



## SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM UPDATE

### Current Status

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- Established by Act 169 (signed into law by Governor Abercrombie, June 2013)
  - Provides access to school readiness services that address children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development
  - Requires each provider to conduct school readiness assessments
  - Gives priority to children from low- and moderate-income families
  - Prepares children through either of the State’s two official languages (English and Hawaiian)
- DHS has been funded to operate the School Readiness Program by expanding its Preschool Open Doors program for the 2014-2015 school year. Target group is those affected by the change in kindergarten entry age – funding serves approximately 900 children, only a percentage of that population. The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) is offering support to DHS in the pre- and post-assessment of children, and optional support for participating programs such as professional development opportunities for teachers and directors.

### We Are Actively Working On ...

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- Identifying additional programs and funding to operate the School Readiness Program in 2014-2015. Possibilities include:
  - Increasing DHS funding to reduce the copayment of families to help send their children to licensed programs.
  - Working with DOE to run programs for 4-year-olds on their campuses with Hawaii State Teachers Association teachers and EOEL support.
  - Funding family-child interaction learning programs to support families in educating their 4-year-olds and getting them ready for kindergarten.
- Identifying the implications for the School Readiness Program whether the Constitutional amendment (to allow public funds to be used for private programs *prior* to kindergarten) passes or not, which include:
  - The rate at which we are able to increase capacity to serve 4-year-olds.
  - The ability of EOEL to contract with DHS-licensed private programs to offer educational services to children *prior* to kindergarten entry. (Contracts directly with providers for classroom slots.)
  - The ability to require the use of quality standards across programs for 4-year-olds that are linked to children’s educational outcomes and have been jointly defined by DOE and EOEL (e.g., align with DOE Common Core State Standards).

### BACKGROUND – Executive Office on Early Learning

- Established by Act 178 (signed into law by Gov. Neil Abercrombie, June 2012)
- Requirement and authority to coordinate across departments
- Charged with developing a comprehensive and integrated statewide early childhood system (birth through kindergarten entry)
  - Supporting healthy and welcomed births
  - Ensuring nurturing and safe families
  - Supporting on-track health and development and services
  - Providing equitable access to programs
  - Providing high-quality early learning programs
  - Ensuring alignment to K-3 for student success