

# Early Learning Board (ELB)

Thursday, May 14, 2020

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

*The public may attend the meeting in any of the locations specified below:*

**Meeting Chair will preside via the Zoom link.**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Dana Balansag (for Dir. Bhanot), Kaina Bonacorsi, Justina Acevedo-Cross, Leilani Au, Ben Naki, Kerrie Urosevich, Wai’ale’ale Sarsona (for Jack Wong), Matt Shim (for Dir. Anderson), Stephen Schatz (for President Lassner), Cheryl Shiiinoki, Bob Peters, Namaka Rawlins, Mari Uehara, Melodie Vega, Bob Davis (for Superintendent Kishimoto), Edeluisa Baguio-Larena

**Executive Office on Early Learning staff in attendance:** Lauren Moriguchi, Keopu Reelitz, Wimmie Wong Lui, Alohilani Maiava, Chris Jackson, Jeff Larson, Dana Ciacci, Keli Houston, Ashley Miura

**Public in Attendance:** Anne Horiuchi, Jim Raymond, Deborah Zysman, Katherine Murphy, Danny Cup Choy, Deanne Goya, Jeffrey Bock, Ka’ano’i Walk, Ken Kakesako, Kim Guieb, Terry Lock, Ka’iulani Laeha, Brandon Lee, Christina Cox, Robyn Chun, Suevon Lee

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
<b>MINUTES:</b>		
<b>Welcome/Introductions—</b> Bob Peters	Bob welcomed the group at 1:31 pm and asked Namaka to read the mission statement. He also asked Keopu to provide general instructions for virtual meeting procedures to be followed.	
<b>Review and Approve</b> <b>3/30/20 and 4/9/20</b> <b>Minutes—</b> Bob Peters	The 3/30/20 special meeting minutes and 4/9/20 meeting minutes were approved as distributed.	
<b>Public Comment—</b> Bob Peters	Kathy Murphy provided a general acknowledgment of all the work that everyone is currently doing.	
<b>Early Educator</b>	This agenda item was deferred to the June meeting, in order to give the	

Early Learning Board

<http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/early-learning-board/>

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<p><b>Excellence and Equity Plan, ECE3 (Support Letter and Ad Hoc Committee)</b>—Terry Lock and Justina Acevedo-Cross</p>	<p>board time to review the letter of intent and description of proposed ad hoc committee.</p>	
<p><b>PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Reports</b>—Jeff Larson</p>	<p>Jeff Larson, EOEL’s research statistician, gave a brief presentation on the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment reports. There were two studies conducted: a comprehensive needs assessment conducted by ICF, Inc., and a facilities study by MGT Consulting. The comprehensive NA included a “risk and reach” analysis to identify systems/services gaps; a system assessment based on interviews with agency leaders and focus groups of ECE providers and families; and a resource map to track funding for the ECE system. The facilities study produced estimates of start-up and operational costs for the construction and renovation of child care facilities.</p> <p>Major takeaways from the discussion that followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In regards to how this information will interact with the COVID-19 pandemic and the new guidelines, regulations, and restrictions that have come from that, the studies are so new that EOEL has not had time to process all of the information and consider how it might fit into the current context. EOEL is also planning for possible budget cuts and will generally have to address COVID-19 impacts in its efforts and work within the new context. Bob said to keep this and the pandemic in mind as the meeting goes on.</li> <li>• In order to address the issue of making sure the right people who need this information, particularly in light of the pandemic, are going to become conversant with this data and what it is saying, EOEL intends to create a user-friendly document that can be easily distributed. As EOEL organizes and thinks about how to disseminate this information, they are sifting through</li> </ul>	<p><b>The board needs to continue to look at the implications of both our facilities and comprehensive needs assessment in light of today’s situation regarding COVID-19.</b></p>

	<p>new digital forms of communication and developing materials that can be presented online and virtually, keeping in mind what the audiences are that they want to reach, including families, lawmakers, providers, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A question was brought up regarding why the study considered health professionals who are early childhood-specific as “lacking.” Jeff explained that professionals who are being trained to support families are not trained in early childhood-specific age groups, the exception being special education. The health professionals who took part in this study said that they would like to see more programs in the state’s higher education system around training future health professionals in early childhood-specific areas, and to recruit such individuals in the future. Mari then said that pediatricians do not focus on birth through five, and instead take care of children from birth till adulthood. Jeff and Mari agreed to discuss this further outside of the meeting.</li> <li>• In regards to the constitutional amendment issue concerning public funding for community-based providers, Jeff confirmed there was no recommendation from the Needs Assessment report. Bob said that this is an important issue that the board should keep thinking about.</li> <li>• Despite the apparent surge in information about developmental milestones, parents are still saying they don’t have enough information or don’t know much about it. Jeff explained that his understanding is that families know this information is out there, but they do not think it is easy to access. They get their information primarily from doctors and schools, but there is no consensus on one “correct” path, so different ideas are coming at them from different sources, like from other families and the media.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jeff and Mari will connect offline to discuss health professionals in ECE.</b></p> <p><b>The board will make sure not to lose sight of a Constitutional amendment.</b></p>
<b>EOEL, DOH, DOE, and</b>	Lauren provided EOEL updates. EOEL is:	

<p><b>DHS COVID-19 Updates</b>—Lauren Moriguchi, Matt Shim, Bob Davis, and Dana Balansag</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to meet on a regular basis with their State partners to coordinate information-sharing and to increase their ability to share more resources with families and providers.</li> <li>• Working with Representative Linda Ichiyama, who has played an integral role in helping to convene stakeholders and providers to provide feedback on guidelines for reopening. EOEL has been helping by providing her with information on reopening and recovery. The Representative is interested in including additional providers in these discussions, such as Family-Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) program providers and family, friend and neighbor care (FFN) providers.</li> <li>• Continuing to work with partners in the media to draw attention to the important issues surrounding the ECE sector.</li> <li>• Continuing to share and provide information through the EOEL website.</li> <li>• Responding to requests from the Senate Ways and Means (WAM) Committee for budget-related information. In anticipation of general fund revenue losses, WAM has asked state departments to submit proposals for budget reductions at 16%, 25%, and 30%. EOEL’s approach to this exercise prioritized looking at how the impact of reductions on programs that serve young children and families can be minimized, and how to maintain positions that are crucial to programs that serve young children and families. With the 16% reduction, funds for programs and positions remained untouched, but 25% and 30% reductions will include furloughing EOEL staff members except for direct teaching positions and resource teachers.</li> </ul> <p>Keopu then showed updates made to the EOEL COVID-19 website since it was last presented to the board, including subsidies and scholarship information, and family-related information.</p>	
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	<p>A brief Q&amp;A followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the systems side, what are the top four things bubbling up right now as the immediate need for families and providers during this pandemic? How are the PDG B-5 priorities shifting as a result of COVID-19? (Response: It is dependent on what happens with our funding. We are really hoping that the cuts don't impact existing programs. Regarding positions, the Legislature has said it is trying to avoid cuts and furloughs, so we are trying to be optimistic. For the State plan, we will be meeting next week to discuss next steps. The feedback from providers right now is that they are really struggling with the lower ratio of children to adults that will need to be in place to adhere to health and safety requirements. We have to focus on workforce issues no matter what happens.)</li> <li>• Can someone help me understand how the Governor's statement that he is not intending to cut or furlough positions impacts the proposed EOEL cuts? What other areas can be looked at to make sure that this doesn't happen? (Response: If we are looking at a cut of 30%, that would impact the Office much more significantly than it would a larger department. While the Governor and legislators are saying that they don't want to touch positions, 75% of EOEL's budget is comprised of staff positions, so that's where the challenge is when it comes to 25% and 30% budget cuts. In the response we submitted, we didn't touch any of the public pre-k program direct teaching positions; only the administration-level/office positions.)</li> <li>• Can we cut the pay of any of the teaching staff, so that no positions need to be completely cut or furloughed? (Response: We don't have the authority to make these types of decisions. What we submitted was just a proposal to the Senate Ways and Means committee to provide them with information regarding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lauren will provide further updates on issues and needs beyond public pre-K that may affect the way EOEL will be</b></p>
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	<p>how budget cuts/furloughs could be implemented.)</p> <p>Dana gave an update on how DHS is dealing with the COVID-19 crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS’ budget request to the Legislature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recommends the “safety net” for benefits and services needs to remain intact. The public services and benefits programs that DHS provides must be sustained to make sure that the health, safety and well-being of Hawaii’s most vulnerable and at-risk population will be given priority, as well as that of DHS employees and people in the non-profit sector who implement a lot of DHS’ contracts.</li> <li>○ Does not want staffing levels impacted because their work is critical to families in the state, and thus have requested consideration of allowing those filled positions that have a federal match to increase the capacity to answer to an increased need across the state.</li> <li>○ Urges the Legislature to be thoughtful and intentional, and not repeat the blind cuts to government programs during the great recession that damaged the safety net, public services, and the economy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The budget for homeless services is to remain as currently appropriated.</li> <li>• Child care licensing: additional guidance from DHS will be given in the future for child care facilities and homes to follow when reopening or continuing to care for children. Child care providers had a meeting earlier in the week to discuss some of the concerns and questions around these guidelines, and DHS is working with EOEL and Representative Ichiyama on these</li> </ul>	<p><b>functioning.</b></p>
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	<p>reopening guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for child care providers will continue through funds provided to DHS through the federal CARES Act.</li> <li>• Child care providers operating in facilities and homes that are interested in entering into a contract with DHS would need to apply and provide information about their services; additional information will be forthcoming when DHS has finalized the details.</li> <li>• DHS was approved for additional SNAP supplemental benefits.</li> <li>• First to Work (FTW) rent support payments will be available for an additional two months beyond the initial two months.</li> <li>• Preschool Open Doors (POD) deadlines will be extended until 5/15/20. Families whose household income has decreased due to COVID-19 do not have to reapply but should submit changes in household income to update their applications by contacting the POD Office.</li> <li>• DHS is still awaiting approval from Office of Child Care for waivers submitted back in April.</li> <li>• Developed outreach information with Kamehameha Schools and Partners in Development for families to learn about temporary assistance available during COVID-19, for Maui County, Hawaii Island, Kauai, and Oahu.</li> <li>• DHS is working on plans to resume in-person appointments by having staff return to work in offices in a safe manner.</li> </ul> <p>Matt gave an update about how DOH is dealing with the COVID-19 crisis with regards to services for children. DOH is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having their Family Health Services Division programs</li> </ul>	
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	<p>continue to telework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for reopening offices while thinking about how to return to work and continue to deliver services to the state in a safe manner.</li> <li>• Ensuring the safety of home visitors and families being visited.</li> <li>• Neighbor island physicians are still on hold and doing restricted in-person visits.</li> <li>• Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC) has been working hard to provide services via phone, so participants don't have to go to clinics in person. The new e-WIC program was able to complete the rollout of the e-WIC benefit system, which replaces the current paper check, for all islands. Major grocery stores and food services accept them. WIC has also added more foods to their list, simply because certain items are more difficult to find.</li> </ul> <p>Bob Davis gave an update about how DOE is dealing with the COVID-19 crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During, and since the extended spring break at the end of March, DOE has been trying to simultaneously figure out how to provide education through distance learning, not just to K-12 students but also to English learners and special needs, and then how to bring students back again once the new school year begins.</li> <li>• Distance learning training was provided to teachers, but DOE will take advantage of this summer to create more training opportunities which will continue into the next school year.</li> <li>• For budget reductions, DOE has already implemented a hiring freeze except for direct teaching positions. They are looking at the CARES Act funding that DOE has received and are</li> </ul>	
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	<p>gathering information from all their schools in order to determine how they are going to release the funds in a balanced manner, primarily for operational and teaching positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOE is already starting to plan for fall semester. As long as CDC guidelines and social distancing are still in place, DOE will need to address the needs of vulnerable learners because most of them are unable to take advantage of distance learning and require face-to-face interactions for support.</li> <li>• DOE will be purchasing new technology devices that will be distributed to children who do not currently have access to them.</li> </ul> <p>A Q&amp;A session and discussion followed. Major takeaways include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EOEL can't advise child care providers on DHS' re-opening requirements, so providers need to contact their licensing workers.</li> <li>• HAEYC has sent out information about the CDC guidelines to providers. Providers can re-open with the current CDC recommendations, but will then have to adjust to any changes proposed by DHS.</li> <li>• EOEL Resource Teachers have been working closely with pre-K program classroom teachers and families to provide support and consultation. Because the population the EOEL pre-K program serves is at-risk, not all families have access to the internet or even computers, so staff has taken the opportunity to mail out packets to families, including books for parents to read to children and materials that give advice on how to interact with children. The EOEL website also has resources for families and teaching staff.</li> <li>• EOEL is currently trying to figure out how to have planning</li> </ul>	
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	<p>meetings and touch bases with the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) champions, as a lot of this work will have to be done online and the champions are already busy during the pandemic dealing with their areas of expertise. There have been ongoing discussions about what these virtual meetings could look like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some families are having trouble meeting the co-payment for child care, either based on what they are eligible to receive, or the maximum that DHS is able to pay out. Dana explained that if the DHS payment rate isn't meeting what the tuition is, then that's one thing. Co-pays should be able to be waived - families just need to contact their subsidy worker and inform them that they need the amount adjusted. DHS is waiving co-payments on a case-by-case basis.</li> <li>• DHS does not currently have a soft target date for their contracts to be released, but when they have that information, they will share it with the board.</li> </ul>	
<b>ELB Role in Recovery Period – Bob Peters</b>	This agenda item was not discussed at length due to the meeting running overtime.	
<b>Legislature: Reopening &amp; HB2543 Testimony—Bob Peters</b>	Bob reminded everyone that the legislative session has reopened and is currently in a week of budget discussions. ELB testimony has been submitted in support of EOEL's budget request. If HB2543 comes back up, the previously submitted ELB testimony will be the same.	
<b>Member Updates—Bob Peters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kaina</i> reported that Maui County's mayor asked for a wish list that could be at least partially covered by the COVID-19 CARES Act. The list submitted by Kaina as County Coordinator covers some things that could be discussed at the state level (i.e., grants to center-based providers, making grants and loans available, providing dollars for sanitation equipment, etc.)</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kim</i> reported (on behalf of <i>Stephen</i>) that Hawaii P-20 received a verbal approval to extend the Early Literacy Project deadline from May 15 to August 8. Kim also reminded the board that the Hawaii P-20 website link is available in the ELB April meeting minutes.</li> <li>• <i>Ben</i> reported that Head Start programs were fortunate enough to have received some federal money from the CARES Act for summer programming that would not otherwise have been possible. There are also one-time COVID-19 response funds for technology needs, food for families, and other assistance.</li> <li>• <i>Edel</i> reported that all the local implementing agencies for home visiting programs have been adapting to the new way of doing home visits (telehealth) and making sure that all of them are being HIPAA-compliant. They are also working on professional development of staff, families getting resources, and mental health supports for staff and families.</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Agenda Outcomes</b> —Bob Peters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board needs to continue to look at the implications of both our facilities and comprehensive needs assessment in light of today’s situation regarding COVID-19.</li> <li>• Jeff is going to connect with Mari offline relating to health professionals in ECE.</li> <li>• The board should ensure they do not lose sight of a Constitutional amendment.</li> <li>• Lauren will provide updates beyond public pre-K that may be affecting the ways EOEL will be functioning.</li> <li>• The board should consider sustainability of providers for the future.</li> </ul>	
<b>Announcements</b>	None.	
<b>Executive Session</b>	No items from the AG.	
<b>Closing</b> —Kerrie Urosevich	“The current era is already crap enough without having to feel guilt that we aren’t learning Greek and painting watercolors of daffodils. If you	

	brushed your teeth today and got showered and ate something and spent ten minutes not looking at the news, then well done, it's an achievement." –Matt Haig via Twitter (@matthaig1)	
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Submitted by Ashley Miura and Chris Jackson