



News Release

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July 22, 2019

Ten New State-Funded Prekindergarten Classrooms to Open in School Year 2020-21

HONOLULU – With funding appropriated by the Legislature this year, the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL), in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE), will be opening 10 additional EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program classrooms for four-year-olds across the state at the following schools:

- Aiea Elementary (Oahu)
- Chiefess Kapiolani Elementary (Hawaii Island)
- Haleiwa Elementary (Oahu)
- Nanaikapono Elementary (Oahu)
- Palolo Elementary (Oahu)
- Pukalani Elementary (Maui)
- Hilo Union Elementary (Hawaii Island)
- Honaunau Elementary (Hawaii Island)
- Waianae Elementary (Oahu)
- Waimanalo Elementary & Intermediate (Oahu)

“This new funding for the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program allows us to offer a high-quality early childhood education for our young children who otherwise would not have the opportunity,” said Lauren Moriguchi, EOEL Director. “We are grateful and look forward to working with the principals and their staff to offer the kind of high-quality program that will make a difference in the lives of our keiki.”

To prepare to welcome children and families next fall, school principals and staff will participate in EOEL’s Early Learning Induction Program this year, in addition to participating in EOEL’s Early Learning Academy throughout implementation. Makaha and Puuhale Elementary Schools have been designated as alternates.

The schools were selected through a competitive application process that considered community need, including the percentage of at-risk and underserved children in the population, and availability of nearby early learning programs for four-year-olds; availability of space on the school campus; and the principal’s commitment to implementing a high-quality

prekindergarten program, including through active participation in professional development sessions offered by EOEL, and working with other early learning programs in the community as well as other grade levels to sustain positive child outcomes.

EOEL launched Hawaii's first publicly funded prekindergarten program in the 2014-15 school year as a first step toward developing Hawaii's early learning system. With the new schools, the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program will have 36 classrooms statewide and provide high-quality early learning experiences to 720 children in the year before they enter kindergarten.

EOEL plans to expand the Program to more schools in partnership with HIDOE, and EOEL is working intently on building the workforce needed to do this. To ensure the responsible use of taxpayer dollars, EOEL needs to ensure every classroom is staffed with a highly qualified teacher who is equipped to work with children from all walks of life and put them on the path toward life-long success. Currently, there is a severe shortage of highly qualified early childhood educators in Hawaii. Expansion is also dependent upon funding.

Details for families to apply for the 2020-21 school year will be announced in the spring. For more information on prekindergarten and early learning, including information about applying for the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program in the upcoming school year, please visit <http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/eoel-public-prekindergarten-program>.

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About the Hawaii Executive Office on Early Learning

The Hawaii Executive Office on Early Learning was established in 2012 to work across the public and private sectors toward a comprehensive and integrated statewide early learning system for Hawaii. Its vision is for all keiki to have access to high-quality early childhood development and learning experiences from prenatal care to kindergarten entry, to lay the foundation for lifelong well-being. The Office is governed by the Early Learning Board. To learn more, visit earlylearning.hawaii.gov.

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