



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

April 5, 2024

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

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: G.M. No. 716 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, ELAINE YAMASHITA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2028.
Hearing Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Conference Room 229

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Aloha, I am Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the nomination and confirmation of Elaine Yamashita to the Early Learning Board (ELB).

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development and administration of the State's early learning system, which shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality early learning opportunities for children 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, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH), Regular Session 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 the 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.

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Ms. Yamashita retired from the University of Hawai'i (UH) Maui College as its Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program Coordinator and, in 2022, Ms. Yamashita served as a member of the Early Care and Education Task Force convened by the UH Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project that seeks to transform ECE teacher preparation programs and compensation and financing systems in the State.

Ms. Yamashita satisfies the requirements of HRS § 302L-1.65, which provides, that the ELB nominees shall demonstrate integrity, civic virtue, and high ethical standards and be willing to hold fellow members to the same; commit to being a conscientious and attentive board member; have an understanding of best practices in early learning governance or be willing to be trained in best practices in early learning governance; and have a clear understanding of the board's role in developing and protecting a clear, long-term strategic vision for early learning.

As demonstrated by her resume, Ms. Yamashita served as a leader in the State's ECE system for many years and her experiences indicate a valuable ability to function among diverse colleagues as a member of an effective team and provides substantial support of her deep and abiding interest in early learning and the support of families and children across Hawai'i.

Ms. Yamashita's experience will add great value to the Early Learning Board. Thank you for your consideration of Ms. Yamashita's nomination and for the opportunity to testify in support.

Elaine K. Yamashita
 Professor Emerita, University of Hawai'i Maui College
 2023



Currently retired (2019) from University of Hawai'i Maui College. Received Professor Emerita UH Maui College title in 2021. Occasionally do consulting work in education.

Educational background

University of Hawai'i at Manoa	2000: Master's in Education, Elementary Education, Early Childhood Specialization
University of Hawai'i at Manoa	1978: Bachelors in Education with distinction. Major: Elementary/Early Childhood Education Academic major: Psychology

Teaching experience

August 2010 – May 2019	Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator at University of Hawai'i Maui College. Program separated from Human Services in July 2010. Responsible for overseeing, teaching, and coordinating Early Childhood Education faculty and lecturers, and MEO Head Start/UHMC partnership. Teach three courses per semester and spend 12-15 hours/week in UHMC Head Start.
Jan. 2000 – August 2010	Human Services Program Coordinator at Maui Community College. Responsible for overseeing early childhood and human services strands of program, teaching early childhood courses, coordinating Maui Economic Opportunity Head Start/MCC partnership.
Aug. 1992 to 2000	Human Services Instructor at Maui Community College. Responsible for teaching early childhood education courses, recruitment of students, and overseeing collaboration of MCC, MEO, Inc., and the County of Maui in building and operating a Head Start on the campus that serves as a training site for early childhood education students.
Aug. 1979 - July 1992	Director/teacher at Ala Lani Preschool. Responsible for operations of quality preschool program with 29 children and two other staff. Oversaw NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation of the program in 1987 (first one in Maui to be accredited). Oversaw re-accreditation in 1990.
July 1990 - Dec. 1992	Preschool Open Doors parent workshop presenter. Responsible for providing workshops for parents eligible for Open Doors assistance in format developed by Governor's Office of Children and Youth.
1988 - 2013	Workshop presenter, consultant, keynote speaker, panel participant as requested by various organizations (Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children, People Attentive to Children, County of Maui, Maui YMCA, Punana Leo O'Maui, MEO Head Start, Iao Preschool, Kamehameha Preschools Paukukalo, Wailuku Elementary, Kahului School).

Special Recognition

2008	Received Hung Wo and Elizabeth Lau Ching Faculty Service Community Award (University of Hawai'i system award).
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1991	Sent to NAEYC National Conference in Denver with funds raised by staff and parents of Ala Lani Preschool, members of Ala Lani Church, and members of Waipuna Chapel.
1987	Received Phyllis Loveless Excellence in Teaching Award from Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC).

Leadership

2006-present	Hawai'i Careers with Young Children (HCYC) Steering Team	
2022-present	Early Care and Education (ECE) Task Force, convened by UH Early Childhood Excellence and Equity Project (ECE3)	
UHMC (1992-2019):	Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, UHMC Head Start coordinator Committees: Student Success, Strategic Planning, Policies & Procedures, Kaulanakilohana (group of ECE faculty across UH system and Chaminade) co-convener	
	2014-2015 2010-2012	Co-chair, Strategic Planning committee Academic Senate Chair
Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) 1979 to 2017:	2013-2017	Vice-president of Public Policy for HAEYC State Board, public policy on HAEYC-Maui chapter board.
	Feb. 21, 2004	Keynote speaker for HAEYC Maui Early Childhood Conference.
	2004, 1995-96	Maui Community College liaison on HAEYC Maui Chapter board.
	2001-2002	Hawai'i's 1 st Affiliate Council Representative on the newly formed National AEYC Affiliate Council.
	1998-2000	President-elect, President, past-president of HAEYC State Governing Board. As president in 1999, facilitated tours of preschools on Oahu for the 1 st World Forum on Early Care and Education. Also facilitated commissioned koa bowl for the Forum which has since traveled around the world to the forums held bi-annually.
	1994-95, 1982-84	HAEYC Maui Chapter president
	1989-1994	HAEYC Maui Public relations
	1984-85	HAEYC Maui Membership chair
National Association for the Education of Young Children:	1991-93, 1985-87	Recording secretary, HAEYC State Board
	2004 – 2008	Elected to be member of National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Governing Board. Election held Jan-March 2004. All NAEYC members were eligible to vote (80,000 in U.S.).
	1998-2012	Coordinator of Children's Church ministry for 3- 8 year olds
	1999 – 2013	Missions committee secretary

County of Maui Commission on Children and Youth	2003-08	2005-06: Chair
Good Beginnings Maui Community Council	1997 – 2013	Represent UHMC on Council.
Good Beginnings Alliance Board of Directors	2003-04	Appointed by HAEYC to represent early childhood community.
Act 259 Early Learning Task Force	2006-08	Co-chair of Professional/Workforce Development Subcommittee
PATCH (People Attentive to Children, Resource and Referral) Board of Directors	2009 – 2013	Board of directors.

Writings

Proposal for a Process to Create a Continuous Quality Improvement Technical Assistance System for Early Care and Education in Hawai'i (Based on Continuous Quality Improvement, Distributed Leadership and User-Centric Design)	2022	For Executive Office on Early Learning
A Condensed History of Professional Development in Early Childhood Care and Education in Hawai'i	2015	With Linda Buck, for Hawai'i Careers with Young Children

April 9, 2024

Hearing Notice: GM 716, for Early Learning Board Gubernatorial Nominee, **Elaine Yamashita**

Date: April 10, 2024

Time: 3:00pm

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Elaine Yamashita's nomination as the Early Learning Board Gubernatorial Nominee. Having worked with Elaine as a colleague, mentor, and friend, I can attest to her exceptional knowledge of Early Childhood Education and Care.

Elaine has played a key role in advancing the field of early learning at the county, state, and national levels. She has held various positions in early learning and has been instrumental in promoting collaborative efforts to serve families, children, and early childhood educators. Her retirement from the University of Hawaii Maui College has not deterred her from her commitment to early childhood education. Elaine continues to work on systemic components that address family choice for childcare; workforce development and compensation; and policies and practices that support equity/access/diversity.

Currently, Elaine co-chairs a workgroup with me under the Hawai'i Careers with Young Children (HCYC). We are working on the Hawai'i Practitioner Framework and recognition of ECE jobs and roles across community-based and public early learning programs.

Elaine has also been integral to advocating for the profession and serves on the HIAEYC Public Policy Committee and the ECE3 Task Force for Advancing the Profession. As the former chair of Kaulanakilohana, a Hawaii consortium of higher education faculty, Elaine facilitated discussions and actions pertaining to teacher education programs and their vital role in supporting our early learning system.

It has always been a pleasure working with Elaine. She is knowledgeable, thoughtful, and often brings a smile and openness to our conversations. Therefore, I strongly support Elaine's nomination to the Early Learning Board and believe that she will be an invaluable asset in supporting early childhood education and care in our state.

Kind regards,
Brenda Watanabe,
Assistant Professor and Early Childhood Educator

April 9, 2024

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

Subject: **Measure – GM 716**
Hearing Date – April 10, 2024
Time – 3:00 PM
Location - Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and committee members,

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) serving as the Director of the Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE³) Project.

This testimony is in strong support of considering and confirming GM 716, Gubernatorial Nominee ELAINE YAMASHITA, to the Early Learning Board for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

I am honored to have known Ms. Yamashita for the last 42 years. Throughout these decades, she has been a knowledgeable champion and unwavering advocate for young children’s development and learning; families as children’s first teachers; and a well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated early care and education (ECE) workforce throughout our islands. Ms. Yamashita served as a leader on state and national governing early childhood policy boards.

In 1982, I was the early childhood education instructor in the Human Services Program at Maui Community College (former name of UHMC), and Ms. Yamashita was the director and lead teacher of Ala Lani Church Preschool located in Kahului, Maui. Through her leadership and persistence, Ala Lani Preschool became the first National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited early learning program on Maui.

At UHMC, Ms. Yamashita was an excellent ECE instructor, and she became the program coordinator in 1999. While at UHMC, she developed the early childhood program in partnership with the Head Start facility on campus, which served 3- to 5-year-old keiki of UHMC students from low-income families. The facility on campus also provided hands-on training for Ms. Yamashita’s early childhood program students.

In 2019, Ms. Yamashita retired from UHMC after 27 years of service, and that same year, she was awarded the Regents’ Medal of Excellence in Teaching by the UH Board of Regents. This prestigious award is “given to faculty members who exhibit an extraordinary level of subject mastery and scholarship, teaching effectiveness, creativity, and personal values that benefit students.” In 2021, Ms. Yamashita received the title of Professor Emerita of UHMC.

In 2015, Hawai'i Careers with Young Children (HCYC) commissioned Ms. Yamashita and Ms. Linda Buck to complete a paper entitled "A Condensed History of Professional Development in Early Childhood Care and Education in Hawai'i."

In 2022, Ms. Yamashita wrote a paper for the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) called "Proposal for a Process to Create a Continuous Quality Improvement Technical Assistance System for Early Care and Education in Hawai'i (Based on Continuous Quality Improvement, Distributed Leadership and User-Centric Design)."

Today, Ms. Yamashita continues to be an active volunteer for HCYC, a collaborative of programs and organizations working together to build Hawai'i's early care and education workforce and professional development system.

Please strongly consider and confirm GM 716, ELAINE YAMASHITA, to the Early Learning Board, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

Mahalo,
Dr. Terry Lock

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/4/2024 10:02:44 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/10/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celia Suzuki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Senate Committee on Education. My name is Celia Suzuki and I am testifying in strong support of nominee Elaine Higa Yamashita to the Early Learning Board. I have known Elaine since the early 1960s. We used to have sleepovers at each other's homes. I clearly recall that she was a voracious reader. She was always reading something (book, newspaper, magazine), even while brushing her teeth. And I believe that her love for reading made her into the person she is today. She is bright, articulate, and energetic. She has always had a strong desire to instill into children that learning is extremely important in life, as demonstrated by her impressive resume. She will definitely be an asset to the Board. I am proud to call her my friend. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on GM716.

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/9/2024 8:23:29 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/10/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Kidani and Vice-Chair Kim,

Please confirm Elaine Yamashita as a member of the early learning board.

Elaine Yamashita is an upstanding, competent, knowledgeable, and most of all caring member of the early learning community. Her resume speaks for itself but her heart says volumes more. Even after retirement she continues to work tirelessly, to advance quality early learning opportunities in our state. Her passion, vast experience in early childhood as well as her demonstrated leadership capabilities make her an ideal candidate. Please confirm Elaine Yamashita as she will be an invaluable asset to the early learning board and our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Malia Tsuchiya

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/9/2024 3:00:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/10/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Fujimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Elaine Yamashita for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board.

Ms Yamashita is retired from UHMaui as the ECE Program Coordinator who underwent the NAEYC higher education accreditation. Ms Yamashita continues to be involved with the early care and education systems locally, within the state and nationally. She values and understands the developmental and educational needs of children from prenatal care to entry into kindergarten.

Ms Yamashita is an active volunteer with Hawai'i Careers with Young Children (HCYC)'s Steering Team and on two HCYC work groups (Career Framework and with the Compensation Design Team). With her knowledge of ECE, expertise and connectivity on all levels (local, state and nationally), Ms Yamashita is the best fit for this role, she is capable of making recommendations on improving the quality, availability and coordination of early learning programs.