



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Governor Signs Measures to Advance Early Learning

Honolulu- Governor Neil Abercrombie signed into law today a measure that is cornerstone to what will one day become a state-funded early childhood education program for Hawaii.

Senate Bill (SB) 1093 expands the Preschool Open Doors program as the basis for ensuring our children are ready for school and is the foundation to the development of an early learning system.

“This measure reaffirms the Legislature’s commitment to our youngest of keiki,” said Senator Jill Tokuda, chair of the Senate Committee on Education, and strong supporter of early childhood education. “It provides a concrete investment in Hawaii’s efforts to join the vast majority of states that direct resources towards school readiness and early learning.”

This measure will also provide services to a gap group of children who will no longer be eligible for kindergarten beginning in 2014 due to the change in the minimum kindergarten entry age.

“Putting into law a more robust, expanded version of the Preschool Open Doors Program allows us to most efficiently and effectively utilize the resources provided, with the overall goal of working with providers to achieve school readiness in our late born population that cannot attend kindergarten in 2014-15,” she explained. “Access to educational opportunities is one of the greatest equalizers we can give our children, ensuring every chance that they can have to be successful in both school and life.”

The program will be administered by Department of Human Services. SB 1093 appropriates \$1.160M for administration costs for two years and \$6M in FY15 for subsidies based on a sliding fee scale that the Department of Human Services will develop.

“Today’s investment builds a firm foundation of readiness for our youngest keiki as they prepare to enter school, and will serve our state well as we move towards creating a high quality publicly funded early learning system,” said Tokuda.

The bill went into effect immediately upon receiving the signature of the Governor today.

(Photo Caption: Legislators and children from Seagull Schools join Governor Neil Abercrombie for the signing of Senate Bill 1093. L-R Rep. Takashi Ohno, Sen. Brickwood Galuteria, Sen. Jill Tokuda, Gov. Neil Abercrombie, Rep. Mark Hashem, Sen. Gilbert Keith-Agaran) (Photo Courtesy: Senate Communications.)

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