



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

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz,
the Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki,
and Members of the Senate Special Committee on COVID-19
State Capitol, Room 208
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Senator Moriwaki, and members of the Special Committee:

We understand that at your April 3rd meeting, Senator Moriwaki asked what is being done on the pre-K level to address the impacts of the pandemic. We appreciate your concern for the care & education of our youngest keiki and the well-being of their families especially during this time of crisis.

In our letter dated March 25 to the members of the Legislature (attached for your reference), we shared some of EOEL's efforts relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program. We are glad to share the following update.

EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program

All EOEL Public Pre-K Program classrooms are closed. The classrooms are located on DOE department and charter school campuses that are closed to students until at least April 30 in alignment with the emergency orders directing residents statewide to remain at home and work from home.

All educational specialists, resource teachers, and clerical staff in the Program are working remotely. School-level staff, including the teachers and educational assistants of our EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program classrooms, are supervised by the administrators of their respective schools, and as such are receiving instruction from them.

With regard to Program implementation, we are focused on minimizing disruption for the children and supporting their well-being. Our educational specialists and resource teachers are working hard to provide much-needed albeit adapted support to the schools and families, including:

- Developing as well as curating resources to help teachers remain connected with their children through live online sessions and offline communications;
- Providing guidance to teachers as to appropriate ways to connect with families and children within the context of their specific school and communities;
- Providing consultation and guidance to individual teachers to provide learning experiences for children;
- Developing as well as curating resources for teachers to share with their families to help them engage with their children in developmentally appropriate ways;
- Providing individualized guidance and assistance to teachers and educational assistants to address specific issues and questions (e.g., parent/family needs, unique school directives and community needs);
- Continuing professional learning support for teachers through professional learning communities and individual coaching conversations;
- Ongoing communication with and consultation for school administrators and office staff; and
- Purchasing, preparing, and packaging learning materials/resources (e.g., literature and informational books, math games) to be mailed to families of all children enrolled in the Program. Coordinating with schools around appropriate distribution. We are sensitive to the situations that our priority/disadvantaged populations especially may be faced with.

Close to 700 children were enrolled in the Program in the 2nd quarter. We look forward to welcoming our children and families back to the classroom as soon as it is safe. In the meantime, the emotional stressors experienced by families and teachers – and teachers' own families – during this time are of a particular concern for us, particularly because of the short- and long-term impacts for children. We are being mindful of the nature of support we provide for the pre-K teaching staff as they work with their families.

Our EOEL Public Pre-K Program team also continues to engage in the regular work of Program administration and planning, including:

- Reviewing applications from families to enroll in the Program this fall based on school offices' processing of applications;
- Continuing to provide guidance through the Early Learning Induction Program for the 10 DOE schools scheduled to open new EOEL Public Pre-K Program classrooms in SY20-21;
- Professional learning support planning for the Early Learning Academy;
- Continuing work related to MOAs and underlying data sharing agreements;
- Continuing partnership work of professional learning support for both DOE and private preschool sectors through math and literacy online sessions provided through the Erikson Institute and funded by the Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation; and
- Continuing strategic planning and program development planning.

Support for Families, Providers, and Partners

EOEL also has ongoing efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 beyond the EOEL Public Pre-K Program, related to our responsibility to coordinate the State's early childhood system as a whole, which includes children from birth to kindergarten entry and their families, and early care & education settings beyond those typically associated with early learning (i.e., center-based programs) – which include family child care homes, family-child interaction learning, and home visiting.

We are in communication with our State agency and community partners especially during this time to determine how we can best support our families and early care & education providers. All EOEL staff are working remotely but continue to perform their regular duties, and are happy to assume this additional work needed to support the community.

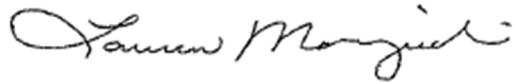
Our work currently includes:

- Convening discussions and otherwise supporting venues for information sharing between government and the community.
 - EOEL helped convene and facilitate a special meeting of the Early Learning Board, at which community members agreed EOEL should leverage its role as coordinator of the system to serve as information hub for families and providers, and as conduit between ELB members and different stakeholders in system. Discussions will continue at ELB's meeting this Thursday, April 8, 1:30-4:00pm, via Zoom.
- Serving as a hub/clearinghouse for comprehensive/consolidated and timely information for families and providers in all settings, including:
 - Building upon the resources we had developed and made available through our current State website (*earlylearning.hawaii.gov*), to create a more user-friendly, frequently updated website to keep our community informed in close collaboration with our partners. Information to include:
 - Resources for families such as: subsidies, scholarships, and other resources for those in need; guidance and developmentally appropriate resources we have identified for families that are home with young children; COVID-19 related information for children.
 - Resources for providers such as: business assistance, operational guidance, shared resources for educators.
 - Working on regular newsletters for distribution, including with the help of our partners.
- Connecting stakeholders to strengthen and leverage efforts, including:
 - Developing a central, more comprehensive/consolidated and continually updated list of program openings/closures and emergency care.
 - Creating awareness about the needs of still-operating providers for cleaning supplies, and connecting providers with donations.
 - Leveraging networks to enhance dissemination of information.

We are also in communication with DHS and DOH to determine how we can otherwise support their efforts at this time.

Our staff and I are in close, frequent communication with each other. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Moriguchi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauren" being more prominent than the last name "Moriguchi".

Lauren Moriguchi
Director

c: Bob Peters, Early Learning Board Chair
Christina Kishimoto, Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent

Act 178, SLH 2012, established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) to be responsible for developing the State's early childhood system to ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout Hawaii, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority for underserved or at-risk children. Our work involves collaboration with both the public and private sectors.



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

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President
and Members of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker
and Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information, I am sharing the Executive Office on Early Learning's efforts relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program.

EOEL Staff

We recognize the great importance of taking unprecedented steps necessary to protect the health and safety of our individual staff as well as the general public. Effective March 18, 2020:

- I directed all staff to stay home pursuant to Governor's directive on March 17, and have and will continue to adjust based on guidance from State and County leadership.
 - All staff are working remotely until a currently scheduled return to the office on Friday, May 1.
 - Any staff members who find it absolutely necessary to go into the office must first notify me so I can seek permission from the Kuhio Elementary School principal who is responsible for approving any visits on campus. Anyone who goes into the office has been directed to quickly finish the necessary task and immediately return to working remotely thereafter. In the rare case that another staff member is in the office at the same time, they have been directed to maintain the CDC-recommended six-foot distance between themselves.
- Our physical office at Kuhio Elementary School is closed to the public during this time.
- We continue to receive email and phone calls during this time.

- All in-person meetings are being cancelled, rescheduled, or adapted for phone or remote technology.

Our staff and I are in close communication with each other via phone, email, and/or other web-based platforms. We remain focused on our mission to coordinate the State's early childhood system for Hawaii's children from prenatal care until kindergarten entry.

EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program

The aforementioned steps also apply to the non-school level staff of the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program, including our educational specialists, resource teachers, and clerical staff. School-level staff, including the teachers and educational assistants of our EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program classrooms, are supervised by the administrators of their respective schools, and as such are receiving instruction from them.

With regard to Program implementation, we are focused on minimizing disruption for the children and supporting their well-being. Our educational specialists and resource teachers are working hard to provide much-needed albeit adapted support to the schools and families, including:

- Developing as well as curating resources to help teachers remain connected with their children through live online sessions and offline communications;
- Developing as well as curating resources for teachers to share with their families to help them engage with their children in developmentally appropriate ways;
- Providing assistance to teachers and educational assistants to address specific issues and questions;
- Continuing professional learning support for teachers through professional learning communities and individual coaching conversations; and
- Ongoing communication with and consultation for school administrators and office staff.

We look forward to welcoming our children and families back to the classroom as soon as it is safe.

Our EOEL Public Pre-K Program team also continues to engage in the regular work of Program administration and planning.

Early Learning Board

We have requested that ELB, our governing board, conduct a special meeting to convene discussions to support action and provide a much-needed venue for information sharing between Hawaii's early care & education providers and government. ELB, with its composition of child-serving agencies and organizations that represent diverse constituencies in the early childhood field across Hawaii, is well-positioned for this.

A special meeting has been scheduled for Monday, May 30, 1:00-3:00pm, via Zoom. Attached are the meeting agenda and details, which has been shared noting the

suspension of certain requirements of Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, pursuant to the Governor's supplemental emergency proclamation, but keeping as close as possible to the spirit and intent of the law.

Other Actions

Resources at earlylearning.hawaii.gov:

We have developed and continue to update and share information on our website to keep our communities, families, and state informed, such as:

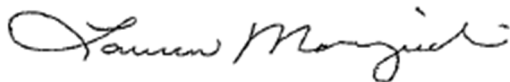
- Developmentally appropriate resources we have identified for families that are home with young children;
- Emergency care and meals; and
- Links to the webpages of our State agency partners.

Support for State agency partners:

We have reached out to our State partners to see how we can support their efforts at this time.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have. We appreciate your hard work for our state and for your continued support of care & education for our youngest keiki and their families especially during this time of crisis.

Very truly yours,



Lauren Moriguchi
Director

c: Bob Peters, Early Learning Board Chair
Lynn Kobayashi, Kuhio Elementary School Principal
Christina Kishimoto, Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent

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