



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING  
HONOLULU

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DIRECTOR

Testimony in **Support** of  
H.B. 2276, Relating to Early Childhood Education  
By GG Weisenfeld, Director

House Committee on Education  
February 5, 2014  
2:00 p.m., Room 309

Chair Takumi, Vice-Chair Ohno, and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. I am GG Weisenfeld, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning. EOEL is in support of House Bill 2276. This is an Administration measure.

The purpose of this bill is to implement, upon its ratification, the amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution, by establishing a statewide early childhood education program.

Section 1 sets forth why early childhood education is important, the history of early learning in Hawaii, and the legislative intent. It is an important component of the bill and we urge the committee to retain this section in any subsequent drafts.

This bill will enable the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) to contract with private, community-based providers, such as KCAA Preschools of Hawaii, Kama'aina Kids, and Seagull Schools, to offer quality educational programs for children prior to their entry into kindergarten.

Private providers are essential to meeting the need of over 17,000 four-year-olds for a prekindergarten experience. While partnerships with DOE (for preschool classrooms on DOE campuses through a memorandum of agreement with EOEL – run by DOE with support from EOEL) and family-child interaction learning programs (where a parent attends with their

children) will serve some of this population, most four-year-olds will have their prekindergarten experience in a private, community-based preschool.

Participating private, community-based providers will be required to:

- Have defined child outcomes;
- Incorporate positive teacher-child interactions;
- Use individual child formative assessments;
- Incorporate family engagement; and
- Have a curriculum aligned with the Hawaii Early Learning Development Standards.

In addition, the program provided for by this bill will allow EOEL to monitor quality indicators, assist Head Start programs with supplemental funds if federal funds are decreased, and distribute federal funds that are provided in the recently passed federal budget.

With the program as provided for in this bill and appropriate funding, the State will be able to help provide access to quality prekindergarten for 85% of four-year-olds by 2018.

EOEL respectfully requests that you move this bill forward. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.