

Early Learning Board (ELB)

Thursday, February 11, 2021

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. Betts), Leilani Au, Ben Naki, Kerrie Urosevich, Wai’ale’ale Sarsona (for Jack Wong), Matt Shim (for Dir. Char), Kim Guieb (for President Lassner), Bob Peters, Mari Uehara, Melodie Vega, Edeluisa Baguio-Larena, Cherilyn Shiinoki, Justina Acevedo-Cross, Bob Davis (for Superintendent Kishimoto), Pualani Kaho’ohanohano

Executive Office on Early Learning staff in attendance: Lauren Moriguchi, Coleen Momohara, Alohilani Maiava, Chris Jackson, Jeff Larson, Keli Houston, Jordana Ferreira, Ashley Miura

Public in Attendance: Anne Horiuchi, Deborah Zysman, Kristofer Teves, Vivian Eto, Alfred Castle, Mary Silva, Ken Kakesako, Cathy Betts, Elaine Yamashita, Danny Cup Choy, Carol Wear, Deanne Goya, Lynn Fallin, Terry Lock, Namaka Rawlins, Scott Fuji, Samantha Cummins, Erin Henderson

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
MINUTES:		
Welcome/Introductions— Bob Peters	Bob welcomed the group at 1:30 PM and asked Wai’ale’ale to read the mission statement. Bob introduced Pualani Kaho’ohanohano, the Director of Preschools for ‘Aha Punana Leo schools. She has been appointed by the Governor and is awaiting Senate confirmation as ELB’s Hawaiian Medium Representative.	
Review and Approve 1/21/21 Minutes— Bob Peters	The 1/21/21 meeting minutes were approved as distributed. (Ben/Kerrie: Y--9; N--0)	
Public Comment— Bob	Public comments were provided by Al Castle regarding HB 1360, the	

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

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Peters	stipend bill scheduled to be discussed in agenda item VII. The Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation is set to be the primary funder for the stipend bill, if passed, and is therefore in support of the bill. The Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation supports high quality and equity in early learning programs. Al shared that he has had many conversations with Representative Justin Woodson, Chair of the House Education Committee. Representative Woodson introduced this bill and has been holding meetings with Senate committees to promote it.	
Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Early Literacy Projects —Kim Guieb	Kim Guieb of Hawaii P20 shared that the focus of the CLSD Early Literacy Projects center around ensuring that birth through grade 12 literacy outcomes for disadvantaged students are enhanced through evidence-based literacy practices, and by ensuring that families are engaged in their children’s literacy and language development. The CLSD involves six sub-grantees across three islands (one grantee is statewide), including Family Hui Hawaii and Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF) on Oahu; Maui Family Support Services on Maui; and INPEACE in both Hilo, Hawaii and Oahu.	
DHS Budget Reductions and Early Learning —Cathy Betts and Dana Balansag	<p>The Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Cathy Betts, and her ELB designee, Dana Balansag, spoke about anticipated budget reductions that DHS is facing. They reported that anticipated federal relief funding will cause the Executive Biennium budget to fluctuate. As with all other departments, DHS was asked to participate in a program review with proposed budget reductions of 10%, 15%, and 20%. Because many of DHS’s programs are block grants, they require a state match. DHS is unable to reduce their budget beyond 7.9% without impacting the percentage of matching funds which are necessary to continue to receive federal funds.</p> <p>DHS has suggested that some of the families who are currently involved in work activities while receiving Preschool Open Doors (POD) childcare subsidies, may consider moving to Child Care Connection Hawaii, the federally-funded childcare tuition subsidy</p>	

program also administered by the DHS. This could save the state \$6.9M. With the new Biden-Harris administration, there will hopefully be more federal dollars allocated to states. DHS is requesting emergency appropriations for general funds-funded programs, the ability to maintain the current level of funding for contracts and child welfare services, among others. DHS maintains that they are prioritizing the residents of this state as well as the staff who serve them. Therefore, they are trying to be mindful of supporting both populations. There is no way to know whether the legislature will restore funding from budget reductions.

Key takeaways from the discussion that followed:

- DHS is currently accepting POD applications for the 2021-2022 school year. The application form has been revised to a single form utilized by both POD and CCCH that include questions to help determine which families would be open to transfer to the federally-funded childcare subsidy program (CCCH).
- The families who are being transferred from POD to CCCH will receive needed tuition support. The POD program would be available on a more limited basis to those families who do not meet the CCCH work requirements and will result in fewer participants, which would be a cost savings.
- There will be no change in eligibility requirements for CCCH unless directed by the federal government. During the pandemic, DHS was able to waive income requirements to CCCH, which expanded the program.
- POD applications are still time-limited because of the limited funding available, so once the application deadline is past, there will only be applications for CCCH available.
- Because DHS has had additional funding come in for the CCCH program, they have been able to waive the family's co-payment on a case-by-case basis, so it is not to the detriment of

	<p>families to get transferred from POD to CCCH, and in some cases, it may even be beneficial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding COVID-19 vaccinations, DHS sent a survey to all child care providers in the state and collected information for the DOH. With this information, DOH can provide further outreach. The biggest issue has been the supply of vaccines not being able to meet the demand. • DHS is supporting the intent of HB 1362, the bill centered on Act 46 that is scheduled to be discussed in agenda item VII, with revisions that include extending the timeline for the expansion of POD to serving 3-year-olds to 7/2024 as well as an extension of 2 years for national accreditation requirements. 	
<p>Subcommittee Reports— Subcommittee Conveners</p>	<p>Justina Acevedo-Cross, who leads the Workforce Subcommittee, shared an infographic and explained the purpose of the upcoming workforce study. Justina stated that it is not simply the salary component that is up for discussion, but also benefits and other compensation factors that could help make early care and education a more attractive profession. While the Workforce Subcommittee hopes to look at other states and learn from them, they also hope to look at the work being done in-state to determine Hawaii’s specific situation. Justina asked the board members to respond to questions which will be used to narrow the scope of the study. The link to the infographic is: https://cscce.berkeley.edu/hole-in-the-bucket/ .</p> <p>Key takeaways from this discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something that could make early care and education a more attractive profession in a post-COVID world could also include work environment and benefits, such as flexibility in work schedule or the ability to telework, family leave and other similar benefits. • The childcare workforce has experienced shortages even before COVID-19 - the pandemic exacerbated the disparities and 	

	<p>resulted in program shutdowns and loss of workforce. However, because this problem now has a spotlight on it, the momentum surrounding it could be an opportunity to make headway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families can no longer shoulder the burden of covering the cost of care and would have a difficult time if the cost of workforce compensation were placed entirely on them. Therefore, the solution should not be “tuition increases.” Other countries have been successful in implementing publicly-funded early childhood workforce benefits. In the United States, Wisconsin’s Governor recently allocated 70 million dollars to early care and education, so such funding is possible once the economy recovers. • Part of the upcoming study is to determine a salary range as a goal to reach for the early childhood workforce. One of the reasons for looking at pay parity is the ability to use what already exists for K-3 teachers and teachers with bachelor’s degrees, particularly lead teachers, and to use that compensation rate as a standard to aspire towards. • If the study can bring to light what some “staying” factors are—i.e. why early childhood workers remain in their positions—it could give everyone new ideas around retention and recruitment. <p>Justina welcomed any additional feedback by contacting her or Terry Lock following the meeting.</p> <p>Matt Shim, who is leading the Director’s Search Committee, provided updates. The Committee has received bids from potential search firms and there is a meeting scheduled for next Tuesday (2/16) at which this will be discussed. An advisory group has been established and includes representatives from all of the six early childhood state plan work groups, plus a representative of EOEL and a parent who has a young</p>	<p>The Workforce Equity Survey Group can receive more responses if people have them. These should be sent to Justina.</p>
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	<p>child. Matt apologized for the tardiness in establishing this group and explained that the advisory group has not yet met because it has been difficult to coordinate schedules. Matt assured the Board that the Search Committee will convene the advisory group, and that he is sensitive to the timeframe.</p> <p>Cherilyn Shiinoki, who leads the Capacity and Resources Subcommittee, provided a revised annual reporting plan for the Early Childhood State Plan. She then made two motions, both of which were approved by the Board. The first motion was made to adopt Objective 1 - Annual reporting of achievements and lessons learned. (Cherilyn/Wai’ale’ale: Y—10; N—0). The second motion was made to adopt Objective 2 - Discussion on the unanticipated challenges and emerging opportunities of setting annual milestones from within the five year priorities of collective action. (Cherilyn/Edel: Y—9; N—0). Bob shared that that the discussion pertaining to the focus and scope of the Capacity and Resources Subcommittee will be deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>Wai’ale’ale Sarsona provided updates on behalf of the Governance Subcommittee. At their last meeting, members discussed feedback received from the Board regarding the Strategic Implementation Subcommittee (SIS). There was some concern expressed regarding the capacity of ELB to establish a new Subcommittee and to do the work well, acknowledging that some ELB members are already on more than one subcommittee. The Early Childhood State Plan, as well as Act 046, is a shared responsibility of many partners and stakeholders across the state, and it will take time and effort to coordinate. The suggestion that EOEL should be the lead entity led to a discussion about EOEL’s capacity and role in coordination efforts. The Governance Subcommittee has already spoken to Lauren about the current capacity of EOEL, especially with potential budget cuts. The next step is to have</p>	<p>The Board approved two motions to inform the state annual reporting plan.</p>
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	<p>meetings with Representative Woodson, Chair of the House Education Committee and Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair of the House Finance Committee, to understand what their expectations of ELB and Act 046 implementation are, and to bring that information back to the Board. Conversations with the legislators may result in a redrafting of a scope of work for a Strategic Implementation subcommittee, or open further conversations with legislators about how to achieve the intentions of Act 046.</p>	
<p>Executive Office on Early Learning Updates— Lauren Moriguchi</p>	<p>Lauren reminded the Board and participants that the State Plan, Strategic Implementation Plans, needs assessments, and resources for providers can be found on the new website at www.earlychildhoodhawaii.com. Those who would like a hardcopy of Strategic Implementation Plans were encouraged to send an email request to info@earlychildhoodhawaii.com.</p> <p>Lauren shared that the Pre-Plus Child Development Services RFP has been posted to the Hawaii Awards and Notices System (HANDS) for Oahu and Hawaii Island sites and interested parties are welcomed to apply.</p> <p>It was announced that Ke’opu Reelitz will be returning to EOEL in the Communications Specialist position as an 89-day emergency hire as of February 16, 2021. After leaving in early January for a position in Congressman Kahele’s Office, Keopu found that this wasn’t a good fit. She will be re-applying for the Communications Specialist position which has been posted on HIDOE’s website as of February 1, 2021.</p> <p>Alohi Maiava, EOEL’s Program Specialist, provided updates on the Preschool Development Grant Birth – Five (PDG B-5). Alohi explained that although the grant ended in December 2020, EOEL has continued to engage the early childhood sector in discussions relating to the implementation of the Strategic Implementation Plans (SIPs) and sharing of resources. Alohi shared that the re-engagement of Champions has been successful, and if support is needed in the future,</p>	

	<p>EOEL would like to ask ELB Subcommittees to assist. Bob welcomed this idea and said that the Board is always open to help Alohi and EOEL with PDG B-5 work.</p> <p>Following the updates from EOEL, members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions. Wai’ale’ale shared that she would like to address the section in the EOEL updates which references the “agreement between DOE, KS, and EOEL.” Wai’ale’ale acknowledged that it has taken awhile to develop the MOA. She explained that while it has been challenging to execute a tri-party agreement, it is not for lack of trying and that the parties are committed to having an executed agreement in place.</p>	
<p>2021 Legislative Session– Bob Peters and Jordana Ferreira</p>	<p>Jordana Ferreira, EOEL Government Affairs Specialist, was asked to share information on early childhood-related bills which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 1360 and SB 1271- Establishes an Early Childhood Stipend Bill to be administered by EOEL in partnership with the University of Hawaii. This bill would provide funds upfront to help offset the cost associated with pursuing early childhood education credits and credentials. The bill makes no appropriations of general funds, and private funding through the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation would help establish and implement the program. • HB1362 - Makes amendments to Act 046, which includes extending the dates of certain requirements in light of the pandemic setting progress back or stalling it, includes language that aligns with federal guidance on Kindergarten Entry Assessment and requires the implementation of a statewide KEA. <p>Bob made a motion for the Board to support the intent of HB 1362, with emphasis on the stipend bill, the extension dates for accreditation, the federal guidance on Kindergarten Entry</p>	<p>The Board will submit testimony in support of HB 1360 and SB 1271.</p> <p>The Board has agreed to support the intent of HB 1362 with comments</p>

	<p>Assessments (KEAs), and the additional language related to P-20 and data. The brief discussion that entailed centered around ELB testimony suggesting: keep POD open to 3-year-olds but extend the timeline; clarifying the language on childcare subsidies. HB 1362 changes language of Act 046 from “families may contribute” to “families shall contribute,” which would require all subsidies to be co-paid; and seek clarification on the re-addition of language requiring EOEL to work with Charter Schools The motion passed, with the addition of comments made in the discussion. (Bob/Edel: Y—10; N—0).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 1337 establishes an online early learning program within the Executive Office on Early Learning, with appropriations. <p>Bob made a motion to oppose HB 1337 due to its emphasis on online learning for young children. Lauren explained that EOEL is in agreement with this motion. It aligns with previous discussions ELB has had where the Board decided it would not be in the best interest of our youngest learners, to adopt an online early learning program in Hawaii. There were questions raised regarding the intent of this bill, as it is possible that the intent is simply to make early education materials more readily available via an online platform and an effort in response to COVID. A few members expressed wanting to learn more about the intent. There were also concerns around placing this program within EOEL when potential budget cuts may be made. The motion passed and Bob shared that he would include within the Board’s testimony a request for clarification question as to the bill’s intent. (Bob/Leilani: Y—6; N—3; A—2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 546 – Replaces the Hawaiian Medium representative on ELB with the Director of APL, functioning as a permanent representative. • SB 1384 - Repeals the prohibition of serving only one term, 	<p>related to 3-year-olds in POD and seeking clarification around EOEL’s work with charter schools, as well as the addition that families “shall” contribute funds with subsidized care rather than “may.”</p> <p>ELB will oppose HB 1337, with questions regarding the intent.</p>
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	<p>allowing the Hawaiian medium representative to serve two consecutive terms for no more than eight years</p> <p>Because SB 1384 did not exist at the last Board meeting, there was no position taken on this bill. Additional discussion is needed so no action was taken at this time. Pualani Kaho’ohanohano, the Board’s newest member and the current Hawaiian medium representative, explained that APL supports HB 546 because having a permanent position would allow for a constant Hawaiian medium representative on the Board. It was suggested to make recommended changes if ELB would want the language in both bills to better align. The discussion further delved into a need to better understand the Board composition. ELB will continue to support the intent of HB 546 and any testimony on SB 1384 will indicate ELB has not reached a decision on that bill but has questions regarding the repeal date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 514 - On-site early childhood facilities tax credit bill that establishes an income tax credit for employers that establish on-site early childhood facilities. <p>The Board wanted more information on HB 514, and ensuing discussion around the bill will take place at the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 791 - Teacher tax credit for expenses incurred, which includes pre-K. • EOEL is also keeping track of bills that would raise the minimum wage, including SB 285, SB 676, SB 677, SB 793, HB 21, HB 600 and HB 603. • SB 736 - Grants tuition waivers to UH community college students; • HB 1322/SB 1242 - Establishes a trauma-informed task force that requires participation of the EOEL director; 	<p>HB 514 will have further discussion at the next ELB meeting.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 986 and HB 987 - pertains to newborn screening and vision and hearing screenings; • SB 900 - Establishes a task force looking at maternal disparity and equity task force to reduce maternal morbidity and better health outcomes; • HB 514 - Expands options for SNAP beneficiaries; and • SB 1148/HB 994 - Imposes a sugar-sweetened beverage tax that would help fund obesity and chronic disease prevention for families. <p>A motion was made and passed to support the intent of the bills that EOEL has likewise supported the intent of. (Bob/Edel: Y—10; N—0).</p>	
<p>Public Comment—Bob Peters</p>	<p>No public comments were shared.</p>	
<p>Member Updates—Bob Peters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kerrie Urosevich</i> reported that the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council (HEICC) just had a stakeholder meeting. The two takeaways from the meeting were: (1) there is a reduction in the number of children Early Intervention is serving right now and a reduction in referrals from community-based care, but an uptick in referrals from pediatricians and primary care; and (2) that children’s social and emotional development is showing a decline as a result of the pandemic and programs lacking face-to-face encounters. Matt Shim shared that the Early Intervention Section has a plan to restart in-person services, but that there are many things that need to be in place before that happens. • <i>Leilani Au</i> reported that the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children is still going through re-organizational challenges, and that she will be helping them with program accreditation. • <i>Wai’ale’ale Sarsona</i> reported that KS has had requests for 	

	<p>professional development to meet DHS requirements and they are now designing workshops that should be available in the summer. She was open to ideas for content for these workshops. Wai’ale’ale also reported that KS is hoping to implement online courses that can be taken for early childhood credit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cherilyn Shiinoki</i> reported that Family Hui is continuing to offer online Hui parent groups and can support other agencies in doing this as well. She also reported that they have launched face-to-face “bubbles,” called “Hui Bubbles,” a virtual program that connects 2-3 families with young children together, since many children are missing out on important social interactions. The families are matched by comfort level, geography, and compatibility, among other factors. Cherilyn explained that for the program to improve, more families are needed so that there is more variety and, therefore, more successful matches. Currently, the program is focused on children birth through five. Leilani offered to partner by making referrals to the program. • <i>Melodie Vega</i> reported that Keiki O Ka Aina is going to be taking over the management of the Castle Medical Center Child Development Center effective May 1, 2021. 	
Executive Session	No items from AG.	
Review Agenda Outcomes —Bob Peters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Workforce Equity Survey Group can receive more responses if people have them, and these should be sent to Justina. • The Board approved two recommendations for the Early Childhood State Plan annual reporting. • The Board agreed to support the intent of HB 1362 with comments, and will seek clarification about certain items. • The Board agreed to oppose HB 1337 and to raise questions about the bill’s intent in its testimony. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More discussion is needed for HB 514 (tax credit for onsite child care facility), and this will be put on the March meeting agenda. 	
Announcements	None.	
Closing —Kerrie Urosevich	“One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.	

Submitted by Ashley Miura and Chris Jackson