EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING

HONOLULU

GG WEISENFELD
DIRECTOR

Testimony in **Support** of
H.B. 1676 H.D. 1, Relating to Early Learning
By GG Weisenfeld, Director

House Committee on Finance
February 21, 2014
1:00 p.m., Room 308

Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Nishimoto, Vice-Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. I am GG Weisenfeld, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL is in support of House Bill 1676, House Draft 1.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) to enter into agreements with the Department of Education and charter schools to use vacant or underutilized classrooms, or classrooms currently being used for preschool, for public preschool classrooms statewide.

EOEL requests that $4,470,208 be appropriated for this purpose to be used in FY2015 for the 2014-2015 school year. This will provide an additional 640 four-year-old children with access to preschool.

Partnering with the Department of Education is an important part of the early learning system that EOEL is charged with developing pursuant to Act 178, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012. Our objective is to increase the number of four-year-olds who will have the opportunity for a prekindergarten experience.

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 ($4,470,208 for 640 children*).

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

The proposed DOE-EOEL program will have the following characteristics:

- Operates within the DOE structure
    - 32 classrooms at 30 schools statewide (list attached)
        - Schools identified using the following criteria: Title I status, rural location or limited preschool choices, existing preschool with Race to the Top or other federal funding support that is ending, and principal support
    - Staffed by HSTA/DOE teachers and HGEA assistants
- Serves 640 children (those eligible for free- and reduced-price meals)
- EOEL will offer professional development support

Each component of our budget request for the DOE-EOEL program is linked to building a quality prekindergarten program. Prekindergarten experiences must be of high quality to make a difference in outcomes for children. The greatest line item in our budget is for staff (80.4%). We will require highly qualified teachers who have early childhood experience. To meet the recommended teacher-child ratio and optimal classroom size for children's learning as identified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, two teachers are needed per classroom. They will be DOE employees who will also need to meet the DOE licensing and educational requirements. However, to ensure high quality is implemented, we have identified five key elements that must be incorporated within the program:

- **Ongoing professional development.** Research has shown that the most successful method for creating high-quality teachers is systematic, ongoing professional development. That is why we will contract for services ($80,000) that will coordinate targeted professional development workshops for the participating school principals and teachers on topics such as child development, use of individual child formative assessments, effective family engagement techniques, and curriculum. For teachers to

participate in the required monthly workshops, substitute pay ($102,400) and travel for neighbor island staff to participate in biannual seminars ($7,200) has been included.

- **Mentoring.** What improves teaching and learning most substantially is the use of in-class mentoring or coaching. Resource teachers will be hired within each of the 10 DOE districts to mentor teachers and support principals in understanding the nuances of implementing a prekindergarten program on their campuses ($900,000).

- **Focus on Child Outcomes.** To ensure children are learning and progressing in their growth and development, the curriculum implemented in the program must be aligned with the Hawaii Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS). HELDS are research-based standards that identify the expectations of knowledge and behavior for children from birth through kindergarten entry. They are a set of expected knowledge and behaviors categorized into five "domains" or areas based on the National Education Goals Panel framework: Physical Well-being, Health, and Motor Development; Social and Emotional Development; Approaches to Learning; Cognition and General Knowledge; and Language and Literacy. To measure a child's progress in these domains, the teachers will be required to conduct ongoing formative assessments on each child ($6,400).

- **Program Assessment.** To evaluate the quality of teacher-child interactions, EOEL would use one of several tools available to provide direct feedback to the teachers as well as to the resource teachers so they can support the classroom teachers. The indicators that would be collected biannually include: the climate of the environment and emotional support provided to the students; classroom organization including the use of materials and behavior management; and instructional support that is occurring, such as concept development and language modeling ($6,400).

- **Environment.** To establish a high-quality program, an appropriate environment must be created. 26 of the 32 classrooms would need equipment ($624,000). All of the 32 classrooms would need consumable materials for the children to use, such as writing materials and paper ($48,800).

EOEL recommends an amendment to the bill on page 2, line 7 (appropriation section): "...enter into **contracts or memorandums of agreement**" (to be consistent with the language on page 1, lines 11-12).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON earlylearning
TAKING ACTION FOR HAWAII'S CHILDREN

#	School	Principal	Island	Complex Area Superintendent
1	Kahaluu Elementary	Naomi Matsuzaki	Oahu	Lea Albert
2	Waiahole Elementary	Wendy Matsuzaki	Oahu	Lea Albert
3	Hauula Elementary	Samuel Izumi	Oahu	Lea Albert
4	Linapuni Elementary	Cindy Sunahara	Oahu	Calvin Nomiyama
5	Hana High & Elementary	Richard Paul	Maui	Lindsay Ball
6	Lanai High & Elementary	Elton Kinoshita	Lanai	Lindsay Ball
7	Kaunakakai Elementary	Janice Espiritu	Molokai	Lindsay Ball
8	Honokaa Elementary	Rory Souza	Hawaii	Arthur Souza
9	Honaunau Elementary	Noreen Kunitomo	Hawaii	Arthur Souza
10	Hookena Elementary	Joyce K. Crisafi	Hawaii	Arthur Souza
11	Konawaena Elementary	Claire Yoshida	Hawaii	Arthur Souza
12	Keolu Elementary	Gay Kong	Oahu	Suzanne Mulcahy
13	Kailua Elementary	Lanelle Hibbs	Oahu	Suzanne Mulcahy
14	Kaiulani Elementary	Rodney Moriwake	Oahu	Ruth Silberstein
15	Likelike Elementary	Kelly Bart	Oahu	Ruth Silberstein
16	Eleele Elementary	Fred Rose	Kauai	William Arakaki
17	Kekaha Elementary	Jason Yoshida	Kauai	William Arakaki
18	Kau High & Pahala Elementary	Sharon Beck	Hawaii	Mary Correa
19	Naalehu Elementary	Darlene Javar	Hawaii	Mary Correa
20	Keaau Elementary	Chad Farias	Hawaii	Mary Correa
21	Mountain View Elementary	Barbara Riley	Hawaii	Mary Correa
22	Keonepoko Elementary	Kathleen Romero	Hawaii	Mary Correa
23	Pahoa Elementary	Michelle Payne-Arakaki	Hawaii	Mary Correa
24	Waialua Elementary	Scott Moore	Oahu	John Brummel
25	Nanaikapono Elementary	Debra Knight	Oahu	Ann Mahi
26	Nanakuli Elementary	Lisa Ann Higa	Oahu	Ann Mahi
27	Leihoku Elementary	Randall Miura	Oahu	Ann Mahi
28	Maili Elementary	Disa Hauge	Oahu	Ann Mahi
29	Makaha Elementary	Lynn Okamura	Oahu	Ann Mahi
30	Waianae Elementary	Wendy Takahashi	Oahu	Ann Mahi

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