, April 14, 2022

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **provide comments on SCR 34 SD1 Requesting The Early Learning Board To Evaluate And Report To The Legislature Regarding The Board's Composition And Charter And To Develop A Strategic Plan.**

The Early Learning Board is charged with:

- Directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (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 the EOEL director and evaluating the director on an annual basis.

While the Board has grown in size in recent years, the actions taken by the Board have not. Rather than try to have a “representative” board, which is impractical due to the variety of programs, services, and families that ELB oversees, the Board should consider limiting the number of members and having certain qualities that Board members should possess. An example would be to say the board members shall consist of at least one member from each County including Maui, Honolulu, Kauai, and Hawaii representing the early childhood education and care community, early intervention and medicine community, and individuals with expertise in areas such as law, Hawaiian immersion programs, and research related to early childhood.

The children and families in Hawai'i deserve a strong, well-functioning Early Learning Board. We appreciate the opportunity this resolution offers the Board.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

Date: April 12, 2022

To: House Committee on Education  
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Support for SCR34 SD1, Relating to the Early Learning Board's Composition and Charter**

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Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

**ECAS supports passage of SCR34 SD1**, which request the Early Learning Board to evaluate and report to the Legislature regarding the Board's composition and charter, and to develop a strategic plan.

The Early Learning Board (ELB) is tasked with formulating statewide policy relating to early learning, and counts among its responsibilities:

- Directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) on how best to meet the developmental and educational needs of children, from prenatal care to entry into kindergarten; and
- Providing recommendations to EOEL on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early learning programs.

Since the adoption of ELB's charter in 2014, the ELB has evolved from acting in an advisory capacity to a governing capacity, and has experienced multiple efforts to amend or add to the composition of its membership. These efforts have been based primarily on the need and desire to expand and diversify representation of stakeholders in decision-making related to the build-out of the state's early care and learning system.

A key tenet in ECAS' policy and advocacy work is that efforts to address inequities and reduce disparities for vulnerable populations and underserved communities should be embedded into every aspect of early childhood systems design and service delivery. A critical component to addressing inequities and reducing disparities is to ensure equitable representation in those systems and institutions that play pivotal roles in the determination of policies and development of services.

**SCR34 SD1** would help charge the ELB to engage in an intentional, strategic effort to ensure appropriate stakeholders and a diversity of perspectives, particularly those of the traditionally under-served and under-represented, are incorporated into the Board's membership and are meaningfully engaged in the ongoing development of Hawai'i's early care and learning system.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this resolution.