Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2545, SD2
Relating to Education
Committee on Education
Rep. Roy Takumi, Chair
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

And
Committee on Human Services
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

March 14, 2012
2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Chair Takumi, Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Jordan, and members of the committees, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 2545 SD2, Relating to Education (ED).

While SB 2545 SD2 is not identical to the Administration’s bill SB 2781, the important objective to support early childhood education is the same. The Governor’s Office will continue to work with the Legislature in support of SB 2545 SD2 as we believe it advances one of the Governor’s more important priorities.

The Abercrombie Administration fully supports any positive action towards a comprehensive early childhood system that prepares our Hawaii’s children, prenatal to age five, for success in school and life. One of the critical components of a comprehensive early childhood system is providing access to high quality early childhood education also known as early learning programs.
Therefore, the Abercrombie Administration is in strong support of the establishment of an executive office on early learning, establishment of the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council, and directing the executive office on early learning to submit before the 2013 state Legislature's regular session, an implementation plan and financials for targeted four year olds.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2545 SD2.
Date: 03/14/2012

Committee: House Education
House Human Services

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2545, SD2 (sscr2612) Relating to Education

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the executive office on early learning. Establishes the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council. Repeals junior kindergarten programs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, requires students to be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year in order to attend kindergarten. Makes an appropriation to establish the executive office on early learning. (SD2)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports SB 2545, SD2 (sscr2612). This bill's purpose will advance quality early childhood initiatives in the State of Hawaii. Establishing the Office on Early Learning, along with the Early Learning Advisory Board, will assist and sustain planning efforts for all children in Hawaii beginning school in a safe, culturally appropriate, educationally sound, healthy, and safe condition. By revising the date for determining the eligibility of a child to attend kindergarten from December 31 to July 31, SB 2545, SD2 (sscr2612) will bring Hawaii in line with other public school systems nationally and some private schools in Hawaii. The Department is also poised to assist with development of the State's implementation plan to help facilitate a seamless transition when junior kindergarten is repealed at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The Department expresses its support and continuing belief that quality early education is important and welcomes the opportunity to continue working with Hawaii's early childhood partners, in both public and private settings. The Department also commits to collaboratively build the foundation for Hawaii's comprehensive early childhood system which focuses on healthy, safe, ready to learn, and engaged children and families.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Roy M. Takumi, Chair
    House Committee on Education

    Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
    House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: S.B. 2545, S.D.2 - RELATING TO EDUCATION
          Hearing: Wednesday, March 14, 2012, 2:00 p.m.
          Conference Room 309, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2545, S.D.2 is to establish the Office of Early Learning; to establish the Early Learning Advisory Board to replace the early learning council; to repeal junior kindergarten program at the end of the 2013-2014 school year; to require students to be at least five years of age on July 31 beginning with the 2014-2015 school year; require the transfer of the Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Office to the Executive Office on Early Learning; and to make an unspecified appropriation to establish the executive office on early learning.

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill and offers the following comments.

As a member of the Early Learning Council and an active participant in all issues related to improving outcomes for young children, the DHS is in support of creating an Office of Early Learning that would be dedicated to coordinating the early care and
Reassigning the Early Learning Council as an advisory board to the Office of Early Learning provides a clearer jurisdiction, role, and responsibility for that group.

This bill proposes to transfer the Pre-plus program and the Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Office from the DHS to the Office of Early Learning. DHS currently has an established Pre-plus coordinator position and the Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Project Director position that we anticipate would transfer over to the Office of Early Learning.

The bill also proposes the repeal of the junior kindergarten program. This is a concern to the DHS as the proposal will delay public school entry for children who are late-born five year olds. Services and programs need to be made available for these late-born children. While eligible families may be able to utilize the child care subsidies issued by the DHS to assist with the cost of tuition, the DHS will be without resources to meet the anticipated need.

In analyzing the potential cost to the DHS, we estimate that there would be about 3,068 children who would be income eligible for child care subsidies (calculation based on 5,900 late-born five-year olds of which approximately 52% on free/reduced lunch program). If there is funding for a portion of the school day appropriated to this group, then the families could apply for wrap-around funding. Oahu Head Start charges $450 for the wrap-around time frame of 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and noon to 5:00 p.m. Using this figure, the potential cost to DHS may be $1.3 million per month. If there is no funding appropriated for this group, the families could apply for child care subsidies for their preschool tuition, with the maximum child care subsidy rate for an accredited preschool being $710, and the potential cost to the DHS may be $2.1 million per month.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY
State of Hawaii
Department of Health
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, Hawaii 96801-3378

House Committees on Education and Human Services

S.B. 2545, S.D. 2, Relating to Education

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health

March 14, 2012

Department’s Position: The Department of Health (DOH) supports the establishment of the Executive Office on Early Learning and the Early Learning Advisory Board.

Fiscal Implications: Appropriates general funds to establish the Executive Office on Early Learning.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose of this measure establishes an Executive Office on Early Learning within the Department of Education. It also converts the existing Early Learning Council to the Early Learning Advisory Board which adds four new voting members: a representative from the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council; a parent representative; a representative from the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; and a representative of home visiting program providers. The Director of Health is a member of the current Early Learning Council and will continue membership within the new Early Learning Advisory Board.

The DOH administers home visiting programs through the newly developed Hawaii Home Visiting Network, established through the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting grant funds via the Affordable Care Act. To ensure meaningful representation on the Advisory Board, the DOH would suggest the home visiting provider representative be from the Hawaii Home Visiting Network.

Promoting Lifelong Health & Wellness
The Department recommends amending page 7, line 1, number 13, to read “a representative of the Department of Health’s Hawaii Home Visiting Network.”

The DOH also supports the establishment of this office as a means to continue its collaborative relationships with the Departments of Education and Human Services and its partnerships with early childhood providers. The DOH applauds the Legislature’s commitment and investment for high-quality, early learning programs which are not only crucial to a child’s development, but the overall well being for a child who will be healthy and ready to learn.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.
To: House Committees on Education and Human Services

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: March 14, 2012, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 309

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 2545, S.D. 2
Relating to Education

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.B. No. 2545, S.D. 2.

OIP takes no position on the substance of this bill, which would establish an Executive Office on Early Learning and an Early Learning Board and raises the minimum age for attending kindergarten. OIP is concerned, however, about the proposed subsection 302L-B(e), beginning at bill page 11, line 12, which would create a special permitted interaction for the new board under which the board’s subcommittees or workgroups would be able to operate outside the Sunshine Law’s open meeting requirements so long as less than a quorum of board members (and any number of non-members) participated in a given subcommittee.

The Sunshine Law generally requires board members to discuss board business in a publicly noticed meeting, but provides for several specific circumstances, called “permitted interactions,” in which board members may properly discuss board business outside a meeting. These permitted interactions are carefully balanced to both facilitate board members’ ability to communicate and to protect the public’s interest in having access to the board’s discussions. For
instance, there is a permitted interaction (section 92-2.5(b), HRS) that allows less than a quorum of a board to be assigned to investigate a specific matter of the board and report back to the board. This existing permitted interaction (1) is limited in duration, as it envisions the group working together on one issue, and ceasing to exist after making its report on that issue; (2) is limited in scope of subject matter, since it involves investigation of one particular issue rather than a range of related topics; and (3) assures the public's ability to be informed about the discussions and testify about the issue, since it requires that the group report back and that the full board wait to discuss the report until a later meeting. Groups formed under this existing permitted interaction sometimes work with individuals who are not board members in carrying out their assigned investigation, and there is nothing in the existing permitted interaction to forbid doing so.

The permitted interaction proposed in this bill lacks any of the public protections in the existing permitted interaction, and seems instead to be intended to allow the council members to have standing subcommittees and workgroups that function entirely outside the Sunshine Law. OIP has serious concerns about allowing a board that is ostensibly subject to the Sunshine Law to conduct a large part of its work outside the Sunshine Law and without the protections of the public interest afforded by the Sunshine Law. OIP would therefore recommend that proposed subsection 302L-B(e), beginning at bill page 11, line 12 be deleted, and that the council instead use the existing permitted interactions in conducting its business consistent with all other government boards.

Thank you for considering our testimony and recommendations.
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS SB 2545 SD 2, which would establish the executive office on early learning and an early learning advisory board. In addition, SB 2545 would repeal junior kindergarten. OHA believes that the cut-off deadline to repeal junior kindergarten should be postponed until a transition plan is in place and recommendations have been made by the advisory board.

In regards to the advisory board, OHA proposes the following amendment to §302L-B (a):

The advisory board shall invite the director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, the chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the chief executive officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the president of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, to serve as voting members of the advisory board.

This amendment will enable OHA to advance the success of Hawai‘i’s largest growing demography—Native Hawaiian children younger than five (Huaka‘i, 2005, p. 140).

Lastly, OHA supports the proposed amendments offered by the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, which recognize the unique position and needs of Hawaiian language immersion early learners. These amendments would ensure that the Hawaiian voice is heard and recognize that the progress of Hawaiian language immersion education in Hawai‘i can only advance with sound policy making beginning with SB 2545 SD 2.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to PASS SB 2545 SD 2 with the suggested amendments. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
House Committee on Education and Committee on Human Services  
Testimony by  
Early Learning Council  
March 14, 2012  
S.B. 2545 S.D. 2 – Relating to Education  

Chairs Takumi and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Belatti and Jordan, and Committee Members:

The Early Learning Council (“ELC”) offers this testimony in support of S.B. 2545 S.D. 2.

Established under Act 14, First Special Session 2008, the Early Learning Council is entrusted with the development and administration of the state’s early learning system. The ELC seeks to establish a cohesive, comprehensive, and sustainable early learning system that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for young children from their prenatal period until the time they enter kindergarten. As such, the ELC focuses upon four essential areas: Early Education and Care; Health; Parent Education and Family Support; and Workforce and Professional Development.

Since its inception, the ELC has completed and received approval for a statewide early childhood system framework, has partnered and provided advice on the development of a State Quality Improvement and Rating System, has supported the drafting of professional competence requirements for early learning practitioners, and most recently completed a Fiscal Mapping study (funded by the Omidyar Foundation) to measure the resources currently available in the State for Early Childhood services (e.g. education, health, nutritional and social services, special education services and family and professional training and development. Finally, the ELC has supported the “Be My Voice” campaign, which is targeted to impact the next biennium.

The ELC will comment on some of the broad provisions of the Bill.

- **Junior Kindergarten**: We are writing to support the delay in eliminating junior kindergarten and we respectfully request an amendment. In addition to the proposed delay, the ELC believes this legislation should authorize the development of an early learning program, funded through a public/private partnership, for all four-year-old children falling within the “gap” period of August 1 – December 31. We believe that this is critically important as a significant number of Hawaii keiki, families and our community may be negatively affected if there were no delay and the junior kindergarten program were to close.

- **Public/Private Early Learning Program**: In addition, S.B. 2545 S.D. 2 recognizes the need to establish a phased implementation plan for a truly collaborative public/private four-year-old program, and it considers the benefits of changing the junior kindergarten into an early learning program. These relate
directly to the ELC’s focus areas of Early Education and Care and Parent Education and Family Support, and represent a significant step in establishing a comprehensive array of services for our most vulnerable children. The ELC is heartened to hear of collaborative discussions between the Office of Early Child Development and the DOE to begin such planning.

The members of the ELC will discuss certain aspects of the bill with legislators at the March 15th ELC meeting in order to develop more clarity regarding these proposed changes. We look forward to working with legislators to provide insight regarding the important work and essential purpose of the ELC as it continues to improve and expand early learning opportunities in Hawaii. We strongly support advancing this bill and will work collaboratively and proactively with the legislature and the broader community to preserve and promote these early education efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Robert Peters
Chair, Early Learning Council
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Katherine Murphy, Executive Director  
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC)

Date: Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Subject: SB 2969, SD1 RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

SB 2969, SD1 would require the Department of Taxation to allow a taxpayer to designate, or “check off,” that a specified amount of the taxpayer’s income tax refund be paid to the early learning trust fund. The Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) offers this testimony in support of SB 2969 and would like to ask for your consideration of the following amendments:

1. The creation of a check-off box allowing taxpayers to designate their tax return to a single trust fund that supports early childhood development instead of a fund that supports multiple early childhood causes.
2. Remove the $25 donation ceiling and add a minimum of one to three dollars.

HAEYC would like to continue to be a positive contributor to ongoing policy conversations about Hawaii’s children. Our volunteers and staff would be happy to provide you more information to facilitate your decision-making. Please contact us at 942-4708 or haevc@hawaiiaevc.org.

HAEYC represents nearly 1,000 members who are early childhood development and educational professionals across the state.

HAEYC’s mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii’s children (0-8) and their families.

Katherine E. Murphy  
Executive Director  
HAEYC

Our mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii’s young children (0-8) and their families.
SB 2545 SD2: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairs Takumi and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Belatti and Jordon, and members of the House Committees on Education and Human Services:

The University of Hawai‘i is in strong support of SB 2545 SD2 that establishes the executive office of early learning and replaces the early learning council with an early learning advisory board.

Recognizing that a child’s positive early learning experiences have significant benefit to individual lifelong learning capacity and to society, the University concurs that it is critical and urgent to establish an office and director of early learning at the executive level. SB 2545 SD2 establishes, in the proposed executive office of early learning, the responsibility for overssoing, developing, and assessing early care and education programs across the state, coordinating programs and policy efforts across agencies, and creates a state plan for an early learning system. This office will build upon progress that has been made throughout many years in Hawai‘i by the efforts of the existing Early Learning Council, state agencies, and public, private, and community groups.

A systematic approach toward early care and learning has the potential of enhancing existing capacity of services and use of resources. One of the areas of highest concern to the University is the access to and relevance of educational programs for the early childhood workforce. To meet the needs of this workforce requires a coordinated approach and understanding of needs across different sectors and regions of the state. An executive office, as described in SB 2545 SD2, could create such a coordinated approach that would support our own review of academic and workforce programs at the University to meet the state’s needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2545 SD2.
March 14, 2012
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
and
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

RE: SB 2545 SD2 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Dear Chairs Takumi and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Belatti and Jordan, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 elementary and secondary students statewide.

The Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 2545 SD2 which, in part, establishes the Executive Office on Early Learning and the Early Learning Advisory Board to replace the Early Learning Council.

HAIS has long been an advocate for educational programming and services for young children, particularly through our active involvement with the Early Learning Council (ELC). The ELC seeks to develop a comprehensive early childhood education system for the state and has engaged a professional body of experienced leaders to realize this goal.

HAIS hopes that the Early Learning Advisory Board envisioned in this bill will continue to engage stakeholders and conduct meetings with transparency under the leadership of Hawaii’s most innovative and highly committed educators.

Despite funding deficiencies, the ELC has steadfastly worked to achieve laudable goals on behalf of the state’s young children. HAIS looks forward to continued and thoughtful discussion with the legislature on how best to achieve high quality early learning programs that are available, affordable, and accessible for all children, birth to kindergarten entry, and address children’s diverse abilities and needs.

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2545 SD2.
To: Roy Takumi, Chair  
Della Au Bellati, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Education and Human Services State Capitol

RE: SB 2545 SD2 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Chair Takumi and Vice Chair Bellati, and Members of the Committee,

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) of Hawaii strongly supports SB2545 which proposes to create an Executive Office on Early Learning with an advisory board that will replace the current Early Learning Council.

The CCCs are community-based bodies comprised of parents, professionals in both public and private agencies and other interested persons who are concerned with specialized services provided to Hawaii's students. Membership is diverse, voluntary and advisory in nature. The CCCs are in rural and urban communities organized around the Complexes in the Department of Education.

The CCCs have long held that all children, with and without disabilities, benefit from quality, early learning programs that address their unique needs and help prepare them for long-term academic success. We have promoted best practices including inclusive placement options, timely transitions from early intervention, positive behavioral supports and academic outcomes, and evidence-based instruction to promote achievement. “According to the National Commission, ‘pupils’ early attainment at school is a good indicator on later educational success, and perhaps a more reliable indicator than family background.” (Ball, 1994)

The CCCs maintain that a significant priority of the new Office on Early Learning will be to develop high quality educational alternatives for the gap group of four-year-olds who will be displaced by the repeal of Junior Kindergarten. The CCCs offer our assistance in disseminating information to families and community members statewide as well as advising the new Office and advisory board on policies and procedures required to promote high quality early education that leads to lasting cognitive and social benefits for all children.

We respectfully request your consideration of SB2545.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Community Children's Council Office (CCCO) at 586-5363. Thank you for considering our testimony,

Tom Smith, Co-Chair  
Jessica Wong-Sumida, Co-Chair

(Original signatures are on file with the CCCO)
Written Testimony of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii in regard to

SB 2545 SD2 Relating to Education

Presented before the
House Education and Human Services Committees
March 14, 2012, 9:00 a.m., Conf. Room 309

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and members of the committee.

My name is Valere McFarland and I am Education Chair for the League of Women Voters — Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of our members throughout Hawaii. The League applauds the state of Hawai‘i for working to establish a collaborative public/private four-year-old program within an early childhood system that prepares our children prenatal to age five for success in school and life. One of the key components in such a system will be to give the families of children in this system choice in providing education opportunities for their children. The League respectfully submits the following input for your consideration with regard to the Junior Kindergarten program.

SB 2545 SD1 provides an end date of the 2013-2014 school year for the Junior Kindergarten program established in 2004. We are concerned about the lack of any language in this bill that would provide a dedicated funding stream for the approximately 6,000 late born five year olds who would have been eligible for the Junior Kindergarten program. Families who had planned for their children to participate in the Junior Kindergarten program will now have to make alternative arrangements. And because of the difficult economic climate we have in Hawaii, with more than 50% of these families living in poverty, their choices may be limited to caretaking by friends or relatives. Thus, for an entire cohort of late born five year old children, the opportunity to receive a quality early childhood education is extremely limited.

Many of the nearly 6,000 children impacted by the abolishment of the Junior Kindergarten program are from low income families, and are ‘at-risk’ of not completing their education career. In addition to economic challenges that prohibit most of these parents from affording quality early childhood education programs, the available spaces in Head Start and other programs are not sufficient to absorb this group. Forcing families to compete for spaces in these nearly full programs adds an unfair burden. Those who planned to enroll their children in Junior Kindergarten will now have to adjust by competing for spaces in nearly full preschool programs, or they will be forced to find relatives or friends who can provide child care.

It is regularly acknowledged in Hawaii by the political system, by the populace, and by educators that the best investment we can make is to ensure that all of our ‘at-risk’ kids start school healthy and ready to learn. There is no debate on that and a survey of the public would likely find a large majority would agree that we should be funding childhood education for this group of children. Economically, we cannot afford to allow this group to fall between the cracks.
Cover Sheet

Testifying Agency:  Aloha United Way
Kim Gennaula, President & CPO
Norm Baker, COO & Vice President Community Impact

House Committee on Education
Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

House Committee on Human Services
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

SB 2545, SD2:  Relating to Education
March 12, 2012

House Committee on Education  
Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services  
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 309

SB 2545, SD2: Relating to Education: Testimony in Strong Support

Dear Chair Takumi, Chair Mizuno and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way strongly encourages your favorable consideration of SB 2545, SD2 which establishes the Executive Office on Early Learning and an Early Learning Advisory Board.

Research clearly shows that the first five years of a child’s life are critical in brain formation and to later success in our education system. The legislature recognized the importance of these early years by passing Act 14, Special Session Laws of 2008, which created the Early Learning Council to develop and administer Hawaii’s early learning system. SB 2545, SD2 continues this process by transitioning the Early Learning Council to funded state positions and creating the framework upon which a functional early learning system can be built.

SB 2545, SD2 will enable the Executive Office on Early Learning Council to initiate the planning for the eventual roll out of the early learning system we need. Aloha United Way strongly encourages favorable consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Kim Gennaula  
President & Chief Professional Officer
Testimony on SB 2545 Relating to Education
House Education and Human Services Committees
Wednesday, March 14, 2012, State Capitol, Room 309, 2 p.m.

Dear Chair Rep. Roy Takumi and Chair Rep. Mizuno, Vice-Chair Rep. Belatti and Vice-Chair Rep. Jordan and Committee members,

I am Howard S. Garval, President and Chief Executive Officer of Child & Family Service, Hawaii’s oldest human services nonprofit organization whose mission is strengthening families and fostering the healthy development of children.

I am writing in support of SB 245 that:

- Establishes the Executive Office on Early Learning and makes an appropriation for this office
- Establishes the Early Learning Advisory Board to replace the Early Learning Council, and
- Repeals junior kindergarten programs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year and beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, requires students to be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year in order to attend kindergarten

The best investment we can make in our community is on the front end; i.e. from birth to three so that children enter school safe, healthy and ready to learn. The Governor’s appointment of an Early Childhood Coordinator was an important step in this direction and establishing an Executive Office on Early Learning is an important next step that will ensure that services for young children are coordinated across state departments. It is important also to continue the work of the Early Learning Council (ELC) by creating the Early Learning Advisory Board under this new Executive Office. I was pleased to hear the House Finance Committee appropriate $250,000 for the ELC. The repeal of junior kindergarten at the end of the 2013-2014 school year is needed to allow time for developing an alternative pre-school option for young children who otherwise would have been in junior K.
I applaud the authors of this legislation that takes an important step in elevating Hawaii’s commitment to our keiki.

I urge your support of this legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Aloha,
Howard S. Garval, President & CEO
Child & Family Service
Honorable Chair Takumi, Chair Mizuno, and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of SB 2545, SD2, relating to education.

We firmly support the establishment of both an executive office on early learning and early learning advisory board. As recently noted by an MIT working group on the topic, investments in early childhood education pay dividends for the formal preparation of children as learners and future citizens, while also benefiting taxpayers and boosting economic vitality. At the national level, every dollar spent on early childhood education saves taxpayers up to $13.00 in future costs. This trend is reflected in local studies, as well, where each dollar spent on early learning reaps approximately $4.20 in social benefits, including lowered healthcare costs, reduced rates of educational remediation and prison incarceration, and higher productivity. Access to affordable early learning programs not only helps working parents fulfill their responsibilities, but is essential for building a 21st century labor force. Early childhood education is especially important for at-risk students. According to the High Scopes/Perry Preschool longitudinal study, at-risk children with access to quality early learning...
programs were 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 14 percent more likely to be employed, and 24 percent less likely to have been incarcerated by age 40 than peers without such access.

That said, we do note that the financial liability of repealing the junior kindergarten program for the Department of Human Services is estimated to be between $1.3 million and $2.1 million per month, depending upon the rate of appropriation of funds for lower-income child care subsidies. Therefore, we urge you to continue pushing for a reallocation of current early learning funds to cover this gap, thereby minimizing the cost to an already and persistently overstretched DHS.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
*Legislative Director*
IMUAlliance
March 13, 2012

The Honorable Representative Roy M. Takumi  
Chairman - The House Committee on Education  
The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno  
Chairman – The House Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 309  
Honolulu HI 9681

RE: SB 2545 SD2 Relating to Education

Aloha Chairman Takumi, Chairman Mizuno, and Members of These Committees:

Partners In Development Foundation, a non-profit organization that serves thousands in our community through early childhood education, supports the establishment of the executive office on early learning, and the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council.

It is encouraging to know that you as legislators are aware of the importance of early childhood education (preschool), and the critical need that we have in Hawai‘i to ensure that our youngest learners are entering school with a good educational foundation.

However, it is because of this need that we are concerned with the proposed repeal of the Junior Kindergarten (JK) program. Doing so may deny as many as 6,000 children access to quality education in preparation for entry into the elementary school system as a kindergartener.

While we are supportive of the opening portions of the legislation, we sincerely hope that the repeal of the JK can be delayed until a program is in place to serve this otherwise gap-group of four year old keiki.

Naʻu Me Ka Pono,

Jan E. Hanohano Dill  
President  
Partners In Development Foundation
Aloha e ka Lunaho’omalu Takumi, ka Hope ‘o Belatti a me nā lālā o ke kūmike ho’ona’auao. Aloha pū mai e ka Lunaho’omalu Mizuno, ka Hope ‘o Jordan a me nā lālā o ke kūmike lawelawe kanaka.

Eia au ka Luna Ho’okele o ka ‘Aha Pūnana Leo ke kākō’o nei i ka pila SB2545 ME NĀ LOLI.

‘O ka ‘Aha Pūnana Leo wale nō ka mea nona ka ‘ōnahana kula kamali‘i kaiāʻōlelo Hawai‘i he 11 mai Hawai‘i mokupuni a i Kaua‘i. ‘O nā kula Pūnana Leo nā paepae o ka ‘ōnaehana P–20 ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. Ke hāpai ‘ia nei e loli SB245 a ‘ike ‘ia ko Hawai‘i i ‘ano kūhēlū me moku‘a‘ina ʻōlelo pālua. He ‘ōnaehana hoʻona‘aua o kula ma luna o ka paepae kaiāʻōlelo Hawai‘i. He laha ka hana o ka Pūnana Leo ma ʻō a ʻō ma ka hoʻōla ʻōlelo ʻōiwi. Ua pīha he 30 makahiki o ka moemoa e ola ka ʻōlelo makuaʻihane a nui ka ʻike no ka ‘oko‘a o ke aʻo ʻano i loko o ka ʻōlelo Hawai‘i a me nā keupono o ia aʻo ʻana ma ka ʻaoʻao kālai‘ike me ka moʻomeheu. He pono a kaalike ka loa‘a o ka ‘ōnaehana kaiāʻōlelo Hawai‘i a na māku e hana. Eia nā loli e hāpai ‘ia nei ‘o ka mua, e hōʻike ‘ia nā ala ʻelua o ka hoʻona‘aua ma nā ʻōlelo kūhēlū ʻelua o ka ʻaina. E noho ka ‘Aha Pūnana Leo ma ke kanihele aʻoʻa aku i ka luna hoʻomalu o ke keʻena hou. He pilina nā loli ʻē aʻe ma ke kuanaʻike me ke kālaiʻike o ka hoʻona‘aua kamali‘i ma ka ʻōlelo Hawai‘i.

He mau loli kūpono no nā Pūnana Leo o lailai kūkulu ‘ia ka papahana mai loko mai o ke ao ʻōlelo Hawai‘i.
Aloha Chairs Takumi and Mizuno and Vice Chairs Belatti and Jordan and members of the committees on Education and Human Services

My name is ‘Ekekela Aionoa, Executive Director of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo. Mahalo for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony for SB2545. The ‘Aha Pūnana Leo supports the intent of this bill and provides the following amendments in support of early education in Hawaiian language.

Section 1 to include Hawai‘i’s linguistic, cultural and historical distinctiveness

Section 2 to include attention to distinctive legislation, policies and programming depending on the official language of the state used as the medium of early education and to ensure support for best practices developed within the community of Hawaiian speaking early childhood educators. In addition, to include membership on the Early Learning Advisory Board similar to other statewide entities currently identified.

The ‘Aha Pūnana Leo is the only statewide provider of early education through the medium of Hawaiian and is attached to a P-20 Hawaiian Medium Education system. Hawai‘i’s distinctiveness as a state with two official languages and two languages of education is a unique strength for Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i is a national and international model of indigenous language revitalization. There are unique academic and cultural advantages for children receiving early childhood education through Hawaiian. We have learned a lot over the nearly 30 years since Pūnana Leo was established. We now have another generation with former Pūnana Leo keiki having their keiki and raising the next generation with Hawaiian as a home language.

Our amendments below include language that allows for the linguistic uniqueness of Hawaiian medium and the development of this system parallel to English medium. We also support the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo on the Early Learning Advisory Board to ensure the unique needs of Hawaiian Medium early education are addressed as well as the application of current Hawai‘i statutes are adhered to.
These are very important to Pūnana Leo as our foundation of early education is based in our language and culture.

Mahalo nui

‘Ekekela Aiona
Executive Director
‘Aha Pūnana Leo
96 Pu'uhonu Place
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-4304
THE SENATE
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE, 2012
STATE OF HAWAII
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the period from birth to age five is the most crucial period of learning in a child's life. This is when over eighty-five percent of a person's brain development takes place. Early life experiences lay the groundwork for a child's lifelong learning and behavior. The legislature further finds that high quality early learning programs sensitive to Hawaii's linguistic, cultural, and historic distinctiveness that are affordable and accessible for all children are critically important for ensuring the success of Hawaii's keiki as they pursue early care and education through the medium of either of the two official languages of the state.

In addition, the significant, long-term benefits realized through investments in high-quality, early learning systems have been established through decades of research as well as Hawaii's own 19th century history of near universal literacy produced in Hawaiian language schools with compulsory education beginning at age four (4). International studies show that it is much easier to teach early literacy through a language with a writing system like that of Hawaiian than through a writing system such as that of English. Many national studies show the importance of early childhood education For example, a federal Department of Education study reports that children enrolled in kindergarten increase their knowledge and skills regardless of development prior to enrollment. English medium school kindergarteners are expected to leave kindergarten knowing how to read and write. First graders who did not go to kindergarten are typically developmentally behind their peers in academic and social development and are more likely to fail a grade level in elementary school.

The purpose of this Act is, among other things, to:

(1) Establish the executive office on early learning;

(2) Establish the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council;
(3) Repeal junior kindergarten programs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year;

(4) Require students to be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year in order to attend kindergarten starting with the 2014-2015 school year;

(5) Make an appropriation to the executive office on early learning; and

(6) Require an implementation plan and projected financials in order to ensure a seamless transition from the junior kindergarten program to the keiki first steps program in the 2014-2015 school year.

SECTION 2. Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding three new sections to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302L-A Executive office on early learning; director; general functions, duties, and powers. (a) There is established, within the department of education, for administrative purposes only, an executive office on early learning.

(b) The head of this office shall be known as the director of the executive office on early learning, hereinafter referred to as director. The director shall:

1. Have professional training in the field of social work, education, and other related fields;

2. Have direct experience in programs or services related to early education;

3. Have recent experience in a supervisory, consultative, or administrative position;

4. Be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor;

5. Be paid a salary set by the governor that shall not exceed ninety per cent of the salary of the director of human resources development; and

6. Be included in any benefit program generally applicable to the officers and employees of the State.

(c) The director shall be responsible for:

1. Serving as the principal officer in state government responsible for the performance, development, and control of programs, policies, and activities related to early care and education for children, from prenatal care to entrance into kindergarten with attention to distinctive legislation, policies, and programming depending on the official language of the State used as the
(2) Overseeing, supervising, and directing the performance of the director's subordinates in various activities, which include planning, evaluation, and coordination of early learning programs:

(3) Administering funds allocated for the executive office on early learning and applying for, receiving, and disbursing grants and donations from all services for early learning programs and services:

(4) Assessing the policies and practices of other agencies impacting early learning and conducting advocacy efforts for early learning:

(5) Advising agencies on new legislation, programs, and policy initiatives relating to early learning:

(6) Employing and retaining staff as may be necessary for the purposes of this section, in conformity with chapter 76; and

(7) Contracting for services that may be necessary for the purposes of this section, including through master contracts with other state agencies receiving federal and state funds for programs and services for early learning in either or both of the state's official languages, and purchase of service agreements with appropriate agencies.

(d) In developing the early learning system with distinctive Hawaiian medium and English medium pathways established pursuant to section 302L-2, the office, among other things, shall:

(1) Establish policies and procedures governing its operations;

(2) Develop a plan, with goals and objectives, for the early learning system, including the development, execution, and monitoring of a phased implementation plan;

(3) Coordinate, improve, and expand upon existing early learning programs and services for children from birth until the time they enter kindergarten;

(4) Establish policies and procedures to include existing early learning programs and services;

(5) Establish additional early learning programs and services, including public and private partnerships, when applicable;
(6) Establish policies and procedures governing the inclusion of children with special needs;

(7) Develop incentives to enhance the quality of programs, services, and educational professionals within the early learning system;

(8) Coordinate efforts to develop a highly-qualified, stable, and diverse workforce;

(9) Develop and implement methods of maximizing the engagement of families, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system;

(10) Develop an effective, comprehensive, and integrated system to provide training and technical support to programs and services within the early learning system;

(11) Develop standards of accountability to ensure that high-quality early learning experiences are provided by programs and services of the early learning system;

(12) Collect, interpret, and release data relating to early learning in the State;

(13) Recommend the appropriate proportion of state funds that should be distributed to programs and services across the early learning system, to ensure the most effective and efficient allocation of fiscal resources within the early learning system;

(14) Promote awareness of early learning opportunities to families and the general public;

(15) Ensure that support for Hawaiian language medium education follows best practice developed from within the community of Hawaiian speaking early childhood educators, with equal access through Hawaiian to the services of the early learning system; and

(16) Consult with community groups, including statewide organizations that are involved in early learning professional development, policy and advocacy, and early childhood programs.

(e) The governor or the department of human services shall transfer the Hawaii head start state collaboration office from the department of human services to the executive office on early learning.
learning advisory board, whose members shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to section 26-34. The advisory board shall be responsible for:

(1) Advising the office on how best to meet the educational needs of children, from birth to entry into kindergarten;

(2) Providing recommendations to the office on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early care and education programs; and

(3) Promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children.

(b) The advisory board shall consist of the following voting members:

(1) The superintendent of education or the superintendent's designee;

(2) The director of human services or the director's designee;

(3) The director of health or the director's designee;

(4) The president of the University of Hawaii or the president's designee;

(5) A representative of center-based program providers or the representative's designee;

(6) A representative of family child care program providers;

(7) A representative of family-child interaction learning program providers;

(8) A representative of philanthropic organizations that support early learning or the representative's designee;

(9) A representative from a head start provider agency;

(10) A representative from the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council;

(11) A parent representative;

(12) A representative from the Hawaii chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;

(13) A representative of home-visiting program providers; and
(14) Two representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors or each representative's respective designee.

The advisory board shall invite the director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, the chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of Aha Puna Leo and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, to serve as voting members of the advisory board.

Except for the superintendent of education, directors of state departments, president of the University of Hawaii, director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of Aha Puna Leo and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, the representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors, or their respective designees, the members shall be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor.

(c) Except for the superintendent of education, directors of state departments, president of the University of Hawaii, director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of Aha Puna Leo and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, the members of the advisory board shall serve staggered terms as follows:

(1) The representative of center-based program providers shall serve a two-year term;

(2) The representative of family child care program providers shall serve a three-year term;

(3) The representative of family-child interaction learning program providers shall serve a three-year term;

(4) The representative of philanthropic organizations that support early learning shall serve a two-year term;

(5) The representative from the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council shall serve a three-year term;

(6) The parent representative shall serve a two-year term;
(7) The representative from the Hawaii chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics shall serve a two-year term;

(8) The representative of home-visiting program providers shall serve a three-year term; and

(9) Of the two representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors, one shall serve a two-year term, and the other shall serve a three-year term as determined by the Hawaii Council of Mayors.

(d) The advisory board shall select a chairperson by a majority vote of its members; provided that the chairperson shall be a representative from the private sector. A majority of the members serving on the advisory board shall constitute a quorum to do business. The concurrence of the majority of the members serving on the advisory board shall be necessary to make any action of the advisory board valid.

(e) The advisory board may form workgroups and subcommittees, including with individuals who are not advisory board members, to:

      (1) Obtain resource information from early learning professionals and other individuals as deemed necessary by the advisory board;

      (2) Make recommendations to the advisory board; and

      (3) Perform other functions as deemed necessary by the advisory board to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.

Two or more advisory board members, but less than a quorum, may discuss matters relating to official advisory board business in the course of their participation in a workgroup or subcommittee, and such discussion shall be a permitted interaction as provided for in section 92-2.5.

(f) Members of the advisory board shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

§302L-C Early childhood education facilities: pre-plus. (a) There is established the pre-plus program within the executive office on early learning to expand access to affordable and high-quality English medium and Hawaiian medium early childhood education for children from low-income families who are not otherwise eligible for kindergarten, by allowing preschool programs to be established on public school campuses through public-private partnerships.
(b) The executive office on early learning, the department of education, and the department of human services shall work collaboratively to develop suitable English medium pre-plus classrooms on department of education campuses statewide, including conversion charter school campuses. The executive office on early learning, with the department of education and department of human services, shall coordinate site selection for additional English medium pre-plus programs at public school sites, with priority given to public school sites that serve at-risk children as defined in section 302L-1, including sites located in areas with limited access to early learning programs and services.

(c) The executive office on early learning, the department of education, the •Aha P•nana Leo, and the department of human services shall work collaboratively to develop suitable Hawaiian medium pre-plus classrooms on appropriate charter school and department of education campuses statewide, including conversion charter school campuses. The executive office on early learning and the •Aha P•nana Leo, with the department of education and department of human services, shall coordinate site selection for additional pre-plus programs at public school sites, with priority given to public school sites that serve Hawaiian speaking and other at-risk children as defined in section 302L-1, including sites located in areas with limited access to early learning programs and services.

SECTION 3. Section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

§302A-411 [Junior kindergarten and kindergarten] Kindergarten program; establishment; attendance. (a) The department shall establish and maintain [junior kindergartens and] kindergartens with a program of instruction as a part of the public school system; provided that:

(1) Attendance shall not be mandatory; and

(2) Charter schools shall be excluded from mandatory participation in the program.

SECTION 4. Section 302A-1151.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§302A-1151.5] Use of vacant public school facilities for pre-plus programs and by charter schools. (a) When the department considers whether to close any particular public school, it shall simultaneously give reasonable consideration to making all or portions of the facilities of the public school available for [the]:"
(1) The exclusive occupancy and use by a charter school or a pre-plus program established pursuant to section 302L-4; or

(2) The joint occupancy and use by the charter school or a pre-plus program and the department;

provided that the department may elect to use the facilities for the support of public education programs, with preference given to instructional uses over administrative uses.

(b) The department shall submit a notice of possible availability of a public school to the charter school review panel and the executive office on early learning as early as possible; provided that if a vacancy is established, a notice of vacancy shall be submitted to the charter school review panel and executive office on early learning no later than thirty days after the establishment of the vacancy.

(c) Pursuant to section 302B-3.6 and upon receipt of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), the charter school review panel shall solicit applications from charter schools interested in using and occupying all or portions of the facilities of the public school and submit a prioritized list of charter schools to the department for final determination of which charter school, if any, shall be authorized to use and occupy the public school facilities.

(d) Upon receipt of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), the executive office on early learning shall solicit applications from pre-plus programs interested in using and occupying all or portions of the facilities of the public school and submit a prioritized list of pre-plus programs to the department for final determination of which pre-plus program, if any, shall be authorized to use and occupy the public school facilities.

(e) Upon the selection of a charter school or pre-plus program to use a vacant school facility or portion of a school facility, the department and the charter school review panel or executive office on early learning, whichever is appropriate, shall enter into necessary agreements within ninety days of the selection to carry out the purposes of this section.

(f) After receipt [by the charter school review panel] of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), if the charter school review panel [does not provide a prioritized list of charter schools or pre-plus programs] because no charter school or pre-plus program has requested to use the facilities of the public school, or if the department receives the prioritized list but determines that no charter school or pre-plus program on [the] either list is an appropriate candidate to occupy and use the facilities, the
department shall give reasonable consideration to making all or portions of the facilities of the public school, if closed, available for occupancy and use for other educational purposes.

[(f)] (g) The department shall adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

[(g)] (h) For purposes of this section, "public school" means any school that falls within the definition of public schools in section 302A-101, except for charter schools.

SECTION 5. Section 302L-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§302L-1 Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

Advisory board means the early learning advisory board established pursuant to this chapter.

At-risk children means:

(1) Hawaiian speaking children, and

(2) children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to language, cultural, economic, and other disadvantages that cause them to be at risk for school failure, including children:

(a) (1) Who are eligible for special education services;

(b) (2) Who are English as a second language learners in English medium schools and Hawaiian as second language learners in Hawaiian medium schools;

(c) (3) Who reside within a public school district, established under chapter 302A, that is in need of improvement based on the criteria of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), as amended; or

(d) (4) Whose family income is no more than two hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level.

"Center-based" describes programs in which early childhood education and care services are provided in a facility, including private preschools, child care centers, and head start programs, licensed, or excluded or exempt from licensing, by the department of human services.

"Council" means the early learning council established pursuant to this chapter.

"Family child care program" means a program in which a child is cared for in a family child care home licensed under section 346-161.
"Family-child interaction learning program" means a program attended by both a child and at least one adult who is the child's parent, relative, or other caregiver, that facilitates family-child interactive learning experiences for children and educates the family member or members about how to encourage the child's learning.

"Home-based instruction program" means a family-involvement, school-readiness program that helps families prepare their child for success in school and beyond, and that is based in the child's home; provided that home schooling is not a home-based instruction program.

"Office" means the executive office on early learning established pursuant to this chapter.

SECTION 6. Section 302L-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 7. Section 346-1.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 8. The executive office on early learning established pursuant to section 2 of this Act shall submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2013 on the status of an implementation plan for the development of the early learning system established pursuant to section 302L-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The report shall include a timeline of the implementation plan and any projected funding needs, with a focus on targeted four year old children.

SECTION 9. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to establish the executive office on early learning.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 10. The members serving on the early learning council on the effective date of this Act shall serve as the initial members of the early learning advisory board established pursuant to section 2 and shall continue to serve as members of the early learning advisory board until their terms expire.

SECTION 11. Sections 302A-1506.5, 302L-2, 302L-4, and 302L-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, are amended by substituting the term "executive office on early learning" wherever the term "early learning council" appears and by substituting the term "office" whenever the term "council" appears, as the context requires.

SECTION 12. Section 302L-3.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by substituting the term "advisory board" wherever the term "council" appears, as the context requires.
SECTON 13. In codifying the new sections added by section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating the new sections in this Act.

SECTON 14. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTON 15. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012; provided that section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.
RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the period from birth to age five is the most crucial period of learning in a child's life. This is when over eighty-five percent of a person's brain development takes place. Early life experiences lay the groundwork for a child's lifelong learning and behavior. The legislature further finds that high quality early learning programs sensitive to Hawaii's linguistic, cultural, and historic distinctiveness that are affordable and accessible for all children are critically important for ensuring the success of Hawaii's keiki as they pursue early care and education through the medium of either of the two official languages of the state.

In addition, the significant, long-term benefits realized through investments in high-quality, early learning systems have been established through decades of research as well as Hawaii's own 19th century history of near universal literacy produced in Hawaiian language schools with compulsory education beginning at age four (4). International studies show that it is much easier to teach early literacy through a language with a writing system like that of Hawaiian than through a writing system such as that of English. Many national studies show the importance of early childhood education. For example, a federal Department of Education study reports that children enrolled in kindergarten increase their knowledge and skills regardless of development prior to enrollment. English medium school kindergarteners are expected to leave kindergarten knowing how to read and write. First graders who did not go to kindergarten are typically developmentally behind their peers in academic and social development and are more likely to fail a grade level in elementary school.

The purpose of this Act is, among other things, to:

(1) Establish the executive office on early learning;

(2) Establish the early learning advisory board to replace the early learning council;

(3) Repeal junior kindergarten programs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year;

(4) Require students to be at least five years of age on July 31 of the school year in order to attend kindergarten starting with the 2014-2015 school year;
(5) Make an appropriation to the executive office on early learning; and

(6) Require an implementation plan and projected financials in order to ensure a seamless transition from the junior kindergarten program to the keiki first steps program in the 2014-2015 school year.

SECTION 2. Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding three new sections to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302L-A Executive office on early learning; director; general functions, duties, and powers. (a) There is established, within the department of education, for administrative purposes only, an executive office on early learning.

(b) The head of this office shall be known as the director of the executive office on early learning, hereinafter referred to as director. The director shall:

(1) Have professional training in the field of social work, education, and other related fields;

(2) Have direct experience in programs or services related to early education;

(3) Have recent experience in a supervisory, consultative, or administrative position;

(4) Be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor;

(5) Be paid a salary set by the governor that shall not exceed ninety percent of the salary of the director of human resources development; and

(6) Be included in any benefit program generally applicable to the officers and employees of the State.

(c) The director shall be responsible for:

(1) Serving as the principal officer in state government responsible for the performance, development, and control of programs, polices, and activities related to early care and education for children, from prenatal care to entrance into kindergarten with attention to distinctive legislation, policies, and programming depending on the official language of the state used as the medium of early education;

(2) Overseeing, supervising, and directing the performance of the director's subordinates in various activities, which include planning, evaluation, and coordination of early learning programs;
(3) Administering funds allocated for the executive office on early learning and applying for, receiving, and disbursing grants and donations from all services for early learning programs and services;

(4) Assessing the policies and practices of other agencies impacting early learning and conducting advocacy efforts for early learning;

(5) Advising agencies on new legislation, programs, and policy initiatives relating to early learning;

(6) Employing and retaining staff as may be necessary for the purposes of this section, in conformity with chapter 76; and

(7) Contracting for services that may be necessary for the purposes of this section, including through master contracts with other state agencies receiving federal and state funds for programs and services for early learning in either or both of the state's official languages, and purchase of service agreements with appropriate agencies.

(d) In developing the early learning system with distinctive Hawaiian medium and English medium pathways established pursuant to section 302L-2, the office, among other things, shall:

(1) Establish policies and procedures governing its operations;

(2) Develop a plan, with goals and objectives, for the early learning system, including the development, execution, and monitoring of a phased implementation plan;

(3) Coordinate, improve, and expand upon existing early learning programs and services for children from birth until the time they enter kindergarten;

(4) Establish policies and procedures to include existing early learning programs and services;

(5) Establish additional early learning programs and services, including public and private partnerships, when applicable;

(6) Establish policies and procedures governing the inclusion of children with special needs;

(7) Develop incentives to enhance the quality of programs, services, and educational professionals within the early learning system;

(8) Coordinate efforts to develop a highly-qualified, stable, and diverse workforce;
(9) Develop and implement methods of maximizing the engagement of families, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system;

(10) Develop an effective, comprehensive, and integrated system to provide training and technical support to programs and services within the early learning system;

(11) Develop standards of accountability to ensure that high-quality early learning experiences are provided by programs and services of the early learning system;

(12) Collect, interpret, and release data relating to early learning in the State;

(13) Recommend the appropriate proportion of state funds that should be distributed to programs and services across the early learning system, to ensure the most effective and efficient allocation of fiscal resources within the early learning system;

(14) Promote awareness of early learning opportunities to families and the general public;

(15) Ensure that support for Hawaiian language medium education follows best practice developed from within the community of Hawaiian speaking early childhood educators, with equal access through Hawaiian to the services of the early learning system; and

(16) Consult with community groups, including statewide organizations that are involved in early learning professional development, policy and advocacy, and early childhood programs.

(e) The governor or the department of human services shall transfer the Hawaii head start state collaboration office from the department of human services to the executive office on early learning.

§302L-B Early learning advisory board. (a) There is established an early learning advisory board, whose members shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to section 26-34. The advisory board shall be responsible for:

(1) Advising the office on how best to meet the educational needs of children, from birth to entry into kindergarten;

(2) Providing recommendations to the office on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early care and education programs; and

(3) Promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children.
(b) The advisory board shall consist of the following voting members:

(1) The superintendent of education or the superintendent's designee;

(2) The director of human services or the director's designee;

(3) The director of health or the director's designee;

(4) The president of the University of Hawaii or the president's designee;

(5) A representative of center-based program providers or the representative's designee;

(6) A representative of family child care program providers;

(7) A representative of family-child interaction learning program providers;

(8) A representative of philanthropic organizations that support early learning or the representative's designee;

(9) A representative from a head start provider agency;

(10) A representative from the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council;

(11) A parent representative;

(12) A representative from the Hawaii chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;

(13) A representative of home-visiting program providers; and

(14) Two representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors or each representative's respective designee.

The advisory board shall invite the director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, the chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of 'Aha Pūnana Leo and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, to serve as voting members of the advisory board.

Except for the superintendent of education, directors of state departments, president of the University of Hawaii, director of the Hawaii head start state collaboration office, chief executive officer of the
Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of 'Aha Pūnana Leo, the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, and the representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors, or their respective designees, the members shall be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor.

(c) Except for the superintendent of education, directors of state departments, president of the University of Hawaii, director of the Hawaii Head Start State Collaboration Office, chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools, the executive director of 'Aha Pūnana Leo and the executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, or their designees, the members of the advisory board shall serve staggered terms as follows:

(1) The representative of center-based program providers shall serve a two-year term;

(2) The representative of family child care program providers shall serve a three-year term;

(3) The representative of family-child interaction learning program providers shall serve a three-year term;

(4) The representative of philanthropic organizations that support early learning shall serve a two-year term;

(5) The representative from the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council shall serve a three-year term;

(6) The parent representative shall serve a two-year term;

(7) The representative from the Hawaii chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics shall serve a two-year term;

(8) The representative of home-visiting program providers shall serve a three-year term; and

(9) Of the two representatives of the Hawaii Council of Mayors, one shall serve a two-year term, and the other shall serve a three-year term as determined by the Hawaii Council of Mayors.

(d) The advisory board shall select a chairperson by a majority vote of its members; provided that the chairperson shall be a representative from the private sector. A majority of the members serving on the advisory
board shall constitute a quorum to do business. The concurrence of the
majority of the members serving on the advisory board shall be necessary
to make any action of the advisory board valid.

(e) The advisory board may form workgroups and subcommittees,
including with individuals who are not advisory board members, to:

(1) Obtain resource information from early learning professionals and
other individuals as deemed necessary by the advisory board;

(2) Make recommendations to the advisory board; and

(3) Perform other functions as deemed necessary by the advisory board
to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.

Two or more advisory board members, but less than a quorum, may
discuss matters relating to official advisory board business in the course of
their participation in a workgroup or subcommittee, and such discussion
shall be a permitted interaction as provided for in section 92-2.5.

(f) Members of the advisory board shall serve without compensation
but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary
for the performance of their duties.

§302L-C Early childhood education facilities: pre-plus. (a) There is
established the pre-plus program within the executive office on early
learning to expand access to affordable and high-quality English medium
and Hawaiian medium early childhood education for children from low-
income families who are not otherwise eligible for kindergarten, by
allowing preschool programs to be established on public school campuses
through public-private partnerships.

(b) The executive office on early learning, the department of education,
and the department of human services shall work collaboratively to
develop suitable English medium pre-plus classrooms on department of
education campuses statewide, including conversion charter school
 campuses. The executive office on early learning, with the department of
education and department of human services, shall coordinate site
selection for additional English medium pre-plus programs at public
school sites, with priority given to public school sites that serve at-risk
children as defined in section 302L-1, including sites located in areas with
limited access to early learning programs and services.”

(c) The executive office on early learning, the department of education,
the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, and the department of human services shall work
collaboratively to develop suitable Hawaiian medium pre-plus classrooms
on appropriate charter school and department of education campuses
statewide, including conversion charter school campuses. The executive
office on early learning and the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, with the department of education and department of human services, shall coordinate site selection for additional pre-plus programs at public school sites, with priority given to public school sites that serve Hawaiian speaking and other at-risk children as defined in section 302L-1, including sites located in areas with limited access to early learning programs and services."

SECTION 3. Section 302A-411, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§302A-411 [Junior–kindergarten–and–kindergarten] Kindergarten program; establishment; attendance. (a) The department shall establish and maintain [junior–kindergartens and] kindergartens with a program of instruction as a part of the public school system; provided that:

(1) Attendance shall not be mandatory; and

(2) Charter schools shall be excluded from mandatory participation in the program.

SECTION 4. Section 302A-1151.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§302A-1151.5][b] Use of vacant public school facilities for pre-plus programs and by charter schools. (a) When the department considers whether to close any particular public school, it shall simultaneously give reasonable consideration to making all or portions of the facilities of the public school available for [the]:

(1) The exclusive occupancy and use by a charter school or a pre-plus program established pursuant to section 302L-C; or

(2) The joint occupancy and use by the charter school or a pre-plus program and the department;

provided that the department may elect to use the facilities for the support of public education programs, with preference given to instructional uses over administrative uses.

(b) The department shall submit a notice of possible availability of a public school to the charter school review panel and the executive office on early learning as early as possible; provided that if a vacancy is established, a notice of vacancy shall be submitted to the charter school review panel and executive office on early learning no later than thirty days after the establishment of the vacancy.

(c) Pursuant to section 302B-3.6 and upon receipt of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), the charter school review panel shall solicit applications from charter schools interested in using and occupying all or portions of
the facilities of the public school and submit a prioritized list of charter schools to the department for final determination of which charter school, if any, shall be authorized to use and occupy the public school facilities.

(d) Upon receipt of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), the executive office on early learning shall solicit applications from pre-plus programs interested in using and occupying all or portions of the facilities of the public school and submit a prioritized list of pre-plus programs to the department for final determination of which pre-plus program, if any, shall be authorized to use and occupy the public school facilities.

[[(e) Upon the selection of a charter school or pre-plus program to use a vacant school facility or portion of a school facility, the department and the charter school review panel or executive office on early learning, whichever is appropriate, shall enter into necessary agreements within ninety days of the selection to carry out the purposes of this section.]]

[[(f) After receipt by the charter school review panel of a notice pursuant to subsection (b), if the charter school review panel or executive office on early learning does not provide a prioritized list of charter schools or pre-plus programs because no charter school or pre-plus program has requested to use the facilities of the public school, or if the department receives the prioritized lists but determines that no charter school or pre-plus program on the list is an appropriate candidate to occupy and use the facilities, the department shall give reasonable consideration to making all or portions of the facilities of the public school, if closed, available for occupancy and use for other educational purposes.]]

[(g) The department shall adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.]

[(h) For purposes of this section, "public school" means any school that falls within the definition of public schools in section 302A-101, except for charter schools.]

SECTION 5. Section 302L-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§302L-1] Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Advisory board" means the early learning advisory board established pursuant to this chapter.

"At-risk children" means:

(1) Hawaiian speaking children, and

(2) children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to language, cultural, economic, and other disadvantages that cause them to be at risk for school failure, including children:

(a) [4-4] Who are eligible for special education services;
(b) (2) Who are English as a second language learners in English medium schools and Hawaiian as second language learners in Hawaiian medium schools;

(c) (3) Who reside within a public school district, established under chapter 302A, that is in need of improvement based on the criteria of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), as amended; or

(d) (4) Whose family income is no more than two hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level.

"Center-based" describes programs in which early childhood education and care services are provided in a facility, including private preschools, child care centers, and head start programs, licensed, or excluded from licensing, by the department of human services.

["Council" means the early learning council established pursuant to this chapter.]

"Family child care program" means a program in which a child is cared for in a family child care home licensed under section 346-161.

"Family-child interaction learning program" means a program attended by both a child and at least one adult who is the child's parent, relative, or other caregiver, that facilitates family-child interactive learning experiences for children and educates the family member or members about how to encourage the child's learning.

"Home-based instruction program" means a family-involvement, school-readiness program that helps families prepare their child for success in school and beyond, and that is based in the child's home; provided that home schooling is not a home-based instruction program.

"Office" means the executive office on early learning established pursuant to this chapter."

SECTION 6. Section 302L-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 7. Section 346-1.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 8. The executive office on early learning established pursuant to section 2 of this Act shall submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2013 on the status of an implementation plan for the development of the early learning system established pursuant to section 302L-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The report shall include a timeline of the implementation plan and any projected funding needs, with a focus on targeted four year old
children.

SECTION 9. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to establish the executive office on early learning.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 10. The members serving on the early learning council on the effective date of this Act shall serve as the initial members of the early learning advisory board established pursuant to section 2 and shall continue to serve as members of the early learning advisory board until their terms expire.

SECTIONS 11. Sections 302A-1506.5, 302L-2, 302L-4, and 302L-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, are amended by substituting the term "executive office on early learning" wherever the term "early learning council" appears and by substituting the term "office" whenever the term "council" appears, as the context requires.

SECTION 12. Section 302L-3.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by substituting the term "advisory board" wherever the term "council" appears, as the context requires.

SECTION 13. In codifying the new sections added by section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating the new sections in this Act.

SECTION 14. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 15. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012; provided that section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.
Conference room: 309  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Lenneth M. Pavao Jr.  
Organization: Aha Punana Leo, Inc.  
E-mail: da@ahapunanaleo.org  
Submitted on: 3/13/2012  

Comments:  
Aloha,  

‘ō au ke kahu o ka Pūnana Leo o Hilo. Our preschool has been operating since 1985 first, at our Hilo site on Kinoole Street, and currently in Keaau on the Ke Kula 0 Nawahiokalaniopuu elementary and high school campus. I am also a father of three children who are products of the Punana Leo o Hilo preschool. Your committees on Education and Human Services will be hearing senate bill 2545 on Wednesday, March 14th at 2p. We have submitted amendments to this bill and ask that you support our amendments.

na‘u  
Lenneth M. Pavao Jr.
To: Representative Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair  
Committee on Education

From: Christina Cox, Liaison  
Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii  
808-941-9414 ext. 25 ccox@kcaapreschools.org

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, 3/14/2012 2 p.m. Room 309

RE: SB 2545SD2, Relating to Education

The Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii serves more than 4,000 children, ages 6 weeks-5 years, in more than 40 preschools on four islands. Approximately 25% of our students are participants in the federally funded Childcare Connection program or the State-funded Preschool Open Doors program. As a group, we account for almost 50% of the students enrolled in private preschools statewide, who participate in the State-funded tuition subsidy programs. As a group, we are committed to providing quality early education and care that is accessible to all children.

The Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii is in full support of SB2545 SD2. We are encouraged by the legislature’s recognition of the importance of early education and its role in preparing children for future school success.

The establishment of the Executive Office on Early Learning will help to ensure that we, as a State, deliver on that promise. In addition, it is critical that the program end date for Junior Kindergarten be changed to July 31, 2014 to enable programs to develop alternative programs for displaced students. We pledge our full support in our efforts to work with the new Early Childhood Coordinator to expand the field’s capacity to deliver high quality services to Hawaii’s keiki.

We ask that the term for all direct service seats on the Advisory Board be for identical periods of time. Presently the center-based representative has a 2-year term, while family child care and family child interaction representatives have 3-year terms. All 3 representatives should have the opportunity to serve for the same length of time. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

156C Hamakua Drive Kailua, Hawaii 96734
The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii’s youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. The following information is provided to help you in your decision-making process:

- There are almost 5,900 late-born 5-year-olds in Junior Kindergarten (JK) or Kindergarten (K) in our public schools this year.
- The attached spreadsheet, sorted by school complexes and containing separate tabs for each committee member, shows the late-born numbers, preschool (PS) attendance, free or reduced lunch participation, and third grade reading scores for every elementary school.
  - It also includes separate tabs for school complexes in your individual districts.
  - Terminating JK in 2014 would leave many of the 5,900 late-born children without any early learning option.
  - In the Pearl City and Aiea Complexes, there are 371 late-born students; if this bill is passed into law without a quality replacement program, these 300+ late-born children may not have an early learning option in 2014-2015 school year.

- A replacement 4-year-old program commencing at the start of the 2014-2015 school year will be very important to replace JK.
- Many states achieved great success in developing a quality early childhood system after establishing an Executive Office on Early Learning.
  - This office provides the authority/accountability to convene different stakeholders of an early childhood system and bring a state early childhood plan to fruition.
  - This office needs the funding and mandate to create an implementation plan with phased-in timeline and projected funding needs for a 4-year-old early learning program.
  - Other states have also established an early learning advisory board/council that advises the Executive Office of Early Learning.
- Pre-Plus programs serve as prime locations for inclusion settings where children with special needs learn side-by-side other children.
  - The opportunity to increase the coordination between these settings and the expansion of these learning opportunities for all 4-year old children is great.

Hawai‘i’s State School Readiness Assessment continues to show us the need for a 4-year old program in Hawai‘i. The 2011 data once again shows the increasing number of children entering kindergarten without first attending preschool as well as the growing number of children who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Specifically, more than 4 out of 10 (42 percent) of the current kindergarten students in our public schools did not attend preschool, an increase from 39 percent in 2008. Additionally, more than 1 out of 2 kindergarten students are from low income families and receiving free or reduced lunch—an increase from 48% in 2009 to 52% in 2011. We clearly believe these two figures correlate to our state’s economic challenges, and this awareness heightens the urgency to obtain public and private investments in quality ECE.

HSSRA - State

![Graph showing % Kindergarten Students from 2008-09 to 2011-12](image)
We have also charted the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scores for Hawaii’s fourth grade students for the last 3 NAEPs. Nicknamed the “Nation’s Report Card,” it assesses a random sampling of Hawaii’s public school students. In 2011, this equated to about 6,500 students statewide. For the last three NAEPs, Hawaii’s overall reading score for fourth grade reading, our low-income students are still scoring well below the Basic Level.

We urge you to strongly consider the information we have provided as well as the demographic data in the attached spreadsheet. Our young children are entering kindergarten with less
attendance in PS and with increasingly less ability of families to afford PS. Reading scores show that in low income areas - where there is less PS attendance - children are not increasing their ability to read at grade level.

We must recognize that early learning experiences do affect later success of our children now and in the future. Expanding -- not decreasing -- the opportunities for quality early learning is imperative for Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration and your support. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502; lchun@goodbeginnings.org
Subject: SB2545 SD2: Education; Early Learning; Appropriation

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director  
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Wednesday, March 14, 2012, 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 309

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**HSSRA - State**

![Graph showing percentage of kindergarten students per school year](image)
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Mahalo for your consideration and your support. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502; lchun@goodbeginnings.org
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>% ELL</th>
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TESTIMONY TO THE TWENTY-SIXTH STATE LEGISLATURE, 2012 SESSION

TO: House Committees on Education and Human Services
FROM: Jed Gaines, President, Read Aloud America, Inc.
Telephone: (808) 531-1985
RE: Senate Bill 2545, SD2 (SSCR2612)
Relating to Education - Establishes the executive office on early learning.

HEARING: Wednesday, March 14, 2012, 2:00 PM,
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

Honorable Members of the Committees:

As President of Read Aloud America, Inc., I respectfully urge you to support Senate Bill 2545 with its related amendments.

*Read Aloud America is a Hawaii program that has been providing services to schools in Hawaii for many years, and has served the needs of more than a quarter of a million parents and children of all ages here.*

In Hawaii where more than 93% of all parents work while trying to raise healthy families, quality early childhood education programs are vitally important to starting children on a path to success in life. Literacy research has repeatedly shown that formal early education programs significantly increase the likelihood of developing early reading skills, and enjoyment of reading and learning.

An Executive Office on Early Learning would more effectively bring the early education stakeholders together to find the necessary funding, develop the goals and objectives, and help best define the parameters of a healthy early education system in Hawaii. Many other states on the mainland have already developed their own Executive Office on Early Education and report consistent successes as a result.

Of important consideration is also that without an Executive Office on Early Learning, we risk losing out on millions and millions of dollars in Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funding.

To apply for these grants, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services has asked states to create plans for early education programs that would give children from low-income families the strong foundation they need to be successful once they start school. The grants support states as they "work toward closing the school readiness gap and developing new approaches to raising the bar across early learning programs, including Head Start, public pre-K, childcare, and private preschools."
Hawaii stakeholders collaborating through the Executive Office on Early Learning will work toward creating standards, improving training and support for teachers and educators, and building evaluation systems into their early learning programs. This is a concept that is overdue and significantly needed in Hawaii to better serve the needs of our youngest citizens.

On behalf of the many schools, and the thousands of parents and children we serve, we respectfully ask for your kokuia in supporting Senate Bill 2545 with its proposed amendments.

Jed Gaines

President, Read Aloud America, Inc.
I am Josepha Munez, a parent in the Farrington Complex. Our parent group, United Friends and Parents for Education, support the intent of SB 2545 SD2 to establish the executive office of early learning. We want to request that there be more parent voice on the early learning advisory board. We also request that funds be allocated to establish an early learning program for the children who will not be able attend junior kindergarten.
Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB2545 with amendments as submitted by the 'Aha Pūnana Leo which addresses the education of our keiki through the medium of the Hawaiian language, one of the two official languages of the state.
I am writing in favor of establishing an executive office on early learning. We know that the early years last forever, and we MUST support programs that provide early learning opportunities for Hawaii's youngest citizens. Please support this bill.
March 13, 2012

Dear Chairs Takumi and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Belatti and Jordan, and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in conditional support for SB2545 SD2.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE‘E) is a diverse coalition of over 30 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

Since 1943, all children who turn 5 years of age during a calendar year have been eligible to attend kindergarten. This bill would end this entitlement for a public education for our “late-born” children (turn 5 years of age between August 1 and December 31) that has been in existence for the last 69 years.

We understand that this bill directs the Executive Office on Early Learning to submit an implementation plan and projected funding needs for an early learning system focused on targeted 4-year-old children. We believe this is the right direction for creating an early learning system for Hawaii’s keiki.

However, we prefer that Junior Kindergarten (JK) not be terminated without a guarantee in law that all “late-born” impacted students will have a state-funded early learning program as a replacement to meet their educational needs.

We also recommend the development and implementation of an outreach program to preschools, families of late-born children (turn 3 years of age between August 1 and December 31 in 2012) to explain the intent of this legislation and help parents prepare for the proposed ending of JK in 2013. Many parents are not aware of the proposals in this bill nor can predict the will of the 2013 Legislature in funding a replacement early learning
program for their children. Thus, these parents will have to decide on one of the following options now:

- Pay for an extra year of preschool (PS), family child care, or other option for SY2014-2015 if the 2013 Legislature does not provide a fully funded early learning program for their children.
- Make the hard decision to not enroll their “late-born” child in PS in the 2012-13 school year because they could be potentially paying for three years of PS.
- Forego PS completely and wait until the child is nearly 6 to enter Kindergarten to start his or her formal early learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE’E Coalition Director
*Academy 21
*After-School All-Stars Hawaii
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Center for Civic Education
*DOE Windward District
*Faith Action for Community Equity
*Fresh Leadership LLC
*Girl Scouts Hawaii
*Good Beginnings Alliance
*Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*Hawaii's Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawaii Charter School Network
*Hawaii Education Matters
*Hawaii Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
*Hawaii State Student Council
*Hawaii State Teachers Association
*Hawaii P-20
*Hawaii 3Rs
*It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
*Joint Venture Education Forum
*Kamehameha Schools
*Kanu Hawai'i
*Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
*McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
*Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
*Punahou School PUEO Program
*The Learning Coalition
*US PACOM
*University of Hawaii College of Education
*Voting Members (*)