TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair

 Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: SB 1022 HD 1---RELATING TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Conference Room 308 & Via Video Conference

**EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support**

The Early Learning Board (ELB) appreciates and supports the HD 1 version of SB 1022 as it creates a Board that includes broad statewide membership including each county along with representation from relevant State agencies, defines qualifications to support needed content expertise and skill sets to facilitate building an early childhood statewide system, and recognizes the value of the diversity of early learning and care stakeholders reflected in the Board’s current composition.

The ELB believes that one voting member from each county will provide needed county perspectives, reflecting each county’s unique needs and communities. It is also essential to include a Hawaiian medium provider as a voting member to reflect our State’s two official languages as well as a pediatrician whose focus is child development in recognition of the value of a holistic view of the child in policy making. The composition of the Board recommended seeks to minimize the potential for, or perception of conflict of interest while not overlooking the inherent value of multiple voices from the early childhood community that can be offered to the Board through the creation of an advisory council. The minimal and ideal qualifications of the Board members defined in SB 1022 HD 1 are designed to better address early care and learning governance as well as systems building, a key responsibility of EOEL.

ELB also recommends the effective date take into consideration the implementation of a plan for the current board to transition based on the provisions of this bill.

The ELB has seriously considered this new iteration of the EOEL’s Board, seeking to enhance the effectiveness of the Board in system building and policy development, recognizing the need for county perspectives to do so and, at the same time, respecting the value of a diversity of voices “providing important input” about how best to serve Hawaii’s young children and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 1022 HD 1 and we urge you to move this bill forward.