

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
*Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Senate Committee on Education  
March 12, 2025

Testimony on  
**H.B. 429 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of H.B. 429, H.D. 1** which appropriates funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools.

H.B. 429 aligns with our *Ready Keiki* initiative, the Administration's multi-faceted plan to ensure universal access to high-quality childcare and preschool. The Executive Office on Early Learning and School Facilities Authority built and refurbished over 50 classrooms to date and anticipate adding an additional 50 classrooms in the next two years. In 2024, the National Institute for Early Education Research's annual *State of Preschool* report found that Hawai'i is only one of five states in the country to meet 10 of 10 research-based quality benchmarks for its public pre-kindergarten programs. We must ensure that we have qualified teachers and teacher assistants to ensure keiki success.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 429, H.D. 1.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR



**MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.**  
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII  
**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**  
**(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)**

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

---

FOR: HB 429 HD1 Relating to Early Learning  
DATE: March 12, 2025  
TIME: 3:00 PM  
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education  
ROOM: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

---

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 429 HD1** which establishes appropriations for the expansion of 50 additional EOEL public pre-K classrooms over the next two years.

Expanding the Executive Office on Early Learning’s public pre-K program is critical to meeting the targets established in the legislatively supported Ready Keiki Initiative’s mixed delivery approach. This expansion will ensure Hawai’i’s three- and four-year-old keiki will have the opportunity to attend a high-quality preschool by 2032.



**STATE OF HAWAII**

**Executive Office on Early Learning**

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'aina  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

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

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 429, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.

Committee: EDU  
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Location: Conference Room 229

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in strong support of H.B. No. 429, H.D. 1.

H.B. No. 429, H.D. 1 appropriates funds and authorizes positions to support the expansion of EOEL Prekindergarten (Pre-K) classrooms over the next biennium. The dollar amounts and position counts in the original version of the bill match the funding requested in the Governor's proposed executive budget and this funding has also been identified as a priority of the Lieutenant Governor's Ready Keiki initiative.

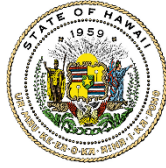
EOEL works in partnership with the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) to administer 92 Public Pre-K classrooms in 74 HIDOE campuses across the State. The funding and positions in this bill would allow EOEL to open an additional 50 classrooms over the next two years.

In 2020, the Hawai'i State Legislature passed Act 46 which established a framework and benchmarks for achieving universal access to early learning for 3- and 4-year-olds. The requested expansion of EOEL Pre-K classrooms helps advance our progress toward these goals and supports educational equity through priority enrollment for at-risk children.

Since the passage of Act 46, the number of EOEL prekindergarten classrooms has grown. However, demand remains high, with the number of applications far exceeding the number of available classroom seats for the 2024-25 school year.

As the program continues to grow, EOEL also works closely with HIDOE to ensure children enrolled in our classrooms receive high-quality early childhood development and early learning experiences that promote Kindergarten readiness. We are happy to report that the program is consistently recognized by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) for meeting benchmarks for quality standards, and as of their 2023 report, Hawai'i is one of only five states that met all 10 benchmarks for state preschool programs.

EOEL strongly supports H.B. No. 429, H.D. 1, as it will expand access to high-quality early learning, advance educational equity, and help fulfill the state's commitment to universal access to early learning for 3 and 4-year-olds. We appreciate the Legislature's continued investment in our youngest keiki and their families and respectfully request your support of this funding.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Early Learning Board**  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 8, 2025

To: Senator Kidani, Chair  
Senator Kim, Vice-chair  
Senate Education Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair  
Early Learning Board

Re: HB 429 HD1 support

Aloha, Honorable Chair Kidani, Vice-chair Kim, and members of the Senate Education committee:

The Early Learning Board (ELB) formulates statewide policy relating to early learning, as well as directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports HB 429 HD1 that requests the funding of 50 additional public preschool classrooms across the state, to be established and run by the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

EOEL continues to refine policies and procedures, using lessons learned from the previous expansion of classrooms. The new classrooms will provide another option for families during the school day and school year.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,

Elaine Yamashita  
Early Learning Board Chair  
[elb@eoel.hawaii.gov](mailto:elb@eoel.hawaii.gov)



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Cheney Kaku**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Ann Mahi**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 429 HD 1 - Related to Early Learning**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 3:00pm, Room 229**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association supports HB 429 HD 1, which appropriates funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools.

Preschool plays a crucial role in a child's development, laying the foundation for their future academic, social, and emotional success. Here's why it's so important:

### **Cognitive Development**

- **Brain Development**: The preschool years are a critical period for brain development. Preschool programs provide stimulating environments and activities that enhance cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and memory.
- **Early Literacy and Math Skills**: Preschool introduces children to foundational literacy skills like letter recognition, phonics, and vocabulary, as well as basic math concepts like counting, shapes, and patterns. These skills are essential for future academic success.
- **Curiosity and Exploration**: Preschool encourages children to explore their surroundings, fostering curiosity and a love of learning. Through play-based activities, children develop a sense of wonder and a desire to learn more about the world around them.

### **Social and Emotional Development**

- Social Skills: Preschool provides opportunities for children to interact with their peers, learn to share, cooperate, and resolve conflicts. These social skills are crucial for building relationships and navigating social situations throughout life.
- Emotional Regulation: Preschool helps children develop emotional regulation skills, such as recognizing and managing their emotions, and understanding the emotions of others. This emotional intelligence is essential for building resilience and mental well-being
- Self-Confidence: Preschool provides a supportive environment where children can develop a sense of self-confidence and independence. They learn to make choices, take on challenges, and celebrate their accomplishments, which builds their self-esteem and belief in their abilities.

### **School Readiness**

- Structure and Routine: Preschool introduces children to the structure and routine of a classroom environment, helping them prepare for the expectations of kindergarten and beyond. They learn to follow directions, listen to teachers, and participate in group activities.
- Academic Skills: Preschool provides a foundation for academic learning by introducing children to basic concepts in literacy, math, science, and other subjects. This gives them a head start when they enter formal schooling.
- Social and Emotional Readiness: Preschool helps children develop the social and emotional skills they need to succeed in school, such as the ability to focus, follow directions, and interact positively with peers and adults.

### **Long-Term Benefits**

- Academic Achievement: Research has shown that children who attend preschool are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and achieve higher levels of education.
- Economic Success: Studies have also linked preschool attendance to higher earning potential and greater economic stability in adulthood.
- Social and Civic Engagement: Preschool graduates are more likely to be involved in their communities, vote, and participate in civic activities.

In conclusion, preschool provides a strong foundation for children's future success in all areas of life. It's an investment in their cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development that pays dividends for years to come. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education  
Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
3:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 229**

**HB 429 HD1: RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Gary Kai, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Business Roundtable. The Hawai'i Business Roundtable strongly supports House Bill 429 HD1, which appropriates funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and provides funding for equipment and services for public preschools. This bill is a critical step forward in expanding the Prekindergarten (Pre-K) program by ensuring the necessary resources for qualified educators, classroom infrastructure, and student support services.

We encourage the committee to consider the funding and position amounts contained in the original version of HB429, which aligns with the budget request of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). This funding is essential to the expansion of public PreK options for Hawaii families and delivering on the promise of Act 46 to provide access to PreK for all of our Keiki."

The Hawai'i Business Roundtable (HBR) is a statewide organization composed of Chief Executive Officers of many of the largest companies in Hawai'i. While it is a business leadership organization, HBR is deeply committed to strengthening our community by fostering public-private partnerships that support education, workforce development, and economic resilience. We believe that investing in early learning is an investment in Hawai'i's future, as it lays the foundation for academic success, workforce readiness, and lifelong contributions to our local economy.

HBR strongly supports this Bill and looks forward to working with the Legislature, the Executive Office of Early Learning, and the Hawai'i State Department of Education to ensure that every keiki in Hawai'i has access to Pre-K programs. We urge the Committee to pass HB 429 HD1 and continue to prioritize investments in early childhood education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Gary K. Kai  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Business Roundtable





## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB429, RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION MARCH 12, 2025

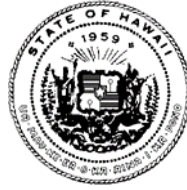
Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee on Education:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB429, RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports appropriate funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools, as well as increasing free preschool access for the keiki in our state.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports this bill because it directly addresses the critical issue of the high cost of living in Hawaii, particularly the financial burden placed on working families by childcare expenses. By expanding access to free public preschool education, the bill helps prepare young children for a successful academic future, ultimately contributing to long-term economic mobility. The bill recognizes the need to address teacher staffing shortages and enhance classroom environments, ensuring that Hawaii's preschool system can provide high-quality, equitable early education for all children. Supporting this bill aligns with the Democratic Party's values of economic fairness, educational opportunity, and ensuring that all families, regardless of income, have the resources to succeed. This bill represents an investment in both the future of Hawaii's children and the future of the state itself.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB429, RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at [legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org](mailto:legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org).

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 10, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 429 HD1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.**

Hearing: March 12, 2025, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services supports this measure and defers to the Department of Education and the Executive Office on Early Learning. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation align with the amount requested in the executive budget and not reduce or replace a priority identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** This bill appropriates funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1).

The Committee on Education amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the amounts appropriated and amount of positions to be funded to unspecified amounts;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

There continues to be a statewide shortage of qualified caregivers and staff for early learning programs due to low wages and lack of benefits. Additionally, operating costs for child care programs continue to rise.

March 10, 2025

Page 2

This measure aims to increase the number of public pre-k teachers and teacher assistants, assist in covering additional services and equipment costs needed for children and staff, and expand the existing child care capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 12, 2025

H.B. 429, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

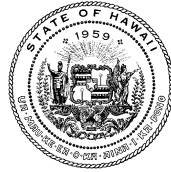
The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 429, H.D. 1, which appropriates funds to hire teachers and educational assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools.

Elementary school administrators have shared the positive outcomes of early childhood education, especially in offering valuable opportunities for children to build important skills to prepare them for kindergarten. Studies have shown that children from low to middle income households who gain access to preschool are projected to earn more as a result of attending preschool. This measure will support our working families with the high cost of childcare by providing the funding and positions necessary for the expansion of early learning classrooms statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 429, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**LINAPUNI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
1434 Linapuni Street  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819  
Phone: (808) 305-2150 Fax: (808) 832-3305

March 10, 2025

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Subject: Testimony in Support of HB No. 429, H.D. 1 – Relating To Early Learning**

***Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,***

Aloha. My name is Kimberly Fuller, and I am privileged to serve as the Principal of Linapuni Elementary School, located in the heart of Kalihi Valley within one of Hawaii's largest public housing communities—Kuhio Homes and the Towers of Kuhio Park. Our school is privileged to serve a vibrant yet vulnerable student population, many of whom come from low-income and immigrant backgrounds. These children represent the future of our community, and it is crucial that we provide them with every opportunity to succeed.

The EOEL pre-kindergarten program at Linapuni is an essential part of the strong foundation we strive to provide our students. The two classrooms we currently have offer enriching learning experiences that support physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development, as well as language and literacy skills. For many of our children, these early educational experiences are the cornerstone of their success, preparing them for a successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.

Our school's vision, "**Lifelong Learning Begins Here,**" and our mission, to "**empower all students through an early learning environment that honors the uniqueness of our community in Hawai'i,**" are both closely aligned with the goals of the EOEL pre-kindergarten program. The program offers a solid foundation that will carry our students through their entire educational journey, helping them build the skills they need for future success.

The impact of the EOEL program extends far beyond the classroom. It provides invaluable professional development, coaching, and resources for our teachers and educational assistants. This support enables our educators to meet the diverse needs of every student, including those with disabilities, and fosters an inclusive learning environment where every child can thrive.

Having witnessed the positive impact of early education firsthand, I can confidently say that students who participate in EOEL pre-kindergarten programs are far better prepared for the academic and social challenges of kindergarten and beyond. The EOEL program is instrumental in ensuring our students have the skills and confidence they need to succeed both academically and in life.

As demand for early learning opportunities continues to rise in our community, Linapuni Elementary is requesting the addition of a third EOEL pre-kindergarten classroom for the 2025-2026 school year. This expansion is critical to ensuring that we can continue providing high-quality early education to all who need it within our growing community.

I respectfully ask for your continued support in expanding EOEL pre-kindergarten programs statewide. Investing in early childhood education is investing in the future of Hawai'i. By providing equitable access to early learning, we ensure that every child—regardless of their background—has the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your time, your dedication to early childhood education, and your commitment to the bright futures of our keiki. Your support makes an immeasurable difference in the lives of our students and the future of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

**Kimberly Fuller**

**Kimberly Fuller**

Principal, Linapuni Elementary School



March 11, 2025

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr. John E. Walje IV and I am the proud Principal of Helemano Elementary School. We look forward to hosting an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public pre-kindergarten classroom at our school in the near future. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1 which funds the expansion of EOEL public pre-kindergarten classrooms on HIDOE campuses. Hosting an EOEL pre-kindergarten class on our campus will be very positive for our school community. Only 40% of our incoming kindergarteners attend preschool.

Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experience arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills.

Expanding access to pre-kindergarten in Hawai'i is essential to ensuring that *all* keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.

Mahalo,

John E. Walje IV, EdD  
Principal  
Helemano Elementary School



March 10, 2025

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai‘i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB No. 429, H.D. 1 – Relating To Early Learning

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

My name is Allyson Doherty, and I am the Principal of Kailua Elementary School. Since 2018, our school has hosted an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1, which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HIDOE campuses.

Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten classroom has been a transformative experience for our school community, particularly in increasing inclusion and setting students up for success as they transition into kindergarten. The program has allowed us to provide high-quality early learning experiences to a diverse range of students, including those with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), by fostering an inclusive environment where children of varying abilities learn and grow together.

This inclusion has enhanced the campus culture, as students build peer relationships early, develop self-regulation skills, and enter kindergarten with the foundational language and social-emotional abilities they need to thrive. Our teachers consistently note the difference in readiness between students who have attended EOEL prekindergarten programs and those who have not. The structured yet nurturing learning environment of EOEL classrooms ensures that students are exposed to literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills in a developmentally appropriate way.

Beyond student success, the EOEL program provides essential professional development and support for teachers and educational assistants. With ongoing coaching, mentoring, and curriculum guidance tailored to the unique needs of early learners, our educators are equipped with the best tools to foster strong learning outcomes.

Expanding access to EOEL public pre-kindergarten is critical for ensuring equitable early learning opportunities for all keiki, regardless of their background or learning needs. By investing in these programs, we are investing in Hawai‘i’s future—ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready to engage, succeed, and contribute to their communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB 429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to early childhood education in our state.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allyson Doherty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Allyson Doherty  
Kailua Elementary School

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:01:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Members of the Committee,

I'm writing in suport of this bill which seeks to further support early education for Hawaii's keiki. Research clearly shows the extraordinary downriver benefits of early education, and as an educator myself, I can think of no better investment in our community's health and well-being than our youngest learners. I urge passage of this measure and amendments that will restore its fullest intent.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dave Ball, Waialae-Kahala

**March 11, 2025**

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Senate Committee,

My name is **Bebi Davis**, and I am the Principal of Ka'iulani Elementary School . We look forward to hosting an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school in the near future. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1, which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HODOE campuses.

Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten class on campus will be very positive for our school community. Specifically, at Ka'iulani Elementary, we have a diverse student body, with approximately 43% of our students being English Learners. The program will provide critical early language development and social-emotional support, ensuring our keiki are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond. Furthermore, it will strengthen the connection between our school and families, offering valuable resources and support to parents in our neighborhood.

The EOEL prekindergarten program is very well supported, with preschool teachers, educational assistants, and administrators engaged in professional development throughout the year. We will also receive coaching, mentoring, and curriculum development support tailored to the unique needs of our classroom. This ensures that our students receive the highest quality early learning experience.

Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experience arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills. This is particularly crucial for our English Learners, as it provides them with a strong foundation in English language acquisition.

Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai'i is essential to ensuring that *all* keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.

Mahalo,

Bebi Davis, EdD & PhD  
Principal, Ka'iulani Elementary School



**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:58:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglas Boyer	Testifying for Lanai High and Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 11, 2025

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai‘i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,  
My name is Douglas Boyer, EdD, and I am the Principal of Lāna‘i High and Elementary School (LHES). We have hosted an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school before my tenure in July of 2021. Additionally, this school year, the school opened a second EOEL prekindergarten classroom to assist in the language development of the school’s Kaiapuni program. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1, which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HIDEOE campuses.

Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten classes on campus has been very positive for our school. It allows us to provide additional learning opportunities for prekindergarten students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who might benefit from an inclusion setting.

The program is very well supported, with Preschool teachers, Educational Assistants, and Administrators engaged in professional development throughout the year. We also receive coaching, mentoring, and curriculum development support tailored to the unique needs of our classroom.

As a Principal, I see firsthand the profound impact of quality early learning on a child’s development. Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with

quality early learning experiences arrive ready to engage and have stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills.

On the island of Lana‘i, there is a need for more preschool programs as there is a lack throughout our community. We are humbled to have two classrooms dedicated to preschool programs at LHES; however, many other communities in Hawaii could benefit from multiple EOEL programs like Lana‘i. Additionally, the funding is investing in and giving our keiki a jumpstart in their education. Many research-based articles show preschool's positive impact on a child's academic and social development.

Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai‘i is essential to ensuring that all keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.

Mahalo,

Douglas Boyer, EdD  
Lāna‘i High and Elementary School

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 1:32:25 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leslie Ziu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 11, 2025

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

Hawai‘i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

My name is Leslie Ziu, and I am the Principal of Mākaha Elementary School. We look forward to hosting an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school in the near future. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1 which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HIDEOE campuses.

Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten class on campus will be very positive for our school. Mākaha is a tight-knit community in one of our most remote locations on island. This bill would help us provide free preschool that is also convenient for our families -- enabling our community to have the essential early start for learning.

Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experience arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills.

Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai‘i is essential to ensuring that all keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.



Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.

Mahalo,  
Leslie Ziu  
Mākaha Elementary School

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 12:14:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laverne Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony to the Hawaii Senate Committee on Education**

**HB 429, HD1 - Relating to Early Learning**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2005**

**Chair Michell Kidani and Members of the Committee**

**My name is Laverne Fernandes Moore, a recent special education retiree teacher from McKinley High School, I strongly support HB 429, HD1 relating to early learning.**

**As a former early childhood specialist, on loan to the Office of Community Services, and Governor Cayetano's Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Director, I witness first hand the benefits a pre-school education affords our children whose families are not able to financially afford sending their children to preschool. Funding this legislation is one of the best investments the State of Hawaii will make for the future of our children. I ask your committee to support this bill. Mahalo, Laverne Fernandes Moore**

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:17:40 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Pimentel	Testifying for Lana'i High & Elementary School - Vice principal	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Capitol

415 S. Beretania St. Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

My name is Jennifer Pimentel, and I am the Vice Principal of Lana'i High & Elementary School. We have hosted an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school for over 10 years, with our Kula Kaiapuni prekindergarten class beginning this school year! I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1, which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HIDOE campuses. Hosting an EOEL pre-kindergarten class on campus has been very positive for our school. It allows us to provide additional learning opportunities for prekindergarten students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who might benefit from an inclusion setting. For example, we've seen significant improvements in the communication and social interaction skills of our students with IEPs when they are integrated into a general education setting. The diverse learning environment fosters empathy and understanding among all students, creating a more inclusive and supportive school culture.

Beyond inclusion, the program has strengthened our school community. Families feel more connected to the school from an earlier age, which builds strong relationships and facilitates smoother transitions into kindergarten. Parents have expressed gratitude for the convenient location and the high-quality education their children receive. The early exposure to our school's culture and expectations also helps to align home and school learning environments. Crucially, the program has supported the ongoing need for support for our littlest haumana and their ohana, as we navigate both 'Ōlelo and English needs of our community.

The program is very well supported, with Preschool teachers, Educational Assistants, and Administrators engaged in professional development throughout the year. We also receive coaching, mentoring, and curriculum development support tailored to the unique needs of our classroom.

As a Vice Principal, I see firsthand the profound impact that quality early learning has on a child's development. Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experiences arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills. Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai'i is essential to ensuring that all keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Pimentel

Vice Principal

Lana'i High & Elementary School



# Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committee on Education

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Date: March 12, 2025

Where: Conference Room 229

## TESTIMONY

By Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Arroyo  
Kamehameha Schools

RE: **HB 429, HD1, Relating to Early Learning**

E ka Luna Ho‘omaluku Kidani, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omaluku Kim, a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Ho‘ona‘auao o ka ‘Aha Kenekoa, aloha nui kākou. My name is Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Arroyo, Vice President of Hi‘ialo at Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools **supports** HB 429, HD1, which supports the continued implementation of EOEL public preschool for Hawai‘i’s keiki.

According to recent figures, only 41.4% of Native Hawaiian children attend preschool and 1 in 2 are living below the ALICE threshold. The continued expansion ensures that all keiki including Native Hawaiians have access to early learning in their community. Such access is important to ensure the readiness of keiki to enter kindergarten while lessening the financial burden on families.

Founded in 1887 by the legacy of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Kamehameha Schools (KS) is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to improving the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian people through education. KS envisions a thriving lāhui where learners, grounded in Christian and Hawaiian values, grow into ‘ōiwi leaders who inspire and contribute to their communities, both locally and globally.

‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou. There is no success without preparation.

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:38:27 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leighton Nakamoto	Testifying for Ka'ala Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**March 10, 2025**

**Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair**

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair**

**Senate Committee on Education**

**Hawai'i State Capitol**

**415 S. Beretania St.**

**Honolulu, HI 96813**

**Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

**Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Leighton Nakamoto, and I am the Principal of Ka'ala Elementary School. We have hosted an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school since 2024. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1 which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HIDOE campuses.**

**Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten class on our campus has proven to be a highly positive experience. It provides valuable inclusion opportunities for prekindergarten students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), allowing them to thrive in a diverse learning environment. The prekindergarten inclusion programs offer a wealth of multifaceted benefits for all children, regardless of their individual learning styles or developmental needs. These programs create a dynamic and enriching environment that promotes social and emotional development. Even in the relatively short time our EOEL classroom has been established, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact of this inclusive approach. I've observed how it organically fosters a truly welcoming and**

**supportive atmosphere, one where every child feels valued and respected. This environment serves as a fertile ground for cultivating a strong sense of community, where children learn to appreciate diversity, practice empathy, and collaborate effectively. The shared experiences within our inclusive classroom are not merely about social milestones; they are about building the foundational skills necessary for lifelong success, including resilience, adaptability, and a genuine understanding of the importance of belonging.**

**The program is very well supported, with Preschool teachers, Educational Assistants, and Administrators engaged in professional development throughout the year. We also receive coaching, mentoring, and curriculum development support tailored to the unique needs of our classroom.**

**As a Principal, I see firsthand the profound impact that quality early learning has on a child's development. Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experience arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills.**

**Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai'i is essential to ensuring that all keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.**

**Mahalo,**

**Leighton Nakamoto**

**Ka'ala Elementary School**

**March 11th, 2024**

**Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair**

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair**

**Senate Committee on Education**

Hawai'i State Capitol

415 S. Beretania St.

Honolulu, HI 96813

**Subject: HB No. 429, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING**

**Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim,** and members of the committee,

My name is John Hamilton, and I am the Principal of **Kalihi Elementary School**. We look forward to hosting an Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classroom at our school in the near future. I am writing to express my strong support for HB No. 429, H.D. 1 which funds the expansion of EOEL public prekindergarten classrooms on HODOE campuses.

Hosting an EOEL prekindergarten class on campus will be very positive for our school.

***Providing a learning opportunity for our community will strengthen their academic success and improve their overall social-emotional development, setting them up for long-term success both in and out of the classroom.***

The program is very well supported, with Preschool teachers, Educational Assistants, and Administrators engaged in professional development throughout the year. We will also receive coaching, mentoring, and curriculum development support tailored to the unique needs of our classroom.

Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have attended prekindergarten programs. Those with quality early learning experience arrive ready to engage, with stronger language, social, and self-regulation skills.

Expanding access to prekindergarten in Hawai'i is essential to ensuring that *all* keiki, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that set the foundation for lifelong success. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB429, H.D. 1, and fund the expansion of EOEL public Pre-K.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to our community.



Mahalo,

**John Hamilton**

**Kalihi Elementary**

**HB-429-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 7:26:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Sanita	Testifying for Hana High and Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 429, HD 1**

**Christopher Sanita**

**Principal, Hāna High and Elementary School**

**Date: 3/11/25**

**Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,**

**My name is Chris Sanita, and I am the proud Principal of Hāna High and Elementary School. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 429, HD 1, which provides funding to expand Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) public prekindergarten classrooms on Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) campuses.**

**We look forward to the opportunity to host an EOEL public prekindergarten classroom at our school in the near future. Expanding access to early learning will have a profound impact on our keiki, families, and broader school community.**

**The benefits of early learning are clear. Every year, we welcome kindergarteners into our classrooms, and it is evident which students have had access to quality prekindergarten programs. These students arrive better prepared—with stronger language development, social-emotional skills, and the ability to self-regulate in a structured learning environment. By expanding EOEL prekindergarten, we are ensuring that more children in our rural and underserved communities begin their educational journey with a solid foundation for success.**

**The EOEL prekindergarten program is well-supported and highly effective. Teachers, Educational Assistants, and Administrators participate in continuous professional development throughout the year. Schools receive mentorship, coaching, and curriculum development support, ensuring that each classroom meets the unique needs of its students. This investment in our educators translates directly into high-quality early learning experiences for our keiki.**

**Access to early childhood education should not be determined by geography or socioeconomic status. Expanding public prekindergarten in Hawai'i is an equity issue—one that ensures all children, regardless of background or ability, have access to the early learning experiences they need to thrive.**

**For these reasons, I strongly urge you to pass HB 429, HD 1 and continue investing in the future of our keiki. Mahalo for your time, consideration, and steadfast leadership on this critical issue.**

**Mahalo nui loa,  
Chris Sanita  
Principal, Hāna High and Elementary School**