



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING
HONOLULU

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DIRECTOR

Message from the Early Learning Advisory Board Chairs, 7/9/14

Aloha,

While increased Preschool Open Doors funding and the DOE-EOEL prekindergarten classrooms will make it possible for some to receive child care in private settings and some to be part of a public program, these current options do not make it possible to support the full complement of Hawaii's 4-year-olds (numbering about 17,500 children) to attend preschool. Looking to the future to better meet this need and recognizing that capacity and quality exists within the private sector, the Legislature in 2013 passed a bill (S.B. No. 1084) with a two-thirds majority in both houses, proposing a constitutional amendment appear on the November 2014 ballot.

This fall's general election ballot will include a proposed amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution to permit the appropriation of public funds for private early childhood education programs. The question on the ballot will read as follows:

“Shall the appropriation of public funds be permitted for the support or benefit of private early childhood education programs that shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex or ancestry, as provided by law?”

If ratified, it will enable Hawaii to establish a state-funded early childhood education program using DOE classrooms as well as community-based preschools for children starting the year prior to kindergarten, expanding access for children statewide.

Hawaii is eligible to apply for the new federal preschool development grants being made available to states that are working to expand access to high-quality early education programs. EOEL is designated as the lead agency for Hawaii and intends to submit a proposal. Should the constitutional amendment pass, the State would be authorized to enter into contracts with both the DOE and community-based preschools to support both expansion and professional development efforts for up to \$10 million per year for four years.

Sincerely,
Robert Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Advisory Board
and
Christina Cox, Vice-Chair of the Early Learning Advisory Board