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 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 2276.

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 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 (see attached).

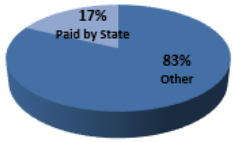
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON earlylearning
TAKING ACTION FOR HAWAII'S CHILDREN

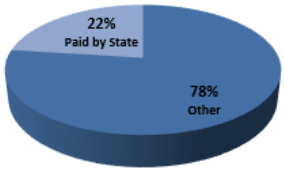
STATE FUNDS ONLY A FRACTION OF THE INVESTMENT IN 4-YEAR-OLDS

Majority comes from available federal, private, and special education funds

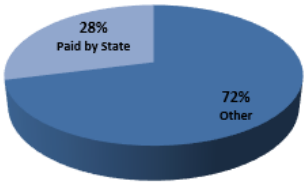
SY 2014-15 / FY 2015
$16 Million / 17%
$93.2 Million Total (All Sources)



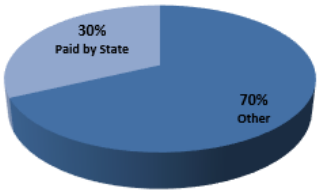
SY 2015-16 / FY 2016
$21.1 Million / 22%
$98.3 Million Total (All Sources)



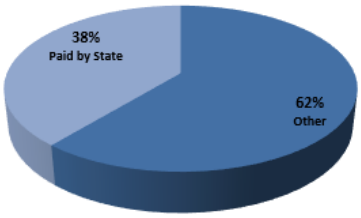
SY 2016-17 / FY 2017
$29.3 Million / 28%
$106.5 Million Total (All Sources)



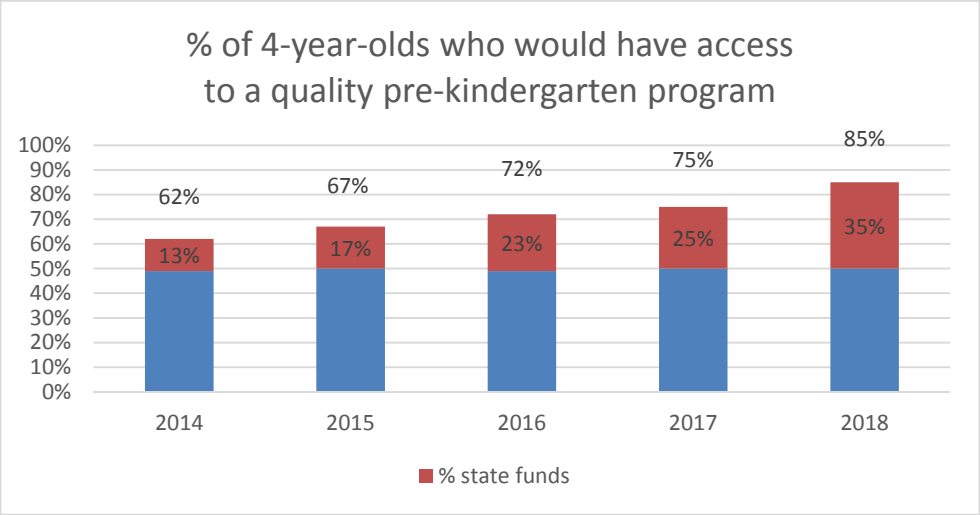
SY 2017-18 / FY 2018
$32.8 Million / 30%
$110 Million Total (All Sources)



SY 2018-19 / FY 2019
$47.9 Million / 38%
$125 Million Total (All Sources)



Notes:

- *"Other" funds consist of a combination of federal (e.g., Head Start), parent, private foundation, and special education funds.*
- *Reflects supplemental budget request for FY2015 and projected budget requests.*

According to the 2012 U.S. Census, there are 17,189 4-year-olds in Hawaii. Based on this funding projection, which assumes passage of a Constitutional amendment to allow public funds to be given to private early childhood education programs, the following percentage of 4-year-olds would have access to a quality pre-kindergarten education program.