



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE  
ON EDUCATION

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014

RE: S.B. 2826 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PERSON TESTIFYING: WIL OKABE  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Wil Okabe  
President  
Joan Kamila Lewis  
Vice President  
Colleen Pasco  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Alvin Nagasako  
Executive Director

The Honorable Chair Jill Tokuda, The Honorable Vice-Chair Michelle Kidani and the Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) strongly **opposes S.B. 2826** relating to the implementation upon its ratification, the amendment to Article X, section 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution.

HSTA is the exclusive representative of more than 13,500 public and charter school teachers statewide. As the state affiliate of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association, HSTA believes that the Constitutional Amendment is clearly an education voucher in which it takes public funds to pay for private education. We support public funding for all preschool students. The Department of Education should have the oversight for preschools in public settings.

HSTA strongly believes in early childhood education in the public schools. As educators, we made the commitment to our children to give them the best type of quality education for the future of Hawaii. Our early childhood education teachers are highly recognized, educated, and some of the best in the nation.

We believe in quality education taught by qualified and licensed teachers in every classroom.

We believe in students having the proper tools, facilities, and guidance in order to be successful.

We believe in parents knowing that their child is in a safe nurturing environment.

We believe in standards of care where as a single unified school system, education should be under one umbrella and not done in the silo in which it is presently structured.

Contrary to what this bill states, private schools are a choice and the state should be working towards ensuring that we strive towards educating children under one system.

Last night, President Obama spoke of the need for high quality preschools for four year olds during his state of the state address. We honor his statement. However, unlike other states, Hawaii does not recognize the need to ensure that five years olds are properly educated. It is our kuleana to secure that our kindergarteners come first.

A great teacher can be a game changer, and a great teacher can help change student's lives for the future. We disagree with the justification in the bill that states, "the future will be grim for this population of children, especially if left without the opportunity for early childhood education."

The reality is that the future of Hawaii will be grim if our students and parents cannot get jobs, cannot afford to live in Hawaii, raise their family, and be fiscally responsible to the economy.

The bill states, "middle school level teachers shared that they can tell which students in their classrooms have and have not gone to preschool." Public school teachers in Hawaii can also identify those students in elementary and high school as well. These teachers work with many different children of all levels and all abilities. Some students enter into school having many years of preschool but by middle school, may find themselves struggling with algebra and other subjects. It is certainly easier for some students to do well in school. Some students have the ability to concentrate, some students have the ability to retain information for long periods of time, and some of the ability to apply what they have learned. These are important abilities and skills for our students to be successful in school.

There are elements in this bill that are missing studies about what happens when a child is taught by a non-highly qualified teacher. The Department of Education requires all teachers who teach Junior Kindergarten to be licensed, have credentials such as a degree, and ongoing training and professional development. These are the same for the four and a half-year olds entering schools and the legislature is legislating a double standard.

The Department of Human Services has not set up any rules to determine its criteria for the roll out of its program Open Doors. Right now it is a closed door to all of the students who could be attending preschool. It is not clear who will be accountable to ensure what and how this plan will work.

If early childhood education was a priority, then schools should have mandatory kindergarten in our compulsory attendance laws before a new project is started.

We urge you to invest in our public school as they are underfunded and value our existing schools by keeping tax dollars to serve all children in public schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong opposition of S.B. 2826.**



Testimony presented before the  
Senate Committee on Education  
January 29, 2014 at 1:30 pm  
By Karen C. Lee, Ed.D.  
Executive Director, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education

SB 2826: Relating to Early Childhood Education.

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

SB 2826 establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System established by section 302L-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Hawaii P-20 strongly supports this bill. As an organization that works in partnership with the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Hawaii Department of Education and the University of Hawaii, Hawaii P-20 works to improve the educational pipeline and facilitates seamless educational experiences across systems. The research has shown that investing in early childhood education, especially that which is of high-quality and is developmentally appropriate, leads to better educational, social and economic outcomes. It is not enough to provide childcare or babysitting services for young children; they need appropriate educational preparation to be successful in the next stage of education: elementary school.

As proposed, the Early Childhood Education Program will be essential to deliver high-quality education to young children who were previously unable to afford access to pre-kindergarten educational services. And, when children are not ready to learn by kindergarten, their chances at elementary, secondary and post-secondary success and completion are greatly diminished. Since studies predict that 65% of jobs in Hawaii in year 2018 will require at least some post-secondary education, Hawaii must prepare its children for success by investing in them early.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129  
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

January 29, 2014

**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

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

- Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
- Dr. Tammy Bopp
- Dr. Robert Campbell
- Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
- Ms. Annette Cooper
- Ms. Shari Dela Cuadra-Larsen,  
*liaison to the Superintendent*
- Ms. Jenny Gong
- Ms. Gabriele Finn
- Ms. Tami Ho
- Ms. Barbara Ioli
- Ms. Valerie Johnson
- Ms. Deborah Kobayakawa
- Ms. Bernadette Lane
- Ms. Shanelle Lum
- Ms. Dale Matsuura
- Ms. Stacey Oshio
- Ms. Zaidarene Place
- Mr. Kenneth Powell
- Ms. Barbara Pretty
- Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
- Ms. Melissa Rosen
- Dr. Patricia Sheehey
- Mr. Tom Smith
- Ms. Lani Solomona
- Dr. Daniel Ulrich
- Ms. Amy Weich
- Ms. Cari White
- Ms. Susan Wood

Jan Tateishi, Staff  
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2826 - RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Dear Chair Tokuda 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** SB 2826 that establishes the Early Childhood Education Program upon ratification of the constitutional amendment permitting the use of public funds for private early childhood programs.

SEAC has long held that all children, with and without disabilities, benefit from quality, early learning programs that address their unique needs and help prepare these keiki for academic success. SB 2826 will be instrumental in expanding quality programs by requiring contracted providers to utilize research-based and developmentally appropriate practices and to align their curriculum with the Hawaii Early Learning and Development Standards and the Common Core State Standards for Kindergarten through twelfth grade. The bill also supports family choice by offering options for quality early childhood education.

Hopefully these new educational resources for young children will expand the options for young children with disabilities to be educated with their non-disabled peers. They may also reduce the need for some special education services in succeeding years by intervening early with effective interventions when children struggle with academic and socio-emotional goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair

# LATE TESTIMONY

**From:** [Shaley DeGiorgio](#)  
**To:** [EDU Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of SB2826 and SB2236  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2014 12:31:00 PM

---

Shaley DeGiorgio from Kaneohe, HI writes:

Dear Chair Tokuda and Vice-Chair Kidani, I am writing in support of SB2826, which establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System established by section 302L-2, HRS; and SB2236, which authorizes the executive office on early learning to enter into agreements with the department of education and charter schools for use of vacant or underutilized classrooms as public preschool classrooms. Last year, you made the courageous decision to begin building the foundation of a high-quality early learning system for Hawaii; you passed and funded a school readiness system and you looked ahead and passed a measure to place a constitutional amendment on the 2014 ballot to ask Hawaii's residents if we are ready to invest in a statewide community preschool system – a system contracts w/ our local non-profit preschools and our public school system. Now, we need your help once again and pass SB2826. This measure will ensure that Hawaii's preschool program will have the capacity, quality, and oversight to succeed. Please support SB2826 and SB2236, and thank-you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of Hawaii's future.

By age 3, there is already a difference in how many words children have heard, depending on family income level:

Children of professional parents - 45 million words

Children with working class parents - 26 million words

Children on welfare - 13 million words

I grew up on welfare. My mother, who is very open about her own struggles with reading comprehension, didn't read to me as a child. I don't have a single memory of her reading anything aloud. I can remember four books in my house—and additionally, my parents didn't talk about current events, politics, or anything outside the realm of typical things, like "what's for dinner, and what are you watching on TV?"

I grew up on welfare and I was starved for words.

In the 5th grade, my teachers realized I was reading at a 2nd grade level, and I barely graduated high school. But that's not where my story ends.

I've spent, literally, the last twenty years trying to compensate for a lack of rich, juicy, nutritious words when I was growing up. And, I'll tell you where I am now... but as I describe my achievements, think not about what I've done, think about where I could have been if, as a child, I'd had a better foothold on the future that would inevitably come.

I currently work as the lead communications person for Cornell University's IT department (more than 300 people). Cornell University is located in New York. Telecommuters from this distance are almost unheard of at the university. In fact, about two years ago, I was told that I couldn't keep my job any longer, because if I wasn't sitting in NY, then someone else deserved the job. And do you know what helped me to overcome the obstacle, keep my job, and help to launch a pilot to encourage all Cornell employees to telecommute? My very carefully, very strategically chosen words.

I am also about to publish my second book, a sci-fi novel. I am a writer now and I spend every day pouring over the power of words. I work alongside other writers with Ivy League educations, who I thankfully, constantly learn and grow from.

But, I am a very rare individual.

Understanding a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a constitution, is the difference between empowerment and helplessness.

We cannot control what happens at home, if parents are broke, if they use TV to babysit their kids, but we CAN provide opportunities for children to learn, to get out of the house, to expand their horizons. We can give them a chance to start using more words sooner, read to them, talk to them, and interact with them.

As an adult, I often think back on my childhood and I think, if only... I'd be lying if I said that I don't hold resentments that my parents didn't take more responsibility, make better decisions, and prioritize my education. But, we're not talking about my parents, are we?

We're talking about what the state can do for children who are living the same circumstances I did then. We're talking about future citizens who will some day look back and they will either feel like, "hey, Hawaii stood up for me," or they'll look back and feel like, "the state doesn't care, they never did, and I'm all alone."

By intervening, you are sending these future citizens a message. You're telling them they are worth it, they are a priority, they are valued. It's your duty to the public to make decisions that demonstrate you believe—it's your responsibility to do everything in your power to ensure these children believe in themselves.

It's imperative, because you have no idea the potential each of these children have. You have the unique privilege of a profession that, despite a lack of familial or friendship relationships, can directly affect the confidence and potential of generations of children to come.

Please, always vote in favor of early childhood education.

Much Aloha,

Shaley DeGiorgio

808 636-1817

-----  
Form Data:

Email 1 (Primary): [degiorgio@cornell.edu](mailto:degiorgio@cornell.edu)

First Name: Shaley

Last Name: DeGiorgio

City: Kaneohe

State: HI

ZIP Code: 96744

**From:** [Vernon Azuma](#)  
**To:** [EDU Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of SB2826 and SB2236  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:33:17 AM

---

Vernon Azuma from Honolulu, HI writes:

Dear Chair Tokuda and Vice-Chair Kidani, I am writing in support of SB2826, which establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System established by section 302L-2, HRS; and SB2236, which authorizes the executive office on early learning to enter into agreements with the department of education and charter schools for use of vacant or underutilized classrooms as public preschool classrooms. Last year, you made the courageous decision to begin building the foundation of a high-quality early learning system for Hawaii; you passed and funded a school readiness system and you looked ahead and passed a measure to place a constitutional amendment on the 2014 ballot to ask Hawaii's residents if we are ready to invest in a statewide community preschool system – a system contracts w/ our local non-profit preschools and our public school system. Now, we need your help once again and pass SB2826. This measure will ensure that Hawaii's preschool program will have the capacity, quality, and oversight to succeed. As a pediatrician, I am very aware of the importance of Early Education for our preschool kids who have no voice of their own, yet represent the future of Hawaii. Please support SB2826 and SB2236, and thank-you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of Hawaii's future. Mahalo!

-----  
Form Data:

Email 1 (Primary): vazuma@yahoo.com

First Name: Vernon

Last Name: Azuma

City: Honolulu

State: HI

ZIP Code: 96822

# LATE TESTIMONY

**From:** [Brian Wu](#)  
**To:** [EDU Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of SB2826 and SB2236  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2014 2:53:23 PM

---

Brian Wu from Honolulu, HI writes:

Dear Chair Tokuda and Vice-Chair Kidani, I am writing in support of SB2826, which establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System established by section 302L-2, HRS; and SB2236, which authorizes the executive office on early learning to enter into agreements with the department of education and charter schools for use of vacant or underutilized classrooms as public preschool classrooms. Last year, you made the courageous decision to begin building the foundation of a high-quality early learning system for Hawaii; you passed and funded a school readiness system and you looked ahead and passed a measure to place a constitutional amendment on the 2014 ballot to ask Hawaii's residents if we are ready to invest in a statewide community preschool system – a system contracts w/ our local non-profit preschools and our public school system. Now, we need your help once again and pass SB2826. This measure will ensure that Hawaii's preschool program will have the capacity, quality, and oversight to succeed. Please support SB2826 and SB2236, and thank-you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of Hawaii's future. Mahalo!

-----  
Form Data:

Email 1 (Primary): wupedspulm@gmail.com

First Name: Brian

Last Name: Wu

City: Honolulu

State: HI

ZIP Code: 96814



# Position Statement

---

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The National Association of School Psychologists believes that services for young children should be coordinated, prevention-oriented and relevant to all young children, and grounded in evidence-based practice. NASP believes services should be linked to important goals for all young children and evaluated for effectiveness on a routine basis to ensure children, programs, and systems of care are making meaningful progress toward those goals. NASP recognizes that important skills in early childhood often bridge multiple developmental domains (social, motor, communication, cognitive, and early academic) and therefore emphasizes the identification of functional and generative skills that can be assessed and targeted for intervention across a number of contexts relevant to the everyday lives of children (Slentz & Hyatt, 2008). NASP also recognizes that important cultural and linguistic differences exist that may alter skill sequences, family priorities, and decisions about what skills require intervention.

### FOCUS ON ALL YOUNG CHILDREN

The National Association of School Psychologists believes in the importance of quality experiences for all young children and supports:

- Policies, programs, and funding to increase universal access to high-quality education and care experiences, provide support for caregivers, and promote health, safety, and development for all children.
- An active and highly collaborative role for school psychologists in early education and care settings that results in innovative approaches to assessment and intervention for all children.
- Communication systems that promote sharing information between early education settings and kindergarten programs to prepare young children for formal schooling and to prepare schools to meet the diverse needs of young children and families (Carlton & Winsler, 1999).
- Models of education that focus on quality experiences prior to kindergarten and seamless service as children transition to kindergarten, facilitated by coordination of curriculum, instruction, and services between the early education and the K–12 setting (Bogard & Takanishi, 2005).
- Partnerships with families and communities to support young children through the transition from early education to the K–12 setting and to encourage families continued engagement in their child's education.

### EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Response-to-Intervention frameworks (RTI; VanDerheyden & Snyder, 2006), general outcome measurement systems (Fuchs & Deno, 1991), and tiered models of intervention (Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006) provide a foundation for the practice of school psychology in early care and education. In promoting Response-to-Intervention frameworks in early care and education settings school psychologists should:

- Collaborate with early educators and families to identify instructional foci that reflect important learning goals for all children (e.g., early literacy and numeracy, social competence).
- Assist in implementing a scientific framework for interpreting rate of skill development relative to expectations or criteria for growth.
- Promote a systems-level approach to considering the development of *all* children to ensure that children make gains and those who do not make gains receive support that effectively accelerates their growth.

General outcome measurement systems hold promise for use, and there is increasing evidence to support the use of general outcome measurement systems in early education and care settings (VanDerHeyden, 2005). School psychologists should:

- Assist early educators and administrators to establish valued goals for learning and development and to identify benchmark criteria against which to compare child skill proficiency and growth.
- Lead teams to design and collect general outcome measurement data for all children to make data-based decisions about children's programming needs.
- Work with early educators to implement progress monitoring systems and use data to inform instruction and intervention to accelerate the progress of all children (Bagnato, 2005).
- Aid kindergarten teachers to use data to plan instruction to accommodate diverse learners as they enter kindergarten.

Tiered models of intervention provide a flexible yet comprehensive structure for meeting the diverse needs of young children. At each tier (e.g., universal, targeted, individualized), school psychologists can collaborate with early educators and families to promote supports that integrate developmentally appropriate learning perspectives with intentional and strategic structured learning experiences.

- At the primary or universal level, school psychologists can assist early educators to identify behaviors essential for school readiness, develop a plan to teach and reinforce those behaviors, and create positive environments that support those behaviors. School psychologists should assist schools in selecting and evaluating instructional and curricula models to ensure adequate opportunities for skill building.
- At the secondary or targeted level, school psychologists should assist teachers and care providers to implement small-group and peer-mediated interventions to increase opportunities for learning for children at-risk.
- At the tertiary or individualized level, school psychologists should guide the collection of individualized data to identify interventions that should effectively solve a problem, evaluate implementation of the intervention, and evaluate the effects of the intervention over time. Interventions grounded in applied behavior analysis have a strong evidence base in early intervention and provide a rich source of intervention strategies for school psychologists. School psychologists should actively collaborate with classroom teachers to modify interventions to increase their use, ecological congruence (e.g., similarity to classroom routines), sustainability over time, and acceptability to parents and teachers.

## **EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability should occur at individual, service program, and system levels. To ensure quality of services at all levels, the National Association of School Psychologists supports:

- The inclusion of all children in evaluation and accountability efforts.
- Meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly families, in identifying valued goals for children, monitoring progress toward goals, and evaluating outcomes.
- The use of a data-based decision-making framework to facilitate sound decision making and increase communication among stakeholders regarding children's progress toward important goals.
- Formative or responsive assessment practices that inform timely and meaningful changes in service delivery to maximize positive outcomes for all children.
- Coordinated professional development that focuses on evidence-based practices in assessment, instruction, and intervention.

To promote evaluation and accountability efforts that are likely to result in improved outcomes for all young children, school psychologists can assist in collecting, analyzing, and using data to inform service delivery at the individual, program, and system levels. Specifically, school psychologists should:

- Coordinate assessment and evaluation efforts.
- Actively engage families in assessment and intervention efforts.
- Identify appropriate targets for measurement in the context of school readiness.
- Promote the use of systems of measurement that are sensitive to growth over time and that inform instruction and intervention.
- Assist with monitoring progress of individual children as well as large groups of children to evaluate growth at different levels.
- Provide professional development, teacher support, and technical assistance in data-based decision making (i.e., methods of data collection, creating, and interpreting graphs, linking data to programmatic changes).
- Work with families and educators to use data to evaluate outcomes at individual, program, and systems levels and to make changes accordingly.

## SUMMARY

The National Association of School Psychologists believes that school psychologists should be active partners in early education and care settings. Such work fits with NASP's Strategic Plan goals to enhance professional competency and advocacy for all children. School psychologists can collaborate with early educators to create supportive learning environments for all children, effectively promote the identification of children needing intervention, assist with planning and implementation of interventions in the classroom and home setting, and evaluation of intervention effects. Further, school psychologists can provide leadership to evaluate the effects of assessment and intervention efforts at the program level to promote learning for all young children and prevent early and future learning deficits for children found to be at risk.

## REFERENCES

- Bagnato, S. J. (2005). The authentic alternative for assessment in early childhood: An emerging evidence-based practice. *Journal of Early Intervention, 28*, 17–22.
- Bogard, K., & Takanishi, R. (2005). *PK-3: An aligned and coordinated approach to education for children 3 to 8 years old* (Social Policy Report No. 19-3). Society for Research in Child Development.

- Carlton, M. P., & Winsler, A. (1999). School readiness: The need for a paradigm shift. *School Psychology Review, 28*, 338–352.
- Fuchs, L. S., & Deno, S. L. (1991). Paradigmatic distinctions between instructionally relevant measurement models. *Exceptional Children, 57*, 488–500.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M., & Fox, L. (2006). Social and emotional foundations for early learning: A conceptual model for intervention. *School Psychology Review, 35*, 583–601.
- Slentz, K. L., & Hyatt, K. J. (2008). Best practices in applying curriculum-based assessment in early childhood. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.) *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 519–534). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- VanDerHeyden, A. M. (2005). Intervention-driven assessment practices in early childhood/early intervention: Measuring what is possible rather than what is present. *Journal of Early Intervention, 28*, 28–33.
- VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Snyder, P. (2006). Integrating frameworks from early childhood intervention and school psychology to accelerate growth for all young children. *School Psychology Review, 35*, 519–534.

Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly on July 20, 2008.

Please cite this document as:

National Association of School Psychologists. (2008). *Early childhood services* (Position Statement). Bethesda, MD: Author.

© 2008 National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814

