



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/22/2021

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education
Senate Human Services

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1362, HD1 RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators. Extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020. Requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students. Allows educational data to be shared using an existing system. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 1362, HD1, but requests additional time and resources to fully implement the required kindergarten entry assessment and ensure equity for all of our students including those in our Hawaiian immersion schools.

Currently, the Department has assembled work groups to assess available kindergarten entry assessments utilized by other states that meet the criteria set in Act 46 (2020) as well as other options. The Department is requesting an extension of the implementation of the kindergarten entry assessment with full implementation in July 2023 as has been granted to other parts of the bill. Through our planning process, we have found the need to adjust our timeline in order to meet the requirements of a valid and reliable kindergarten entry assessment. Procurement procedures, data sharing agreements, updates to our data system and other requirements will require additional time to complete.

An adjustment to our implementation timeline will also be needed to modify specific domain items (e.g., Language and Literacy) of the adopted kindergarten entry assessment to meet the needs of our Hawaiian immersion schools. Assessment items will need to be created and validated to ensure these items are culturally responsive to our Hawaiian immersion student population in alignment with the rigor of the adopted kindergarten entry assessment.

The Department respectfully asks for funding to carry out the task of identifying and purchasing a kindergarten entry assessment that provides valid and reliable data as well as addresses the readiness domains of early childhood. For the kindergarten entry assessment to be available for the 2023-2024 school year, funds for the kindergarten entry assessment would be required one to one and one-half years prior to implementation to meet procurement requirements. The Department also respectfully requests funding to cover costs incurred for training of staff, required materials, and supports needed to implement the assessment with fidelity across the state. Estimated first-year costs at this time include approximately \$350,000 for a ready-to-use kindergarten entry assessment; \$800,000 for the translation of applicable sections of the assessment and development of the remaining sections for the Hawaiian language version; and \$400,000 for two days of substitute or stipends for approximately 1000 kindergarten teachers, for a total estimate of \$1,550,000. If a ready-to-use kindergarten entry assessment is not selected, the cost of developing a valid and reliable state kindergarten entry assessment is anticipated to be significantly higher.

Please note that the Department is also currently assessing any necessary changes to forms and processes as well as modifications to its information systems to accommodate the requirements for data on attendance in learning programs for incoming kindergarten students. Depending on the final assessment of data collection needs, there may be incurred costs for modifications of the Department's information systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1362, HD1.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2021**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1362, H.D. 1, RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND ON HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: Monday, March 22, 2021 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229, Via Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Clare E. Connors, Attorney General, or
Melissa J. Kolonie, Deputy Attorney General

Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program; and (2) clarify and make adjustments to Act 46, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020, which relates to access to learning, to reflect the current situation brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subsection (e) of the new section being added to chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), by section 2 of the bill, on page 3, line 16, through page 4, line 2, allows the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) to enter into contracts with collection agencies to collect delinquent repayment of stipends owed to EOEL. Subsection (e) also allows the collection agency to collect a fee from the debtor.

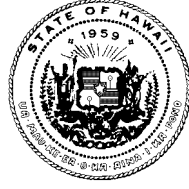
Section 443B-9(a), HRS, provides:

A collection agency shall not collect, or attempt to collect, any collection fee or attorney's fee or commission from any debtor; provided that an attorney's fee or commission may be collected after filing of a suit against any debtor and the fee or commission shall not be in excess of twenty-five per cent of the unpaid principal balance. All attorney's fees or commissions collected by a collection agency shall be remitted to the attorney and no portion of the collection shall be retained by the collection agency.

Section 443B-9(b), HRS, provides exemptions to subsection (a), allowing a collection agency to collect, or attempt to collect, from a debtor, a commission authorized under a contract with the University of Hawaii or with the Department of Taxation. Therefore, we respectfully recommend the Committee amend the bill by amending section 443B-9(b), HRS, to also allow a collection agency that is contracted by EOEL to collect a commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 21, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1362 HD1 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING.**

Hearing: Monday, March 22, 2021, 3:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure, provides comments, and defers to the Department of Education (DOE), Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC), and the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) on the impact this proposal may have on them. DHS also respectfully requests that any appropriation does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget.

The House Committee on Education amended the measure by:

1. Removing language requiring EOEL to partner with HSPCSC to provide the early childhood education program;
2. Restoring the language requiring DHS to establish or augment its existing database to collect and analyze information it receives from DOE and HSPCSC regarding standardized assessments for students entering kindergarten and prior early learning programs attendance disclosure;
3. Repealing the requirement for DHS and EOEL to collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State;

4. Requiring DHS and EOEL to collect annual data on the total number of available seats, total number of vacancies, and available waitlist information, to be aggregated by age, program type, and zip code, and allow DHS and EOEL to work with outside providers and entities to aggregate the collected data;
5. Changing the effective date to be July 1, 2050; and
6. Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The House Committee on Finance passed the measure unamended.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators. Extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020. Requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students. Allows educational data to be shared using an existing system. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

DHS supports the need to increase the affordability, availability, and capacity of child care facilities for Hawaii's families and children. DHS is the regulatory agency of the State's child care system codified in Chapter 346, Part VIII, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

DHS also administers the federal Child Care and Development Fund block grants, the Child Care Connection Hawaii (CCCH) child care subsidy program, and the state funded school readiness program called the Preschool Open Doors (POD) child care subsidy program. Additionally, DHS is the primary agency to distribute and provide oversight of the utilization of additional federal child care stimulus funds.

The federally funded CCCH program is intended to provide child care subsidy for families who are employed, pursuing post-secondary education, or in a job training program, and need child care, so that they are able to pursue and maintain self-sufficiency.

The state funded POD program is intended to provide a school readiness experience by providing the opportunity for children to attend a group child care setting for up to one year prior to their entry into kindergarten. Because the POD program's intent is on the child's school readiness opportunity, there is no qualifying activity required of the family.

DHS provides comments, supports the following amendments, and identifies areas of concern.

- Section 2, at pages 1-4, starting at line 10, to establish the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to be administered by EOEL, as such a stipend program could provide increased access to continuing post-secondary education and be a useful incentive to expanding the early care and education workforce;
- Section 6, at pages 15-16, starting at line p. 15, line 18, given there is continuing pandemic impacts that practically eliminate additional general fund appropriations, DHS supports the proposal to remove the language to expand the POD program to serve three-year-olds and the clarification of program priorities. As the HD1 is drafted, per Section 10 (2) at page 39, lines 5-8, these provisions are temporary and will be repealed on July 1, 2024, reverting back to provisions of Act 46, SLH 2020.
- Section 7, at page 17, starting at line 5, the measure extends the deadline by two years by which national accreditation shall commence and be obtained for each service provider of the POD program. DHS supports a long term goal of increasing the number of group child care facilities that are nationally accredited when there is consistent funding to support attaining and maintaining accreditation. Without consistent funding, DHS has significant concerns whether it is feasible that all licensed group child care centers and group child care homes (i.e., preschools) that provide care for children who participate in the POD program would be able to obtain accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), the National Association for Family Child Care, or an accrediting organization approved by DHS.

DHS currently supports family choice by offering higher child care subsidy payment rates to families that choose preschools that are accredited by NAEYC or NECPA for both the POD program and the CCCH program. Requiring all preschools providing care for POD children to become nationally accredited may disincentivize preschools from accepting POD children, thereby accepting only CCCH children, or have other unintended consequences.

DHS notes that the child care sector has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and many have reduced the number of children in care, or families have not returned to utilizing group care settings, so these additional factors may require reconsideration by the Legislature regarding these provider accreditation requirements and timelines;

- Section 8.1, at pages 17-19 and 21, clarifies the conditions and uses of the standardized assessment for students entering kindergarten (i.e. kindergarten entry assessment); DHS defers to DOE and HSPCSC as to the impact of the proposed amendments;
- Section 8.3, at pages 33-34, starting at page 33, line 15, clarifies that funds appropriated by Section 11 of Act 46, SLH 2020, shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated, provided that all moneys from the appropriation that are unencumbered as of June 30, 2023 shall lapse as of that date; and
- Section 8.5, at page 38, starting at line 6, delays the effective date of the provisions under paragraph (2) until July 1, 2023 to allow DHS, DOE, HSPCSC, and EOEL additional time to implement the data components of Act 46, SLH 2020. State agencies have all been responding to the immediate needs of the COVID-19 pandemic, quickly pivoting services and operations to ensure the health and safety of our employees, families, children, and our local communities. It is clear that the pandemic response efforts will continue through calendar year 2021 and possibly into 2022.

DHS supports the intent of Act 46, SLH 2020, and continues to work on implementing its provisions; DHS does note that the positions provided to DHS were not funded, and therefore have not been filled to increase DHS capacity to support the implementation work for Act 46, SLH 2020; therefore, the additional time to implement is greatly appreciated.

DHS requests the following amendments:

- Under Section 8.5, at page 38, starting at line 14, amending it to read:
"(3) Section 8 shall take effect on July 1, 2021;
(4) Section 13 shall take effect on July 1, 2023; and
[+3+] (5) Section 12 shall take effect on July 1, 2024."

The requested amendment to the effective date for Section 8 of Act 46, SLH 2020, will allow DHS to begin the procurement and award for the contract needed for DHS to begin working on the analysis and assessment of IT data system modifications to implement the provisions under Act 46, SLH 2020. Leaving the effective date of Section 8 of Act 46, SLH 2020, as July 1, 2023 as proposed in this HD1 version will delay any work on the IT data system modifications. Without the change in effective date, DHS will have to go through a competitive procurement process to award the contract or require DHS to determine if there is a different exemption to complete the procurement and award of the contract.

- Under Section 8.3, at page 35, starting at line 10, reinserting the original subsection (b) and deleting the new amendments on pages 35, lines 15-20, and page 36, lines 1-5, to read:

(b) The department of human services and the executive office on learning shall collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State and consider using public facilities including schools, libraries, and the university of Hawaii system as locations for child care and early learning programs.

(c) The department ...

This reversion to the original subsection (b) would allow for all Act 46, SLH 2020, public partners, including DHS, EOEL, DOE, HSPCSC, Hawaii State Public Library System, and the University of Hawaii system to continue to assess the provisions of Act 46, SLH 2020, and data elements needed to be captured to meet the benchmarks under Section 12 of Act 46, SLH 2020, (on pages 34-35) to be reported

to the Legislature starting August 31, 2024 as proposed by this HD1. The original subsection (b) language is less prescriptive and allows for data to be reported as it becomes available, and also allows for more flexibility than the proposed data provisions of the HD1 at subsection (b) which possibly creates unfunded mandates that heavily relies on the private child care providers to track and report, without any incentives or supports for them to do so.

DHS respectfully requests additional time to allow the public partners until the 2022 legislative session before revising this original subsection (b), since the report to the Legislature is proposed to start in August 2024. DHS, DOE, HSPCSC, and EOEL have begun discussions around the data needs of Act 46, SLH 2020, and continue to determine the data elements that may already be captured and what may be challenging to capture without additional appropriations. DHS acknowledges that another year would be appreciated as the agencies continue to address the immediate needs that have resulted from the pandemic public health emergency.

DHS notes that the HD1 amendments (b) (3) specify that waitlist information shall be collected and reported. However, waitlist information may likely be duplicative as families could be on multiple waitlists for different facilities and some families may continue to have their children on a waitlist at other preferred choices even if their children are attending another preschool program. If the intent is to determine how many children were not served in a preschool program, that could instead be derived from the prior early learning attendance disclosures when registering for kindergarten at a public elementary school.

If the Legislature must specify in this measure in detail the annual data to be collected and reported, DHS requests clarifying revisions under Section 8.3, at pages 35-36, starting at line 10, to read:

(b) The department of human services and the executive office on learning ~~[shall]~~ may collect annual data including but not limited to:

(1) The total number of available seats by age, program type, and zip code; and

(2) The total number of vacancies by age, program type, and zip code; ~~[and].~~

~~[(3) The available waitlist information by age, program type, and zip code.]~~

(c) The department ...

- Under Section 8.3 (amending Section 12 of Act 46, SLH 2020), at page 36, starting at line 13, amending the latter part of subsection (c) to read:

(c) ... No later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of ~~[2023, 2024,]~~ 2025, 2026, and 2027, the department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall submit to the legislature a joint report on the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs.

(d) The department ...

This amendment is needed to align with the HD1 amendment of Section 8.5 amending Section 12 of Act 46, SLH 2020, to be effective July 1, 2024. The first legislative report would be provided for the 2025 legislative session if Section 12 of Act 46 (2020) is effective July 1, 2024 as proposed.

DHS provides the following comments:

- Section 8.3, at page 34, starting at line 1, regarding the benchmarks as established under Act 46, SLH 2020, DHS notes that the child care sector has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as many child care facilities have reduced the number of children in care due to increased distancing and smaller groups, or families have not

returned to utilizing group care settings. The uncertainty around the vaccine roll out to the general population and to children, and how often these COVID-19 vaccines will need to be administered, will likely impact future capacity of the child care sector. All of these new factors may require reconsideration by the Legislature of the benchmarks and timelines.

- Section 8.4, at page 37, starting at line 1, the proposed language to require licensure by DHS of the pre-kindergarten program operated by the University of Hawaii at Hilo Ka Haka Ula O Keelikolani or in partnership with the Imiloa Astronomy Center aligns with existing statutes as DHS does regulate other child care facilities operated by the University of Hawaii or its community colleges. DHS notes that section 346-152(b), HRS, exempts staff members of programs taught solely in Hawaiian that promote fluency in the Hawaiian language from any DHS rules requiring academic training or certification, while the *other* health and safety requirements of the department continue to apply.

Lastly, DHS requests the support of the Legislature to implement this and other measures. DHS needs to be properly resourced to remain responsive to residents' and providers' needs and remain compliant with multiple existing program requirements. Additional proposed cuts to positions and existing program funds, will have long term negative consequences on the agency's ability to support our workforce, sustain current caseloads, distribute and provide oversight over additional federal stimulus funds, and maintain the level of services delivered by community providers. Continuing to reduce the capacity of DHS to deliver needed services will impact the residents and the communities we serve and will hamper our ability to work on innovative programming.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 21, 2021

TO: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 1362 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING
Hearing Date: Monday March 22, 2021
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: Videoconference

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support the Intent

Good afternoon. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). Thank you for continuing to prioritize early learning despite the challenges the State has had to face with COVID-19.

We greatly appreciate the Legislature's strong support of early learning. Hawaii was one of the last states to start investing in public prekindergarten in 2014. Since that initial investment, we are grateful to the Legislature for its continued support of EOEL in our efforts to develop and coordinate the early care and education system in Hawaii.

EOEL supports the intent of H.B. 1362 H.D. 1 to clarify and amend Act 046, which would expand access to early learning for our keiki and provide comments.

One of our nation's foremost experts on early learning states, "Expansion of public pre-k is only a worthwhile public investment if children receive a high-quality education" (W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Senior Co-Director, National Institute for Early Education Research). The Legislature created EOEL to help build a high-quality early childhood system for Hawaii, from prenatal care until kindergarten entry. We carry out this purpose every day, including through working across sectors, agencies, and levels of government, and will continue to do so. We believe every child in Hawaii deserves high-quality early care and education.

One of the things we've learned from our Program as well as our collaborative work across private and public partners in the field is that most, if not all, of us cannot find enough qualified staff to expand quickly. We must be sure this workforce is in place if we want new classrooms to have qualified teachers. As such, we support the amendment that would include an early childhood stipend program. This program, to be administered by EOEL in partnership with the University of Hawaii, leverages private source funding that would provide upfront financial support, covering early childhood tuition and fees, to individuals in the early care and education system. This program targets individuals already working in the sector and would provide much-needed support for educators and providers who are an under-valued and under-supported workforce.

We thank the Legislature for the amendment of dates regarding the commencement of the accreditation process for providers receiving Preschool Open Doors funding, and the implementation of data-collection and data-sharing requirements across departments. As the State continues to address the impacts of COVID-19, the extended timelines would allow EOEL, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Hawaii Public Charter School Commission (HPCSC) to focus on addressing more immediate and short-term priorities to preserve and maintain current programs and services across the early care and education sector.

EOEL supports the requirement for implementation of a uniform, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that aligns with federal guidance within the Department of Education and Charter Schools. When this information is collected through a standardized system and format that allows for comparison across and within districts, it can be used more broadly to improve outcomes for young children. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), **developmentally appropriate assessments can provide the information needed to strengthen high-quality early childhood programs and early elementary programming.**

EOEL respectfully requests the following amendments:

Reinserting subsection (b) under Section 12, page 35, starting at line 10 to read:

“(b) the department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State and consider using public facilities, including schools, libraries, and the university of Hawaii system as locations for child care and early learning programs.”

This original subsection (b) allows for Act 046, SLH 2020, public partners to assess provisions of the Act and data elements needed to meet the benchmarks set forth in the Act. Furthermore, the proposed data provisions in subsection (b) of H.D. 1 may potentially create unfunded mandates and relies heavily on private child care providers to track and report data without any incentives. Allowing public partners until the 2022 legislative session to revise subsection (b) would be greatly appreciated as it would help public partners make more informed decisions on what data elements can and should be captured and to determine what barriers may exist.

If the legislature must specify the annual data to be collected and reported, EOEL respectfully requests including the following language to subsection (b) under Section 12, page 35:

“(b) the department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State and consider using public facilities, including schools, libraries, and the university of Hawaii system as

locations for child care and early learning programs. The department of human services and executive office on early learning shall may collect annual data, including but not limited to:

- (1) The total number of available seats by age, program type, and zip code; and
- (2) The total number of vacancies by age, program type, and zip code; ~~and.~~
- (3) ~~The available waitlist information by age, program type, and zip code.~~

As families often apply for multiple programs when attempting to secure care for their children, waitlist information would likely provide duplicative information. If the intent of tracking this data is to determine how many children were not served in a preschool program, that data may be best derived from prior early learning attendance disclosures when registering for kindergarten at a public or charter school.

Section 16 subsection 4, line 16 states “section 12 shall take effect of July 1, 2024.” As such, we also respectfully request Section 12, subsection 2 (c), be amended as follows:

~~“The department of human services shall work jointly with the executive office on early learning to monitor the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs. No later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027, the department of humans services and the executive office on early learning shall submit to the legislature a joint report on the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs.”~~

And Section 16 be amended as follows:

“section 12 shall take effect on July 1, 2024. No later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session, the department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall submit to the legislature a joint report on the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs.”

As Act 046 requires coordination across different departments and partnership with community stakeholders across sectors for successful implementation, appropriations for a 1.00 FTE position under either the EOEL or ELB would support efforts to coordinate and facilitate implementation of Act 046.

We defer to the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission on the other parts of this bill.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to expand access to high-quality early learning programs and services in the state and make its vision a reality. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee On Education

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

Subject: **Measure:** HB 1362, HD 1, Relating to Early Learning
Hearing Date: Monday, March 22, 2021
Time: 3:00 PM
Location: Via Video Conference, Conference Room 229

Description: Establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators. Extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020. Requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students. Allows educational data to be shared using an existing system. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD 1)

Early Learning Board Position: Support the Intent

I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board (ELB). Thank you for this opportunity to offer written testimony supporting the intent of HB 1362, HD 1 on behalf of the Early Learning Board.

Through Act 202, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017, ELB transitioned from an advisory to a governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) and is charged with formulating statewide policy relating to early learning. We are composed of members from across the early childhood field, in both the public and private sectors.

ELB's mission is to support children's academic and lifelong well-being by directing and supporting the EOEL for an effective, coordinated, high-quality early learning system from prenatal to kindergarten entry. We support efforts that promote the development of this system for our keiki and families.

The ELB appreciates the Legislature's efforts to amend Act 046, SLH 2020 given current circumstances, and for maintaining its priority to increase access and opportunity to quality early learning by recognizing that the childcare needs of Hawaii's families have not diminished but only become more challenging. COVID-19 has had an inordinate impact upon childcare providers in our State. While some have not been able to open at all, those who have reopened or continued to offer childcare find themselves dealing with additional expenses and needing to reduce the number of seats available in order to ensure the health and safety of their *keiki*. The result has been fewer options for families and the need for some to leave the workforce to care for their children.

Among the 2021 priorities for the Early Learning Board is supporting efforts to sustain available childcare placements pre-pandemic while, at the same time, supporting the Legislature's vision to continue initiatives to lay the foundation for expansion of access to quality early care opportunities for more children and their families as outlined in Act 046.

Recognizing the critical importance of building the needed infrastructure to expand access, particularly workforce capacity, the ELB supports the stipend program to be administered by EOEL in partnership with the University of Hawaii included in HB 1362, HD 1. This provision of the bill leverages private funding for upfront financial assistance. The Board also supports amendments to revise the implementation and benchmark timelines along with those related to accreditation requirements for providers receiving Preschool Open Doors funding.

ELB supports the Kindergarten Entry Assessment provisions, calling for alignment with federal guidelines with the Department of Education and Charter Schools, along with the addition of language that allows the P-20 longitudinal data system to include prior early learning program information from various departments.

The Board supported keeping POD open to 3-year olds but extending the timeline for implementation and has sought clarification about the language change on childcare subsidies from Act 046 “families may contribute” to “families shall contribute” in HB 1362, HD 1. In the current version of the Bill, questions were raised about the repeal of “the requirement for DHS and EOEL to collaborate to identify the need for childcare and early learning in geographic areas of the State.” (HD 1, #3), supporting instead the restoration of the original language.

As a result of discussions about a potential role the ELB might assume to support Act 046 expansion efforts, the Board respectfully recommends the amendment below as a vehicle to facilitate coordination of this initiative:

The Early Learning Board, in collaboration with EOEL, DHS, DOE, HSPCS and other affected partners to be determined by the Board, be charged with recommending a coordination plan, including staffing and funding needs for staffing, to facilitate implementation of Act 046. To launch this effort, an appropriation for at least one (1) FTE be established for State Fiscal Year 2022 (to begin 7/1/2021) and State Fiscal Year 2023 within the authority of either the Executive Office on Early Learning or the Early Learning Board to support the development of the coordination plan, noting that a position being housed in EOEL would permit greater flexibility in moving the work forward.

The Early Learning Board remains committed to working with the Legislators, along with the public and private sectors, to increase access to early learning opportunities, while building the infrastructure needed to make sure the State’s investment in early learning yields the positive impact for our keiki, their families and our community that we know it promises.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 1362, HD 1.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



JOHN S.S. KIM
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
('AHA KULA HO'ĀMANA)

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FOR: HB 1362 HD 1 Relating to Access to Learning
DATE: March 22, 2021
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education and Committee on Human Services
ROOM: Conference Room 229
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Kim, Chair, San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Committees:

The State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony providing **COMMENTS on HB 1362 HD1** which establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators, extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020; requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students, allows educational data to be shared using an existing system, and appropriates funds.

In a one-year pilot project, 174 early learning educators were served. This project provided over \$330,000 in tuition subsidies to support teachers and educational assistants in completing college-level early childhood education coursework or coursework that will lead to a degree in early childhood education. The success of this program clearly illustrates the demand and need for these kinds of educational supports for our early education workforce. We **strongly support** the provision in this bill that establishes an early childhood education stipend program.

Lastly, in Section 3, page 21, lines 18-19, the Commission has concerns on the proposal to give the Commission the authority to waive the requirement for the kindergarten entry assessment on a case by case basis. Instead, the Commission recommends that Native Hawaiian language medium early learning programs be allowed to use their own language and culture based assessments and be required to provide the data in developmental areas that the kindergarten

readiness assessments are seeking to capture. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committees on Education and Human Services

DATE: Monday, March 22, 2021
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Via Videoconference
State Capitol Room 229

TESTIMONY

By Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, EdD
Kamehameha Schools

RE: **HB 1362 HD1, Relating to Access to Learning**

E nā Luna Ho‘omalū Kidani a me San Buenaventura, nā Hope Luna Ho‘omalū Kim a me Ihara, a me nā Lālā o kēia mau Kōmike o ka ‘Aha Kenekoa, aloha kākou! My name is Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, the Vice President of Hi‘ialo at Kamehameha Schools.

We offer our **support with comments** on HB 1362 HD1, which advances Act 46 (2020) in reaching the promise of access to learning for all unserved three to four-year-old children by the year 2032.

At Kamehameha Schools, we believe in early learning education for all Native Hawaiian keiki. Every year, we educate 1,600 keiki at our 29 preschools (with 79% of our keiki on financial aid); provide scholarships to another 2,400 keiki at other private preschools; and support another 4,800 keiki through partnerships with public and private preschools, family-child interaction learning centers and other early learning programs. In sum, every year, we spend \$50 million in our communities to assist over 8,800 keiki start their journey.

Yet we know, that despite our efforts and the efforts of many others, there are still many keiki who do not get a fair start in their early years. During this pandemic alone, Hawai‘i has lost about 3,300 seats, at least 6 preschools and many more family childcare providers. Our keiki cannot lose any more. The enactment of Act 46 (2020) was a pivotal step and we must remain steadfast in our commitment to this future in Hawai‘i. *Such a massive undertaking needs a full-time coordinator. We request that this committee add a coordinator position to effectuate the collective vision.*

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an educational organization striving to restore our people through education and advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou. There is no success without preparation. **Please advance this measure and consider our request.**



Committee on Education
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair

March 22, 2021

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kim and Ihara, and Members of the Committee,

This testimony is submitted in **support of HB 1362 HD1**, which establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators, extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020, requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students, and allows educational data to be shared using an existing system.

HE'E Coalition continues to support the bold vision of building the infrastructure and resources of our system to achieve the goal of providing all three, four, and late-born five-year-old children in the state access to learning by the year 2032.

We are pleased that the bill adds more detailed language regarding the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and sets a definitive effective date of July 1, 2022. We feel that a state-wide KEA is critical to knowing where each student is and to determine systematic and strategic approaches for teaching and learning. In order to make sure we are on track for implementation by July 1, 2022, we suggest that as soon as possible, the Board of Education work with the Department of Education to create a plan with a timeline and milestones for choosing and implementing the assessment. We also suggest that the legislature receive regular updates through July 1, 2022 via public reports or informational briefings so that stakeholders are fully informed.

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," promotes a child-centered and strength-based public education system in which families, communities and schools are valued and empowered to help every student succeed. HE'E works to bring diverse stakeholders together to harness collective energy, share resources, and identify opportunities for progressive action in education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Our support represents a 75% consensus or more of our voting membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director



Academy 21	Junior Achievement of Hawaii
After-School All-Stars Hawai'i	Kamehameha Schools
Alliance for Place Based Learning	Kanu Hawai'i
*Castle Complex Community Council	*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS	Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Coalition for Children with Special Needs	Kupu A'e
Education Institute of Hawai'i	*Leaders for the Next Generation
*Faith Action for Community Equity	Learning First
Fresh Leadership LLC	McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Girl Scouts Hawaii	Native Hawaiian Education Council
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation	Our Public School
*HawaiiKidsCAN	*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance	*Parents and Children Together
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice	*Parents for Public Schools
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists	*Teach for America
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars	The Learning Coalition
*Hawai'i Charter School Network	US PACOM
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network	University of Hawai'i College of Education
Hawa'i Education Association	<i>Voting Members (*) Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.</i>
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition	
* Hawai'i State PTSA	
Hawai'i State Student Council	
Hawai'i State Teachers Association	
Hawai'i P-20	
Hawai'i 3Rs	
Head Start Collaboration Office	
It's All About Kids	
*INPEACE	
Joint Venture Education Forum	



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senator Kidani, Chair
Senator Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **HB 1362 HD1- Relating to Access to Learning**
3PM, March 23, 2021

Chair Kidani, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Kim, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members,

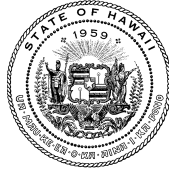
On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Bill 1362 HD1**, a bill to establish an early learning educator stipend and making amendments to Act 46.

Last session Hawai'i made the commitment to children and families that by 2032, all 3- and 4-year old underserved students would have access to a preschool program. Even with the ongoing pandemic, we must take steps to meet that ambitious goal. We appreciate the changes to Act 46 in this bill to allow for better implementation coordination. We also ask the committee to consider the following:

- If the committees find it necessary to create a coordinator position, we ask that the position be assigned to the Executive Office on Early Learning and that the salary of the coordinator not impact EOEL's budget requests
- Because of the quick passage of Act 46 last session, some key provisions were left unfunded. We ask that the 12 FTE for the Preschool Open Doors Program be funded so the Department of Human Services has the resources to meet the legislation's intentions.
- We support giving departments additional time to implement programmatic pieces as long as the goal date of 2032 remains unchanged.
- We encourage the legislature to consider adopting a new revenue stream to fund and sustain the Preschool Open Doors program, which is currently facing a funding reduction of over \$6M.

We appreciate the legislature's continue commitment to our youngest learners. We know the benefits of expanding learning opportunities to a child are life-long and beneficial to our entire community. For these reasons, we ask that the committee report favorably on HB 1362 and pass the bill out of the committees.

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Senate Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Human Services

Monday, March 22, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229

House Bill 1362, House Draft 1, Relating to Access to Learning

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Kim and Ihara, and Members of the Committees:

The Board of Education ("Board") supports the intent of HB1362 HD1, which would establish the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program, require the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students, and allow early learning educational data to be shared, among other things.

The Board supports proposed legislation that expands access to quality early learning opportunities for more children. The Board understands the profound effects early education has on K-12 student outcomes. The uniform assessment of kindergarten students is a critical piece for ensuring the quality of our early learning system, and the Board is more than willing to take responsibility for adopting the kindergarten entry assessment.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Payne".

Very truly yours,

Catherine Payne
Chairperson, Board of Education
Chairperson, 2021 Legislative Ad Hoc Committee

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
March 22, 2021

The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Kidani, Senator San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: HB1362 HD1 Relating to Access to Learning

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1362 HD1** specifically the section which establishes the Hawaii early childhood educator stipend program to address early childhood education educators' shortage.

We appreciate that the legislature has continued to prioritize early learning despite the challenges the state has had to face with COVID-19. The early learning community has been working to increase access for decades but has not had the resources needed to achieve this goal. We believe the Legislature's goal is achievable through this plan if there are funding and resources to support as well as sustain it.

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities understands the dire economic situation the state is facing. However, we know the trajectory will get worse if cuts to investments in our youngest children and their families are made. Investing in the earliest years can help improve outcomes for kids, ultimately reducing social costs to the state in later years. These goals are achievable if we support our existing providers who are struggling in the face of COVID-19. It is achievable if we address our workforce challenges: if not for their passion, there would not be many who'd want to work and stay in this field with pay at levels lower than those of parking lot attendants and manicurists.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **supporting HB1362 HD1**.

Sincerely,
Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov
March 22, 2021

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Dale Matsuura, *Vice Chair*
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Disher
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Bernadette Lane
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Kaili Murbach
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. David Royer
Mr. James Street
Mr. Francis Tael
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams
Ms. Susan Wood

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Committee on Education
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1362 HD 1 - RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports** HB 1362, HD 1 which creates an early childhood educator stipend program to address the shortage of qualified early childhood educators in Hawaii and requires a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students.

Numerous research studies have shown the long term benefits of quality early childhood education programs, including higher high school graduation rates, lower grade retention and drop out rates, and greater social and emotional maturity. There is also ample evidence that access to quality preschool programming can lessen referrals for special education services by providing prevention and early intervention strategies to meet students' diverse needs.

A uniform assessment for all public and charter school kindergartners is another safety net for our youngest learners. It will help to ensure consistency across the state in identifying students who need additional supports to be successful.

Mahalo for the opportunity to lend our support to this valuable legislation.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEES

PERSONS TESTIFYING: Kaulanakilohana (members of the consortium of early childhood education higher education faculty in Hawai'i)

DATE: Monday, March 22, 2021

TIME: 3:00 PM

LOCATION: State Capitol Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

TITLE OF BILL: HB1362 HD1 RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Honorable Chairs Kidani & Buenaventura; Vice Chairs, Mercado-Kim & Ihara; and Committee Members, Acasio, Dela Cruz, Fevella, Kanuha, Misalucha,

We, members of Kaulanakilohana, the early childhood education higher education faculty, **offer comment on HB1362 HD1** and support the tuition stipend section of this bill.

HB1362 HD1 includes a tuition stipend component that is essential to expanding early learning programs: DHS licensed child care settings, public PreKs, home visiting programs, and Native Hawaiian serving programs such as the Family Child Interactive Learning Programs and Hawaiian language medium early childhood education programs. We need to invest in the early childhood workforce in order to grow and sustain all these programs.

Along with facilities, the greatest barrier to expanding new programs is growing and sustaining a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. The tuition stipend program included in **HB1362 HD1** (as well as in HB 1360 and SB 1271) has the potential to begin to put in place an infrastructure to grow the practitioners needed to expand the programs and services available for young children and their families.

There is broad consensus that **early childhood education is a specialized field of education** which requires “educators who are prepared to create engaging, inclusive, and developmentally grounded learning environments and who can effectively reach and teach diverse learners” (Gardner, Melnick, Meloy & Barajas, 2020, p. 1). Nationwide, minimum standards to ensure quality in state funded PreK require that teachers possess a baccalaureate degree with specialized coursework in early childhood education and assistant teachers or educational aides, complete entry level preparation consistent with industry recognized certificates (National Institute of Early Education Research, 2018).

Likewise, **federal funding streams for programs serving young children** (Child Care Development Block Grants, Headstart, IDEA Part B and C funding) **increasingly require states to show progress in establishing comprehensive and coherent workforce development systems that bridge across sectors and agencies.** It is no longer adequate to train practitioners to meet minimum care

and safety standards. Criteria for continued federal funding asks states to move towards more robust systems that develop a well-prepared workforce consistent with the recommendations of *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unified Foundation* (Institutes of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015).

Problems sustaining a well-prepared workforce negatively impact children from our most vulnerable families, those living in poverty or Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) families who have difficulty affording early childhood education settings and must depend on assistance in order to obtain services (Aloha United Way, 2018). The Institutes of Medicine and National Research Council (2015) warn that the failure to support early educators with the preparation they need and seek hurts society by perpetuating systems where “adults who are under informed, underprepared, or subject to chronic stress themselves may contribute to children’s experiences of adversity and stress and undermine their development and learning” (p. 493).

Tuition stipends and other forms of support are essential for early childhood educators who are among the lowest paid workers. A majority of the people currently in the workforce are women, a high percentage are mothers from ethnic groups who are underrepresented in higher education, working long hours in some of the lowest paying jobs in the state. Despite being employed in an early childhood job, they often still depend on some form of government aid (Executive Office of Early Learning, 2019; TEACH, 2010). In Hawai’i, our workforce, particularly outside of the public PreKs, is composed of a large percentage of Native Hawaiian, Filipino and Pacific Islander women. It is typical for workers in this sector to discover a love for this work after experiencing an early childhood setting through their children. Many want to be employed in their neighborhoods and desire to pursue college, increase their earnings, and sustain a living as an early childhood educator. However, they often come from a student population that differs from the typical K-12 pre-service student and find it difficult to meet criteria such as full-time enrollment, that is required by typical financial assistance or loan forgiveness programs available to other educators. Tuition assistance programs for the early childhood workforce must be designed with the flexibility and support that reflects the diversity of our student-practitioners (TEACH, 2018).

Many states offer targeted financial assistance programs in order to stimulate the expansion of their early learning workforce in order to encourage degree attainment despite the dismally low wages in the field (National Academies of Sciences, 2019).

The tuition stipend provisions in **HB1362 HD1** provide the opportunity to put in place a sustained infrastructure based on the successes of a tuition support program already piloted and refined between 2018-2019.

The tuition stipend program proposed in HB1362 HD1 is structured to reflect lessons learned from an 18 month, \$330,000 workforce development tuition stipend program funded through a US Preschool Development Legacy Grant (2018-2019). The federally funded pilot was the first coordinated, systemic effort to disseminate public funds to practitioners statewide who were enrolled as early childhood education students across the UH system and Chaminade University. A key to the program's success was addressing the diverse entry points and educational aspirations of practitioners in the field and intentionally funding certificates and degrees at all levels, from entry level positions, to lead teachers in classrooms, to the instructional positions essential to growing an infrastructure necessary to expand public PreK, child care, and other early learning programs in the state. The stipend program proposed in **HB1362 HD1** builds on the previous collaborations between the Hawaii Charter School Commission, the Executive Office of Early Learning, the UH System and Chaminade University early childhood teacher preparation programs. Through that grant we demonstrated the ability to:

- Address the absence of dedicated teacher loan forgiveness or other forms of financial assistance programs available to early childhood educators.
- Provide a vehicle to administrate tuition support across all ECE preparation programs and at all levels (entry level aides or educational assistants, lead teachers, leaders)
- Include early childhood students enrolled in preparation programs for both state recognized languages (e.g. English and Hawaiian language medium and Hawaiian culture based early childhood education preparation programs).
- Provide specialized advising and wrap around supports to encourage recruitment, retention and persistence in college courses (90% course completion rate).
- Gather data to evaluate the effectiveness of services in a comprehensive manner across all campuses.

The Executive Office of Early Learning (EOEL) provides leadership in early learning system building efforts across the various agencies and stakeholders. As the administrator of the program, this would enable the Office to coordinate with higher education institutions to ensure a cohesive system to support the development of the workforce.

Furthermore, Hawai'i has a competitive proposal for a national grant, ECE³, to improve the alignment and stacking of degrees and certificates and to increase access for neighbor island and underserved students in the workforce. HB1360 HD1 is an opportunity for the Legislature and Governor to take action consistent with their letters of support for the grant. A cohesive system of advising and support, including financial support for students, is a critical next step that will enable us to build a workforce with the knowledge and competencies necessary to support young children and their families. The bill leverages private funds and is a way to support workforce development in early childhood education without requiring appropriations during a time of fiscal restraint.

The COVID-19 pandemic has truly brought attention to the critical human infrastructure that programs for young children provide. A safe, stimulating learning environment for each family's young children will be essential to rebuilding our economy. Key to this is knowledgeable and skilled adults who can support the learning of young children in a manner consistent with the research on early learning.

We would defer to the appropriate agencies (Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission) and offices with regard to other components of this bill.

Kaulanakilohana **supports** the tuition stipend provisions in **HB1362 HD1**. A stipend program is a critical step towards realizing the Legislature and Governor's aspirations to sustain and build an early learning system for the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Kaulanakilohana (Early childhood education higher education faculty in Hawai'i)

Chaminade University - Elizabeth Park, PhD and Yan Yan Imamura, MEd
Hawai'i Community College - Janet Smith, MA; and Brenda Watanabe, MEd
Honolulu Community College - Ann Abeshima, EdD; Elizabeth Hartline, MA; Eva Moravcik; Caroline Soga, PhD; Laurie Ann Takeno, EdM; and Cyndi Uyehara, MEd

Kaua'i Community College - Antonia Fujimoto, MA

University of Hawai'i at Hilo Ka Haka 'Uka O Ke'elikōlani - Noelani Iokepa-Guerrero, PhD

University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu – Susan Adler, PhD

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa – Christopher Au, PhD, Robyn Chun, MEd; Richard Johnson, EdD; Theresa Lock, EdD; Leah Muccio, PhD

University of Hawai'i Maui College – Julie Powers, MA; Gemma Medina MEd

Date: March 19, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna M. Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB1362 HD1, Relating to Access to Early Learning

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of HB 1362 HD1, which addresses key concerns and limitations in access to early learning opportunities in Hawai'i. The measure would help to expand and strengthen the early childhood workforce, clarify key dates in the implementation of Act 46, and clarifies that a uniform assessment of kindergarten readiness will be used to support the readiness and learning of all students entering kindergarten in public and charter schools across the state.

In particular, ECAS:

- Supports the establishment of an early childhood educator stipend program to address the shortage of early care and education professionals in the field;
- Supports the planned implementation of a uniform, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and encourages consideration of an allowance for Native Hawaiian culture medium early learning programs to use their own assessments, contingent on their ability to provide the data that the KEA seeks to capture;
- Supports amendments to retain three-year-olds in the planned expansion of Preschool Open Doors, albeit on a delayed timeline; and
- Supports giving departments additional time to implement other programmatic pieces as long as the goal date of 2032 remains unchanged.

Additionally, ECAS supports the requests being made by the Executive Office on Early Learning and the Department of Human Services to reinstate the following, original language under Section 8.3, subsection (b), which reads:

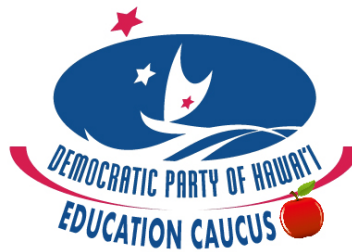
(b) The department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State and consider using public facilities including schools, libraries, and the university of Hawaii system as locations for child care and early learning programs.

ECAS believes that it is consistent with the intent of Act 46 to conduct ongoing assessment of child care and early learning needs and to measure our progress in meeting those needs. These objectives are supported and enhanced by collecting and reviewing basic evaluation data. As such, ECAS encourages retention of the data metrics in Section 8.3, subsection (b), that have been designated for inclusion in annual reporting, with the following modifications:

- (1) The total number of available seats **for 3-4 year olds**, by ~~age~~, program type, and zip code; and
- (2) The total number of vacancies **for 3-4 year olds**, by ~~age~~, program type, and zip code; and
- (3) The **total population of 3-4 year olds**, ~~available waitlist information by age, program type, and zip code;~~

We appreciate the Legislature's continued prioritization of early learning despite the challenges the state has faced from COVID-19. The early care and education needs of Hawaii's children and families have only increased and become more complex in light of the pandemic, and the expansion of the state's early childhood system will be critical to the state's ultimate recovery and wellness.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



HOUSE BILL 1362, HD 1, RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING

MARCH 22, 2021 · SENATE EDUCATION AND
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEES · CHAIRS SEN.
MICHELLE N. KIDANI AND SEN. JOY A. SAN
BUENAVENTURA

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 1362, HD 1, relating to the access to learning, which Establishes the Hawai'i early childhood educator stipend program to address shortage of early childhood education educators; extends certain effective dates for implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020; requires the application of a uniform assessment for public and charter school kindergarten students; and allows educational data to be shared using an existing system.

As noted by an MIT working group on the topic, investments in early childhood education pay dividends for the formal preparation of children as learners and future citizens, while also benefiting taxpayers and boosting economic vitality. Research on the benefits of quality pre-kindergarten programs indicates that for every dollar invested in such opportunities, society saves four to eight dollars on remedial classes, special education, welfare programs, and criminal justice costs. Roughly 85 percent of a child's brain develops from birth to age five, according to modern neuroscience, emphasizing the importance of providing a quality learning environment during these formative years. Preschool brings an approximately \$4.20 return on investment for every dollar spent on quality early childhood services, especially in terms of long-term life skills. At the

national level, every dollar spent on early childhood education saves taxpayers up to \$13.00 in future costs, including lowered healthcare costs, reduced rates of educational remediation and prison incarceration, and higher productivity. Access to quality pre-kindergarten programs not only helps working parents fulfill their child rearing responsibilities, but is essential for building a 21st century labor force.

Early childhood education is especially important for at-risk students. According to the High Scopes/Perry Preschool longitudinal study, at-risk children with access to quality early learning programs were 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 14 percent more likely to be employed, and 24 percent less likely to have been incarcerated by age 40 than peers without such access. It is imperative that we do all we can to ensure our children are “classroom ready,” meaning that they are prepared to receive basic instruction and effectively socialize with peers upon entering elementary school, placing both our keiki and their teachers on the path to success.

Currently, early childhood education programs operated by the Executive Office on Early Learning are experiencing a chronic teacher shortage, with a majority of EOEL’s classrooms lacking a teacher certified in early childhood education (private early learning programs are experiencing a similar shortage, it should be noted). We believe that this measure is a positive step forward in ensuring that our keiki are given quality instruction during the most formative years of their childhood development.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai’i Education Caucus ·

(808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com

HB-1362-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 3:05:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erin ODonnell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a parent and early childhood educator in the field for almost 20 years, I know firsthand the importance of preschool education for ALL children, not only the ones who can afford it. Preschools are very expensive to run and are expensive for middle class and lower income 'ohana to pay for.

I'm writing in support of HB 1362 HD1 for the following reasons:

- **Almost 90% of a child's brain development takes place before age five. Children who attend preschool or have access to quality early childhood education show improved kindergarten readiness, and from grades K-4, are more likely to be successful in the traditional school environment.**
- **Studies show that children who attend preschool decreases grade repetition and special education referrals, are more likely to graduate from high school and continue onto college, and are less likely to need public assistance when they are adults.**
- **[The National Institute for Early Education Research estimates that less than 10% of all 3 and 4 year olds attend a public preschool program or head start.](#)**
- **Support the creation of an early childhood stipend program.**
 - **One of the most fundamental components of high-quality early learning is a qualified educator. At the core of this complex and important work with young children is strengthening the workforce to reflect the science of learning and development.**
 - **Qualified educators are especially needed in working with children who experience adversities that place the learning and development at-risk. A qualified workforce is critical to promoting equity for all children.**
 - **Currently, the supply of qualified early care and education providers do not meet the demand. Addressing workforce barriers are necessary for expansion to meet the needs of families and children.**

- **This bill makes no appropriations recognizing the dire economic situation our state is in. However, there are private funds committed to establish and implement this early childhood stipend program**
- **Act 46 set the goal to have underserved children have access to a preschool program by 2032. Passing House bill 1362 will help the state's implementation plan.**
- **Because of the quick passage of Act 46 last session, some key provisions were left unfunded. We ask that the 12 FTE for the Preschool Open Doors Program be funded so the Department of Human Services has the resources to meet the legislation's intentions.**
- **We support giving departments additional time to implement programmatic pieces as long as the goal date of 2032 remains unchanged.**
- **We also encourage the legislature to consider adopting a new revenue stream to fund the Preschool Open Doors program to help sustain the program, which is currently facing a funding reduction of over \$6M.**

In addition, it should be the work of this program to ensure that any child wishing to attend a Hawaiian Medium Education preschool should have equal resources, the resources between Hawaiiin Medium Education and English Medium Education remains unfairly imbalanced and needs to be remedied, not just for preschool but at the elementary, secondary, and post secondary level as well.

Mahalo for you time

Erin O'Donnell