

Early Learning Board (ELB)

Thursday, July 9, 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), Cherilyn Shiinoki, Bob Peters, Namaka Rawlins, Mari Uehara, Melodie Vega, Edeluisa Baguio-Larena
Absent: Bob Davis (for Superintendent Kishimoto)

Executive Office on Early Learning staff in attendance: Lauren Moriguchi, Keopu Reelitz, Wimmie Wong Lui, Alohilani Maiava, Chris Jackson, Jeff Larson, Kathi Takakuwa, Coleen Momohara, Keli Houston, Ashley Miura

Public in Attendance: Anne Horiuchi, Brenda Watanabe, Danny Cup Choy, Richard Johnson, Elaine Yamashita, Hide Wu, Justine Kamelamela, Carol Wear, Jordan Smith, Ka’iu Kimura, Katherine Murphy, Kathleen Algire, Kim Guieb, Mary Ann Nemoto, Napua Rosehill, Toni Fujimoto, Deborah Zysman, Mel Horikami, Terry Lock, Ka’iulani Laeha, Tyffiny Keliiaa, Aldric Ulep

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
MINUTES:		
Welcome/Introductions— Bob Peters	Chair Peters welcomed the group at 1:32 pm and asked Matt Shim to read the mission statement. He also stated that there would be no need to go into an executive session at this meeting as listed on the agenda because the EOEL Director’s annual review needs to be postponed to next month due to the review materials not yet being ready.	Director’s annual review to be on August meeting agenda
Review and Approve 6/10/20 Minutes— Bob Peters	The 6/10/20 meeting minutes were approved as amended, with the following changes to be made on page 9: change “Family Hui will be starting to recruit people to run the text messaging...” to “Family Hui and NEST will be helping to enroll families to receive supports through	Minutes to be revised and posted

	text messaging and may be reaching out to other board members.”	
Public Comment —Bob Peters	No public comments were offered.	
Access to Learning Implementation Plan Update —Mel Horikami, HEC	<p>Mel Horikami of Hawaii Executive Conference (HEC) provided an update on work he has been doing related to House Bill 2543, having been contracted to create an implementation framework for this bill. Mel reiterated his desire for flexibility and optimization within the state’s child care system, and with Kerrie’s help, described the implementation framework he believes is ready to be carried out at the first opportunity available. Mel also noted that time and resources will need to be devoted to gathering data and certain types of needs assessments, but that this can be carried out in parallel to the plan itself.</p> <p>Key takeaways from the discussion that followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bill includes access for three-year-olds, including when it addresses the charter schools. • Implementation coordination of HB2543 will be a shared responsibility between EOEL, DHS, DOE, Charter School Commission, and an implementation plan will need to be developed. • Mel is not developing a plan, nor is he developing a written report for the ELB to digest information being shared to know how things will fit together. Rather, he is doing exploration, building a business case, and finding resources as part of the framework he is developing. • In his conversations with some stakeholders, Mel felt a lot of them didn’t know the structure of the current early childhood education system. He believes it would be worthwhile to explain to organizations what kind of support is available to them and the options they have for expansion. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The special fund for child care that goes along with this bill might not be available for COVID-19 relief aid, as the intent behind it is for expansion and not to save a business from collapsing. Kerrie pointed out that it will be difficult for expansion to happen at this time as many seats have been lost as a result of COVID-19. • Lauren added to this by explaining that losing the positions for the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program would result in the loss of 140 seats for students, a discussion that was continued later in the meeting during the EOEL updates. 	
<p>Governance Subcommittee Report (Chair Responsibilities/Term Limit; Vice Chair Position)—Wai’ale’ale Sarsona</p>	<p>Board member Wai’ale’ale Sarsona, convener of the ELB Governance subcommittee, presented two items Chair Peters had asked her and the subcommittee to work on: an outline of responsibilities for the position of the ELB Chair, including term limits; and a position description for the position of Vice Chair, as well as a staggered term for the first Vice Chair. The board approved the formation of the Vice Chair position and the responsibilities and term limits for the ELB Chair, which is set for three years.</p> <p>Wai’ale’ale also gave a brief update on the EOEL Director evaluation: all ELB members should have received an email from Chair Peters with a form that should be filled out by July 15, which Wai’ale’ale stressed was an important deadline in order to stay on top of the evaluation process and timeline.</p>	<p>Board approved the Chair’s responsibility and term limit and Vice Chair’s responsibility and term limit, with a staggered term for the first vice chair.</p> <p>All ELB members should fill out and submit the evaluation form <i>by the July 15 deadline.</i></p>
<p>Executive Office on Early Learning Updates (Legislation, Re-Engaging “Champions”)—Lauren Moriguchi</p>	<p>Lauren first called on Wimmie, EOEL’s policy analyst, to give an update on the ongoing legislative session. Wimmie explained that with the passage of SB126 a week ago, the previously cut eight EOEL positions have been restored, but funding for them has not. Furthermore, a certain amount of funds from EOEL’s previous fiscal year have been cut. SB126 is now on the Governor’s desk for consideration. The Legislature has made it clear that any discussion</p>	<p>Any and all letters of support for the restoration of the EOEL positions would be helpful.</p>

	<p>about funding for the restored positions should be had with the Department of Budget & Finance (B&F); EOEL has been communicating with them. The last time EOEL heard from B&F, B&F had indicated they were reviewing the situation. Wimmie also extended thanks to Chair Peters and all other board members who sent letters to B&F and advocates who raised awareness surrounding this issue. After Chair Peters asked whether the families have been informed about this situation, Wimmie and Coleen, EOEL’s educational specialist, both explained that letters have been sent to the families so they have as much time as possible to make alternate arrangements if the classrooms do have to close, and that EOEL has also been in close communication with the school principals.</p> <p>Wimmie then talked about HB2543, which was briefly discussed during Mel Hirokami’s Q&A session. She summarized the Senate Draft 2 of the bill, the version that is expected to pass from the Senate back to the House. Main takeaways include: DOE will be required to conduct a kindergarten-readiness assessment at the start of every school year; families must disclose information about previous childcare attendance upon entering kindergarten; and the Charter School Commission (CSC) has administrative authority over preschools in the charter schools. There are different effective dates for each of the new changes.</p> <p>Wimmie also stated that HB1346, the bill to prohibit expulsion and limit suspension in the EOEL Public Pre-K Program, has the same status as HB2543, waiting for both the House and Senate to pass it fully before going to the Governor for consideration.</p> <p>A brief discussion/Q&A session followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you optimistic funding will be restored? (Response: We are still waiting to see what’s going to happen, and so we are not sure. We are hopeful that funding will be restored given that the	
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	<p>classrooms will have to close without the funding.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the funding issue be determined today or tomorrow? (Response: We're not sure what the timing is like, and we've been hearing different things, so we have no concrete timeline that we know of. Furthermore, it has not been clear how to request the funding for these restored positions, so we've been trying to figure out what the process is and how to move through it.) • I'm not sure how the state budget system works. Can you explain whether you have any flexibility to re-prioritize? (Response: Re-prioritizing would be at the expense of funds we've committed to supporting schools that are participating in the EOEL Public Pre-K Program, including to address COVID-19, and would also not be sustainable.) • Have families who may be affected by these position losses been asked to write letters or communicate to the legislature? (Response: Families have inquired about writing to the legislators, and some of them have been doing that, as well as reaching out to others they think may be able to help.) • Chair Peters explained that he emailed all Board members with a template and information for letters to the Governor's Office and B&F. <p>Lauren then asked Alohi to provide updates on the re-engagement plan for "Champions," individuals/agencies who have volunteered to help with early childhood strategic plan implementation, through the support of the PDG B-5 grant. The timeline for this plan has been changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new re-engagement plan is separated into four phases: (1) assess the support Champions may need to re-engage; (2) Champions re-engage with other partners and the plans; (3) Champions initiate action; and (4) All share the good</p>	<p>Requesting for the restoration of funds from Craig Hirai, B&F Director, would still be very helpful.</p>
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	<p>news of progress. The desired outcomes are to share achievements, lessons learned, and where additional help is needed. Alohi also clarified the role of the Champions: they are meant to lend their leadership to ensure an objective moves forward but are not expected to do all the work themselves. Through their leadership, all partners would be engaged in implementation. Lauren clarified that EOEL wanted to wait until after the legislative session came to a close to re-engage Champions, so that everyone would have a better idea of their agency budgets and funding, and in order to be sensitive to the demand and bandwidth challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has created. After the legislative session, EOEL wants to send out a survey to ask Champions what kind of support they may need to help with strategic plan implementation and what kind of support they are able to provide.</p>	
Executive Session – Bob Peters	No Executive Session was needed.	
EOEL Director’s Annual Review—Bob Peters	This agenda item is postponed until the next ELB meeting in August.	Defer to August meeting.
Public Comment	Deborah Zysman of Hawaii Children’s Action Network (HCAN) said she is concerned about budgetary cuts and wondering what the expectations are for EOEL/ELB to implement HB2543. Chair Peters replied that because the bill has not yet passed and because it seems to change with every new iteration, the Board cannot answer that question until the bill passes, at which time there will be a clearer picture of the future and what EOEL/ELB will need to do.	
Member Updates—Bob Peters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt Shim provided an update on the Department of Health (DOH): DOH is working with DHS, EOEL, and ELB to create a webinar for providers to discuss best health practices and how to reopen during the pandemic. Dr. Sarah Park, state epidemiologist, will lead a panel and answer questions. Matt asked everyone present to submit any questions or concerns that they would like to have addressed through this webinar to their respective ELB representative. There is no set date for this 	

	<p>webinar, as it is currently in the planning phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dana provided some updates on the Department of Human Services (DHS): There is an email address for DHS that people can send their questions and concerns to. Some food programs that serve children are unfortunately not covered by pandemic funding. Online applications for SNAP and TANF assistance have been launched but there are a few bugs that still need to be worked out. However, families will now be able to apply for SNAP and TANF via their home computer. • <i>Justina</i> reported that ELB had previously concurred with the development of an early childhood behavioral health plan that can help guide short-term and long-term goals for young children and families related to mental and/or behavioral health. ECAS is close to executing a contract with a consultant to develop a plan that would be aligned with the EC State Plan, and PDG B-5 State implementation plans around this issue. An advisory team helped to ensure a targeted approach through an integrated model, and the intention is to bring this plan back to the ELB in December for review/blessing. There will be key informant interviews and focus group sessions to identify needs and priorities. <i>Kerrie</i> reported she has a meeting next week on July 15 with the Funder’s Hui regarding finding funding for the EOEL Public Pre-K Program positions that the Legislature is set to cut. The challenge she sees in working with them is that it will be tough to convince them to fund positions. • <i>Bob Peters</i> reported that Hawaii Association of Independent Schools’ (HAIS) early learning committee has been sponsoring roundtable discussions for directors of preschools and heads of schools around reopening, how people are solving problems, etc. These could be opened up to others if requested. 	
<p>Review Agenda Outcomes—Bob Peters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board approved the Board Chair’s responsibility and term limit, and the Board Vice Chair’s responsibility and term limit, with a 	

	<p>staggered term for the first Vice Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters for the restoration of funding for EOEL staff positions to B&F Director Craig Hirai are still important. • The EOEL Director’s annual review has been postponed to the August meeting. Chair Peters and Wai’ale’ale Sarsona urged everyone to fill out and submit the Director’s evaluation forms by the July 15th deadline. 	
Announcements	None.	
Executive Session	No items from the AG.	
Closing —Kerrie Urosevich	<p>“Have patience; all things are difficult before they become easy.” –Saadi Shirazi, 13th century Persian poet</p>	

Submitted by Ashley Miura and Chris Jackson