

April 5, 2021

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

From: Robert G Peters, Chair,
Early Learning Board

Re: **GM 627 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Early Learning Board,
Gubernatorial Nominee, Melodie Vega, for a term to expire 06-30-2023**

Wednesday, April 7, 2021, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, 3:00 pm.

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members:

I am offering this testimony in support of the confirmation of the Governor's nomination of Melodie Vega to serve a term on the Early Learning Board (ELB) to expire on 06-30-2023.

Melodie brings a wealth of knowledge to the Early Learning Board from her years as Project Manager for Hawaii Careers with Young Children Workforce and Professional Development Systems Building to her experience in the Executive Office on Early Learning in the School Readiness Program, and, now as the Early Childhood Education Director for Keiki O Ka Aina (KOKA). Her current role at KOKA is Director of Early Childhood Education Programs for the Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) program. Melodie has been a key planner in the program's pandemic on-line learning response.

Since joining the Board to complete an FCIL term, Melodie has shared her insights and represented the FCIL community by educating the Board about the FCIL role, relationship to community values and the significance of the family-child relationship in learning it supports. She has become an active member of the Workforce Equity Subcommittee, sharing her broad understanding of the workforce itself along with the needs and expectations of the variety of early childhood settings in Hawaii. Melodie is also very knowledgeable about workforce qualifications in these settings, which has helped guide the subcommittee's study plans.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of Melodie Vega.

Sincerely,
Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board



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

April 6, 2021

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

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: G.M. 627 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND
CONFIRMATION TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL
NOMINEE, MELODIE VEGA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2022.
Hearing Date: Wednesday April 7, 2021
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: videoconference

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good afternoon. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the nomination and confirmation of Melodie Vega to the Early Learning Board (ELB).

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

The ELB was established as a governing board through Act 202, SLH 2017, and is responsible for directing the EOEL on how best to meet the developmental and educational needs of children, from prenatal care to entry into kindergarten; providing recommendations to EOEL on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early learning programs; promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children; and appoint and evaluating the EOEL Director on an annual basis.

Melodie Vega is seeking appointment to the ELB as a representative of Family Child Interaction learning (FCIL) programs. She is currently the Director of Early Childhood Programs of Keiki o Ka 'Āina, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating children, strengthening families, enhancing communities and perpetuating culture and is also a member of the 'Eleu network, a statewide network of FCIL program providers. She has worked in the early learning sector and supporting the workforce in various capacities in Hawaii for 33 years. With her extensive experience in the field, Ms. Vega satisfies the requirement of §302 L-1.6 and would be an asset as a member to the ELB. Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

April 5, 2021

Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair of the Senate Committee on Education
Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Kidani and Senator Kim,

This letter of recommendation is in support of Ms. Melody Vega who has been appointed by Governor David Ige to serve on the Early Learning Board (ELB) for term expiring on June 30, 2023.

Ms. Vega has been a leader and mentor in the early childhood education (ECE) field in Hawai'i for many years. Fortunately, I had the pleasure of working closely with her when I was the director of the Kamehameha Schools' ECE division; Hawai'i's first state early childhood coordinator; first director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL); and now as an ECE instructor with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Education (UHM COE).

- In the early 2000's, through grant from Kamehameha Schools' that was awarded to Hawai'i Careers for Young Children (HCYC), Ms. Vega created and implemented a process where early childhood practitioners could agree on a set of principles, scope of practice, competencies, career pathways and nomenclature that defined ECE professionals across settings in our state.
- From 2011- 2013, Ms. Vega assisted the Governor's Office and EOEL in the development of a phased-in state private-public preschool program with a professional development plan for early childhood program directors, teachers and assistant teachers of this program.
- Currently, Ms. Vega, as member of the ELB and I, representing UHM COE, are serving on the ELB's subcommittee on workforce compensation equity. Through this subcommittee, Ms. Vega has brought her keen insights of how and why the early childhood workforce is currently being compensated, including salaries and benefits, and promising practices that some organizations are utilizing to increase compensation and reduce staff turnover.

Ms. Vega is a hard worker, collaborative team player, possesses strong administrative and management skills, and has in-depth knowledge of the field of ECE in Hawai'i. She has the ability and experience to lead and facilitate a process for diverse individuals to tackle difficult issues and reach shared goals. She has excellent skills in project management and relationship-oriented leadership. Ms. Vega has been able to coordinate and manage multi-faceted projects from start to end, including using various types of processes for different tasks in the life of projects. Her leadership skills are evident in how she has empowered others and advanced equity in ECE. Because of Ms. Vega's knowledge, skills and experiences, I am in full support of her appointment as an Early Learning Board member.

Sincerely,

Theresa F. Lock

Theresa F. Lock, Ed.D