



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

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

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

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 24, 2021      **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

**TESTIFIER(S):**      **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact Melissa J. Kolonie,  
Deputy Attorney General, at 586-1255)

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Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

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-2019 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, lines 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. Under section 443B-9(a), HRS,

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



JOHN S.S. KIM  
CHAIRPERSON

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

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

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FOR: HB 1362 Relating to Access to Learning  
DATE: February 24, 2021  
TIME: 2:00 P.M.  
COMMITTEE: Committee on Finance  
ROOM: Conference Room 308  
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

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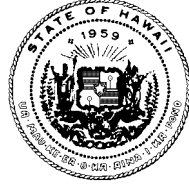
Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony providing **COMMENTS on HB 1362** 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this 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

February 23, 2021

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 2:00 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.

**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.

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 focused on the child's school readiness opportunity, there is no qualifying activity required of the family.

DHS 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. DHS respectfully requests that the stipend program establishment or appropriation not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget;

- Section 6, at pages 15-16, starting at line 18, to temporarily remove the language of expanding the POD program to serve the three-year-olds until July 2, 2024, by which time Hawaii's economy may have recovered somewhat from the severe economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Legislature is more able to appropriate general funds for the POD program to serve the three-year-olds;
- Section 7, at page 17, starting at line 5, to extend 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 emergency, 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 future reconsiderations by the Legislature of the provider accreditation requirements and timelines;

- Section 8.3, at pages 33-34, starting at line 15 and line 1, to clarify 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;
- Section 8.1, at pages 17-19 and 21, to clarify the components and uses of the standardized assessment for students entering kindergarten (i.e. kindergarten entry assessment) and defers to DOE and HSPCSC as to the impact of the proposed amendments to their agencies; and
- Section 8.5, at page 38, starting at line 6, to delay 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). The State agencies have all been responding to the immediate needs of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, quickly pivoting services and operations to ensure the health and safety of our employees, families, children, and our local communities, and 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 the provisions, and 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.

Also, DHS requests the following amendment:

- 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 (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 (2020) and data elements needed to be captured to meet the benchmarks under Section 12 of Act 46 (2020) (on pages 34-35) to be reported to the Legislature starting August 31, 2023. 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.

Since the report to the Legislature is proposed to start in August 2023, allowing the public partners until the 2022 legislative session to revise this subsection (b) in order for the various entities to determine the data elements that may already be captured and what may be challenging to capture without additional appropriations. DHS, DOE, HSPCSC, and EOEL have begun discussions around the data needs of Act 46 (2020), and 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.

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 ...

Waitlist information would be likely be duplicative information since families could be on the waitlist at multiple 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.

Finally, DHS provides the following comments regarding:

- 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 future reconsideration by the Legislature of the benchmarks and timelines; and

- 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 be exempt from any DHS rules requiring academic training or certification, while the *other* health and safety requirements of the department would continue to apply.

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



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

**Date:** 02/24/2021

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 308 Via Videoconference

**Committee:** House Finance

**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 HB 1362, HD1, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Department's budget. This bill aligns to the Department's vision that ensures all of Hawaii's children are provided opportunities that foster health, safety, education, school readiness, and success. The Department appreciates the legislature's effort to provide Hawaii's children with access to quality early learning opportunities, especially in those regions that are in high need of early learning sites. The Department acknowledges that a statewide kindergarten entry assessment will provide multiple agencies with data that will help gauge a student's readiness upon entering kindergarten.

The Department would like to note for the Committee that per Act 46 from the 2020 Legislative Session, the Department is 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. 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.

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 as well as other options. The Department would also ask for funding that would cover costs incurred for training of staff, required materials and supports needed in order to implement the assessment with fidelity across the state. For the kindergarten entry assessment to be available for the school year 2023-24, funds for the kindergarten entry assessment would be required minimally one year to one year and a half prior to ensure meeting procurement requirements.

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](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).

**HB-1362-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2021 12:04:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
HMS BESSD CCPO	Department of Human Services	Comments	No

Comments:

Testimony submitted by the Department of Human Services. Additional DHS staff will be available to provide clarification and respond to questions. Please send the zoom meeting link.



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

February 23, 2021

**TO:** Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

**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:** Wednesday February 24, 2021  
**Time:** 2:00 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. We support the State's commitment to increase capacity and create more opportunities through a mixed-delivery system that expands access to early learning through public offerings and with private providers.

**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.

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.





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: Representative Luke, Chair  
Representative Cullen, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

Re: **HB 1362 HD1- Relating to Access to Learning**  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 308  
2PM, February 24, 2021

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, 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:

- 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 committee.

Kathleen Algire  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



Committee on Finance  
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

February 24, 2021

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, 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	



**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](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)  
February 24, 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 Taele  
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

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Committee on Finance  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1362 HD 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee,


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 your 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  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee



# Kamehameha Schools®

## House Committee on Finance

DATE: Tuesday, February 24, 2021  
TIME: 2:00 P.M.  
PLACE: Via Videoconference  
State Capitol Room 308

### TESTIMONY

By Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, EdD

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

E ka Luna Ho‘omaluku, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omaluku Cullen, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Waiwai o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka‘āinana, 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.**

Date: February 22, 2021

To: House Committee on Finance  
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

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

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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**, 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.

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.

**To:** Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee On Finance

**From:** Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

**Subject:** **Measure:** HB 1362, HD 1, Relating to Early Learning  
**Hearing Date:** Thursday, February 24, 2021  
**Time:** 2:00 PM  
**Location:** Via Video Conference, Conference Room 309

**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.

### **Early Learning Board Position: Support**

I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board (ELB). Thank you for this opportunity to offer written testimony supporting 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 to continuing 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.

At its most recent meeting, the Board requested clarification about the elimination of 3-year olds from the bill, along with information about plans for any future inclusion, and clarification about the nature of the “partnership” between EOEL and DHS. In the current version of the Bill, questions arise about the intent of the elimination of this “partnership” and 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). ELB seeks to understand how expansion efforts will be coordinated given these changes and what its role can be in supporting those efforts.

The Early Learning Board is 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.





**TO: Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance**

**FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)**

**DATE/LOCATION: February 24, 2021; 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 308/Video Conference**

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1362 HD1 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING**

**We ask you to support HB 1362 HD 1 which seeks to establish 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.**

We thank the legislature for its passage of Act 046, SLH 2020 to increase access to early care and education in Hawaii. We hope that state policy will continue to work towards putting all the critical pieces together for effective implementation, systems change and the long-term benefit of our keiki and community. Access to high-quality early childcare continues to be a critical need in Hawaii.

As a provider of Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs on Oahu and Hawaii Island we understand the importance of providing access to early care and learning opportunities grounded in educational best practices. Data shows that high-quality care and education during the earliest stages of a child's development provides a critical foundation for later educational and life success. Early childhood is a particularly critical time in a child's development that provides a strong foundation for our youngest learners and sets them on a trajectory for future success. We thank the legislature for your continued support of creating access to early learning in our State. **Our keiki are the greatest investment we can make for the future of Hawaii.**

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 1362 HD 1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.