



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

March 10, 2024

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

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 1903 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) is committed to expanding early learning opportunities for all keiki across the State and is in **strong support** of H.B. No. 1903 S.D. 1.

The intention of this bill is to expand public-private partnerships for all young keiki by administering programs in existing vacant public spaces. Presently, section 302L-1.7, HRS, authorizes EOEL to administer pre-plus programs through private-public partnerships on Department of Education (HIDOE) public school campuses. This bill would expand access to affordable early learning programs through offering potentially more cost-effective spaces by allowing programs to be administered on other public properties in addition to HIDOE campuses.

This measure does not require funding or fiscal support.

As EOEL continues to expand the EOEL public prekindergarten program, it is critical to also focus on expanding community-based options as these programs are necessary to meet families' unique needs and demands. Community-based programs offer services that may be longer in duration, assisting families who work traditional and non-traditional hours; culturally and linguistically based; provided in a home-setting, which may be more comfortable or preferred by families; or may accept younger children from birth onward.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued investments to our youngest keiki and families and respectfully request the committee pass this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support.



HB1903 HD1
RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
Senate Committee on Education

March 13, 2024

3:00 p.m.

Conference Room 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS and offers comments** on HB1903 HD1, which expands access to early learning programs on other state properties and public lands besides Department of Education public school campuses.

OHA is in its fourth year of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The development of this strategic plan included gathering community input via surveys and focus groups as well as mana‘o from internal staff. **One of the most critical needs that our community repeated was ‘ohana’s ability to provide high-quality keiki and kūpuna care.**

HB1903 HD1 will support the state’s ongoing efforts to expand early childhood care and education. In 2020—the same year our strategic plan began—the State Legislature passed Act 46 setting a vision for 100% access to early learning opportunities. We believe this measure is one component that will help the state both achieve the Legislature’s vision and meet the needs that OHA has identified for the Hawaiian people.

The Pre-Plus Program has been an important piece of the early learning puzzle, allowing community-based Head Start providers to offer early learning programs on public school campuses. OHA sees this bill as having the potential to expand the impact of a program like Pre-Plus. It sets the tone to prioritize the development of early learning programs in facilities, and it adjusts the existing pre-plus statute to have the possibility for greater reach. The inclusion of other public properties will provide the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) the authority to work beyond public schools to realize its obligations for universal access.

OHA would also like to respectfully remind the State Legislature of the state’s obligations to steward crown and government lands, also known as ceded or public land trust lands. Our understanding of this measure is that it will provide facilities for low- or no-cost to community-based providers. This is consistent with the way **early childhood**



SB3087 SD1
RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
Hosue Committee on Education

care and education must be seen as a public good. We support these lands being used for this purpose rather than for the purpose of generating revenue. We would also like to ensure that the implementation of this expanded program taking careful precautions not to allow for the alienation of any public property that may be part of the public land trust.

OHA believes this program can be an integral component to the State's efforts to actualize Act 46 (SLH 2020). We respectfully request the committee **advance HB1903 HD1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



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

March 13, 2024

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Members of the Committee,

We support HB 1903 HD1, which expands access to early learning programs on other state properties and public lands besides public school campuses.

Expansion of early learning programs beyond public school properties is an innovative and effective way to use State properties that are underutilized or are in locations where early learning programs can grow. This legislation aligns with Act 46, which created a goal to expand preschool access to all 3- and 4-year-olds by 2032.

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 for this measure represents at least a 75% consensus of our voting membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE’E Coalition Director



Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

Education Institute of Hawai'i

*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

*HawaiiKidsCAN

*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and
Economic Justice

*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

*Parents and Children Together

*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Special Education Provider Alliance

*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

* Youth Service Hawai'i

Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the*

To: Senate Committee on Education

Re: HB 1903 HD 1 – in strong support

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 329

March 13, 2024; 3:00PM

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 1903 HD 1 relating to Early Learning.**

Early childhood education is a crucial foundation for lifelong learning and success. Research consistently demonstrates that children with access to high-quality early learning programs are more likely to excel academically, exhibit better social skills, and experience improved long-term health and economic well-being outcomes. By extending early learning opportunities to state-owned properties and public lands, we can reach a broader and more diverse population of young learners and create equitable access to early learning opportunities across Hawai'i.

This thoughtful approach enhances educational outcomes and can strengthen community engagement and collaboration. By involving various stakeholders, including local communities, non-profit organizations, and businesses, we can create a network of support that extends beyond traditional educational settings. This collaborative approach will enrich children's learning experience and foster a sense of shared responsibility for their well-being and development.

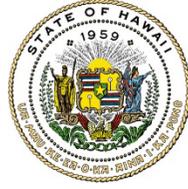
HCAN Speaks! urges the committee to consider this proposed bill's long-term benefits and positive impact on our state's early learning efforts and the well-being of our young keiki and communities. Utilizing existing buildings on state-owned properties and public lands is a visionary step towards creating a more inclusive, innovative, and effective early learning system that is cost-effective to the state, early learning programs, and, most of all, our families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this critical issue. **Please pass HB 1903 HD 1.**

Mahalo,

Chevelle Davis, MPH

Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy



SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina

32nd Legislature, State of Hawaii
Senate Committee on Education
March 13, 2024

Testimony on
H.B. 1903 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

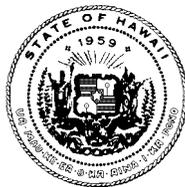
Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of H.B. 1903** which expands access to early learning programs to other state properties and public lands besides Department of Education public school campuses.

Access to preschool is a social justice issue for our state and we know that children who attend high-quality preschool are much better prepared for success. Our Ready Keiki initiative, the administration's multi-faceted plan to expand affordable, high-quality early learning opportunities for 3- and 4-year-olds, launched last year and together with our public, private, and non-profit sector partners, we opened 13 classrooms across the state and are slated to open 44 more by the end of the year. Ready Keiki's success is contingent upon a multi-pronged approach which includes building and refurbishing classrooms, creating teaching pathways for educators, and expanding the Preschool Open Doors program for low- and moderate-income families. The amendments proposed in H.B. 1903 are critical to ensuring that we can build enough additional classrooms at an affordable price on existing underutilized or vacant public spaces.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 1903.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 11, 2024

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1903 HD1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, which is similar to administration measure HB 2398 and defers to the Executive Office on Early Learning for implementation.

PURPOSE: This bill expands access to early learning programs to other state properties and public lands besides public school campuses. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The House Committee on Education amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3000.

The Department supports the expansion of early learning programs on other state properties and public lands besides public school campuses since it may provide more opportunities for families to access child care throughout the State. DHS will work with the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) and child care providers who are authorized to use and occupy the public school facilities and other available public properties should they be required to be licensed by DHS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: **Measure:** H.B. No. 1903 HD 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Time: 3:00 PM
Location: **VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**
Conference Room 229

Early Learning Board Position: Support

The Early Learning Board supports the Executive Office on Early Learning’s (EOEL) commitment to expanding early learning opportunities for all keiki across the State and is, therefore, in strong support of H.B. No. 1903 HD 1.

The intention of this bill is to expand public-private partnerships for all young keiki by administering programs in existing vacant public spaces. Presently, section 302L-1.7, HRS, authorizes EOEL to administer pre-plus programs through private-public partnerships on Department of Education (HIDOE) public school campuses. H.B. No. 1903 HD 1 would expand access to affordable early learning programs through offering potentially more cost-effective spaces by allowing programs to be administered on other public properties in addition to HIDOE campuses.

The Board is confident that EOEL will work collaboratively and effectively with other State agencies that own or oversee these properties to provide early learning spaces, with priority given to communities and areas with limited access to early learning programs and services.

As EOEL continues to expand the EOEL public prekindergarten program, it is critical to also focus on expanding community-based options as these programs are necessary to meet families’ unique needs and demands, while supporting choice. Community-based programs tend to offer services that extend beyond the traditional school day, helping to meet the care needs of families who work traditional and non-traditional hours.

This bill also does not require any funding or fiscal support

The ELB appreciates the on-going support from the Legislature to expand access to quality early learning for Hawaii’s keiki. We strongly support this measure and respectfully ask that H.B. No. 1903 HD 1 be passed. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony.



Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committee on Education

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Date: March 13, 2024

Where: Conference Room 229

TESTIMONY

By Dr. Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona
Kamehameha Schools

RE: **HB 1903, HD1, Relating to Early Learning**

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

Kamehameha Schools **supports** HB 1903, HD1, which expands access of early learning programs to other state properties and public lands besides public school campuses.

The pivotal enactment of Act 46 (2020) set Hawai‘i on the important pathway of ensuring that every three- and four-year-old has access to early learning by the year 2032. As of September 2023, according to the data aggregated by Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS), Hawai‘i childcare providers reported their capacity to care for keiki between birth and age 5 at 19,983 seats. However, this is still 16% below pre-pandemic levels.

In the Hawai‘i Early Learning Needs Assessment (2017), center-based program directors listed the lack of space or appropriate facilities as the most common barrier to increasing the number of seats in their classrooms for three- and four-year-old keiki across Hawai‘i. By expanding access to early learning programs on state properties and public lands, more seats can be made available. Our keiki cannot afford to lose any more opportunities. **Please advance this measure.**

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.



Date: March 10, 2024

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

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB1903 HD1**, Relating 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 HB1903 HD1, which would expand access to early learning programs on other state properties and public lands besides Department of Education public school campuses.

High-quality early care and learning programs are fundamental to providing children with dependable, nurturing relationships, safe environments, and stimulating experiences that are critical for brain development and school readiness. Experiences in high-quality early care and learning programs can lead to improved educational, economic, health and well-being outcomes for children, lasting into adulthood. Hawaii, however, faces a significant shortage of early care and learning programs, with only one program space for every four children under the age of six.

HB1903 HD1 would support the State's commitment to increasing access to early learning programs by allowing for the use of space for early learning programs beyond HIDOE campuses to other, existing vacant public spaces. This expansion of options will help facilitate growth of a larger spectrum of early care and learning programs to better meet the unique needs and preferences of children and families, such as the needs for full-day, full-year programs, or programs for infants and toddlers.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB1903 HD1**. With the limited availability of quality early care and learning seats we strongly support the bill's proposal to expand available options and increase access to early learning opportunities for a wider range of children.



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 13, 2024

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Sara Alimoot
Ms. Kathie Awaya
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shana Cruz
Mr. Mark Disher
Ms. Mai Hall
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Jennifer Leoiki-Drino
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Dr. Paul Meng
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Mr. Christopher Pelayo
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro
Ms. Debora Uyeda
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Helen Kaniho, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Committee on Education
Hawaii Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1903, HD 1 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Senator Kidani and members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, **supports** HB 1903, HD 1 which expands access of early learning programs to other state properties and public lands besides public school campuses.

Numerous research studies have shown the long term benefits of quality early childhood education programs for students with and without disabilities, 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.

HB 1903, HD 1 has the potential to expand early childhood education programs, as well as community-based programs that may offer a combination of education and child care options to meet the needs of working families. Increasing the availability of these quality early learning programs will also create more opportunities for young children with disabilities to have their school readiness needs met in inclusive settings.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 3PM Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: HB1903 HD1 Relating to Early Learning

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports HB1903 HD1** which would expand access to early learning programs on other state properties and public lands besides Department of Education public school campuses.

The Chamber completed its 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii Initiative earlier this year to create a data-based action plan and vision for business to lead and shape Hawaii's economic future as a top place to do business. Results clearly presented that despite efforts to keep costs down, affordability remains a significant obstacle for families in Hawaii. Community-based programs often operate on narrow profit margins, making it challenging to sustain these valuable services. The Chamber is in support of this proposed bill which will foster public-private partnerships to ensure access for all young children by utilizing existing vacant public spaces and increase access to affordable early learning programs by potentially utilizing more cost-effective spaces, including utilization of other public properties alongside HIDOE campuses.

Furthermore, effective early learning programs offer significant and lasting advantages for both present and future generations. Moreover, they afford families the chance to pursue further education or employment by offering a reliable and nurturing environment for their children to be enrolled in while enabling workforce entrance accessibility.

In 2020, legislation was passed affirming the State's dedication to enhancing access to early learning programs and entrusted EOEL and DHS with the responsibility of ensuring that all three and four-year-old children have access to prekindergarten by 2032. While public prekindergarten initiatives are expanding, it's vital to prioritize the expansion of community-based options to cater to families' diverse needs and preferences. These community-based programs offer various services, such as longer hours to accommodate families with traditional and non-traditional work schedules, culturally and linguistically tailored approaches, home-based settings preferred by some families, and the acceptance of younger children from birth.

Enacting the strategy presented through this measure not only enhances educational outcomes but also encourages community engagement and collaboration. The Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii Initiative similarly proposed involving a variety of stakeholders, including local communities, non-profit organizations, and businesses, to create a supportive network that extends beyond traditional educational settings. This collaborative approach not only enriches children's learning experiences but also cultivates a shared dedication to our state's early learning



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

efforts and long-term benefits towards the mutual goal of economic success. Utilizing existing buildings on state-owned properties and public lands is a visionary step towards creating a more inclusive, innovative, and effective early learning system that is cost-effective to the state, early learning programs, and, most of all, our families.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.