

## Talking Points – EOEL Plan (Early Learning Program and Supplement Budget Request)

- Our objective is to increase the number of four-year-olds who will have the opportunity for a prekindergarten experience.
- This November, there will be a question on the ballot that will ask voters whether the state constitution should be changed to permit public monies to be used to fund private, community-based preschools.
  - If voters approve, the State will be allowed to contract with private, community-based preschools for quality preschool experiences.
- While we await the outcome of the vote, the State's Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) in the Office of the Governor is requesting additional resources from the Legislature to increase the number of four-year-olds who will be able to attend preschool this August 2014.
- There will be an increased number of four-year-olds this coming 2014-2015 school year who need a preschool experience – about 5,100 who are too young to go to kindergarten due to the change in kindergarten entry age. Many of these families want their children to go to preschool but cannot afford the cost.
- Last year, the Hawaii State Legislature funded the Department of Human Services' Preschool Open Doors program with an additional \$6 million that now will cover 1,200 of the 5,100 children at private, community-based preschools. These families can receive support if they have a certain income – a family of four could qualify if its income is at or below \$67,725.
- However, with more than 17,000 four-year-olds in Hawaii, many more families want access to quality preschools. Many cannot afford the cost.
- To prepare as many four-year-olds for kindergarten as possible, it is important to use and expand the already-existing mixed-delivery system. EOEL's approach is to support such a mixed-delivery system, which includes:
  - Private, community-based preschools;
  - Head Start programs;
  - Family child care homes;
  - Special education prekindergarten classrooms;
  - Family-child interaction learning programs; and
  - DOE-EOEL prekindergarten programs.

All of these options are funded through a variety of funding streams, including federal, parent (which make up the highest percentage), private foundation (such as Kamehameha Schools), special education, and state funds.

- This session, EOEL is seeking funds for the school year beginning August 2014 for:
  - Family-child interaction learning programs (\$1 million for 400 children\*); and
  - The DOE-EOEL Prekindergarten Program (\$4.47 million for 640 children\*).

\*Free- and reduced-price meal eligible – a family of four could qualify if its income is at or below \$50,117.