LEGISLATIVE REPORT

SUBJECT:	Relating to Early Learning
REFERENCE:	SB 2878 Act 14 (SLH 2008, Special Session), Sections 2 and 6
ACTION REQUESTED:	Annual reports to the Legislature by the Department and by the Early Learning Council on number of classrooms suitable for programs and services in the early learning system and cost of renovating those classrooms to meet standards (Department Report); and progress and status of early learning system (Council Report).
DOE REPORT:	See attachment.
RECOMMENDATIONS:	None. The Early Learning Council (Council) has made progress throughout the year and continues to be fully committed to the work that needs to continue. The Council will continue to explore venues for fiscal support of early learning throughout the state.

Early Learning Council

Report to the 2012 Hawai'i State Legislature

Introduction:

The state of Hawaii mandated the development of the *Keiki First Steps* statewide early learning system in 2008. This early learning system will include families and communities in center-based, family childcare, home-visiting and family-child interaction learning program settings. It will be designed to be widely accessible and voluntary and build upon existing programs and services for children from before they are born until they enter into kindergarten. To achieve these goals, Hawaii's early childhood system must be a priority for the state in terms of both policy and funding matters. According to research by Dr. Clive Belfield (Economic Benefits of Investments in Early Education for Hawai'i, 2008), every $1 invested in quality early education would generate $4.20 for the state.

Composition and Qualifications:

To develop and administer the system, Act 14, as an initial priority, established the Early Learning Council (the Council) attached to the Department of Education (DOE) for administrative purposes only. In the past, the Council has been given a limited amount of funding as part of the DOE budget to further the progress of the Council's sub-committees, which individually are addressing elements of a 10-year work plan.

The Council provides a broad representation of expertise in the early childhood community and the unique ability to convene members of the public and private sectors to address early childhood statewide needs from a variety of perspectives. Members are a committed group of early childhood advocates with broad experience in early learning, health and family-related issues. The Council is comprised of 14 members representing both public and private sectors as prescribed in Act 14 and listed in *Appendix A*.

Highlights:

December, 2010

- The ELC redefined the role and responsibility of an ELC member as a steward of the early learning message for Hawaii with a shared idea/vision to take back and share with the organizations they represent and make decisions with appropriate consideration of the ELC as a system.
- ELC members met with newly elected Governor Neil Abercrombie's office staff to review critical early learning initiatives that include essential public and private partnerships and an innovative system which includes collaborative and inclusive processes. Other early learning initiatives included the ELC replacing the State Advisory Council/Interdepartmental Council (SAC/IDC) as the early learning advisory group; initial efforts to review, redirect, and leverage current resources to create dedicated funding streams; efforts toward establishing an Office of Early Learning; engaging in system building activities to work on quality, data, professional development, and comprehensive health services; establishing more early learning facilities; and continuing development of the P-20 longitudinal data system.

January, 2011

- The ELC Framework brochure with a consistent, clear message on the state's comprehensive early learning system was printed and readied for distribution.
- Legislation to assist with ELC operational funding was introduced by the Office of the Governor and Education Committees of the Senate and House.
- Zero to Three, a national nonprofit organization, stressed in a presentation to the ELC the importance of public policy addressing priorities of good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences as part of a comprehensive system. Zero to Three also explicitly focuses on infants' and toddlers' issues and encourages promoting alignment and integration when planning for existing or new early learning governance structures.

February, 2011

- The ELC provided testimony for various legislative bills relating to early learning. The ELC was in support of broadening access to all children with a need for parent/family education, supports and prioritizes legislation for statewide Preschool Open Doors and developmental screening programs, supports using vacant school consolidated buildings for early learning opportunities, and was not in support of standardized testing of young children.

March, 2011

- The ELC Framework was officially launched during Educate Legislators Week at the Legislature on March 15 and communicated a clear early learning system message to the legislators, media, and public. Early learning and community organizations such as Child and Family Services, Childcare Business Coalition, Department of Health/Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (DOH/ECCS), Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA), Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), Head Start Association, The Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE), Parents Attentive to Children (PATCH), Aloha United Way (AUW), and Child and Family Services (CFS) offered financial support for this event.
- The Childcare Business Coalition, an organization comprised of private preschool providers, shared recommendations with the ELC to address the birth date change for children's eligibility to enter public school kindergarten (Act 183 – beginning school year 2013-2014, children eligible to enter public school kindergarten must be 5 years of age by the first day of school). The recommendations include: 1) Stagger birth date entrance which affects approximately 1,100 children/year for 5 years instead of 5,500 children all at once; 2) Early learning opportunities may be contracted out to private agencies similar to the current A+ program or created through Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs in rural or isolated areas; 3) State funded subsidies on a sliding fee scale to determine families' co-pay; and 4) Private preschool agencies to provide services as determined by the Quality Improvement and rating System (QIrS).

- The ELC's Governance Sub-Committee was tasked to plan for an alternative to junior kindergarten (a "Pre-K" alternative) as the beginnings of an early learning system in Hawaii. The plan was to address the issues of the public/private partnership, the capacity of facilities and highly qualified teachers, and young children and families' transitions. All sources of funding or subsidies, not just public or federal funding, be considered to build an effective system over time. The plan also should look toward new priorities to make quality changes beyond the current infrastructure model, should consider what's currently working and build or expand the system, and recognize that private donors must be leveraged with public funding. Educating communities on early learning benefits is important so that people value and support the increased cost of quality services.
- Hawaii Careers for Young Children (HCYC) convened an ad hoc group to research workforce and compensation parity for all early learning providers.

April, 2011

- A fiscal mapping project was introduced to assist the ELC with understanding current resources in the system. The Finance Project will collect federal, state, and private funding source data that will be analyzed for effectiveness in achieving Hawaii's early learning system goals.
- A Quality Improvement and rating System (QIrS) began the planning stages as a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Nationally, the QIrS is an important state approach to ensure and maintain high quality early childhood care and education that are linked to positive child outcomes. The Department of Human Services (DHS) funded the planning of the project and will also manage the QIrS state pilot that will lead to improved quality of early childhood programs, increased consumer awareness of the quality of early childhood programs, and continued quality improvement.
- Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC) cautioned analyzing any preliminary findings on the effectiveness of junior kindergarten because full data analysis will

be completed in 2 years. Results of the 4-year evaluation study may lead to future early learning policy reviews and revisions.

May, 2011

- Governor Neil Abercrombie signed Executive Order 11-17 that declared the ELC as the State Advisory Council (SAC). The former administration recognized the Interdepartmental Council as the SAC. The Office of the Governor announced hiring an early childhood liaison.
- A visit from Dr. Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D. C. resulted in various meetings with early learning community leaders. Dr. Lombardi suggested Hawaii focus on system-level approaches that include the longitudinal data and the quality improvement and rating systems (QIrS), create policy across all government agencies, prioritize foster children to access quality early learning opportunities, and revise DHS co-payment structures. Dr. Lombardi also praised Hawaii's efforts of linking the ELC as the SAC and moving QIrS plans forward.
- The ELC's Public Will Sub-Committee intended to plan focus meetings with freshmen legislators of the Senate Ways and Means and House Finance Committees on early childhood discussions.
- The Public Will Sub-Committee worked with Ward Research to help guide the ELC's Public Will campaign for early childhood education. The survey was conducted from March 31 until April 17, 2011. The summaries of the surveys revealed the ELC should consider reframing its message of supporting early learning to resonate around children who are victims of child abuse and services that provide children with necessary health care. One of the most convincing arguments against funding services for children in Hawaii is that tax money is never spent as promised. The public does not trust the government to spend the new money for children's programs responsibly.

June, 2011

- Governor Abercrombie named Terry Lock as the State Early Childhood Coordinator to support the Governor's A New Day in Hawaii plan of establishing a Department of Early Childhood.
- A Hawaii Business Roundtable (HBR) event on June 16 was focused on garnering support for the "Be My Voice" and the ELC's Public Will campaigns, funds for the campaign, and an employee-base to move this effort forward. Business, government, and early childhood community leaders gathered together in a coordinated effort for early childhood issues.

July, 2011

- New members Pamela Perkins, replacing the current representative for Family-Child Care Programs, and Frank Ranger, representing Head Start Provider Agencies, were introduced, bringing the ELC membership to 14 members.
- The Finance Project continued work on forecasting budgets and identifying state and federal funding sources currently used for early learning and development.
- Tammi Oyadomari-Chun, Education Policy Analyst from the Governor's Office, indicated Hawaii registered its intent to apply for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELCG) Program. Terry Lock will lead the grant application that focuses on 5 key areas: 1) Successful State Systems, High-Quality; 2) Accountable Programs; 3) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes; 4) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and 5) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

August, 2011

- Governor Abercrombie notified all state agencies about designating the ELC as the SAC to oversee Hawaii's early learning system. Terry Lock would be the SAC grant contact as DHS continues to administer the grant and Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) to be the fiscal agency.
- The RTTT-ELCG's Leadership Team, comprised of Pankaj Bhanot (DHS), Ronn Nozoe (DOE), Deliana Loretta Fuddy (Department of Health), Robert Peters and

Dee Jay Mailer (ELC co-chairs), and Terry Lock began overseeing the application's planning and progress. The official application was available late August and due to the U. S. DOE in mid-October.

- The ELC's Direct Services Sub-Committee is working toward completing deliverables that: 1) Identify needs of communities, 2) Develop recommendations for improved coordination and expansion of existing services, 3) Develop recommendations for expanded inclusion opportunities for children with special needs, and 4) Develop recommendations for inclusion of junior kindergarten cohort into the early learning system.
- The ELC's Quality Sub-Committee's work plan includes quality improvements in all 4 early learning settings – center-based, family-child interaction learning, family child care, and home visiting programs in connection with DHS's QIrS pilot programs.
- The ELC's Data Sub-Committee continued deliverables for the existing longitudinal data system work and is expected to have an important role in the RTTT-ELCG application.
- The ELC's Professional Development Sub-Committee's workforce deliverables include developing Common Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners, developing Trainer Performance Standards, designing a plan for compensation parity/increased compensation, and designing a credentialing process.

September, 2011

- Terry Lock announced the ELC would be the coordinating body working with an "Executive Management Committee" (to be defined by Terry Lock) to oversee the RTTT-ELCG application and its implementation, with DHS as the lead agency until the formation of a Department of Early Learning in 2015.
- DHS will establish an open QIrS Sub-Committee as part of its Child Care Advisory Committee as a venue to interested parties to participate in discussion, raise issues and questions regarding the QIrS pilot.

- The Be My Voice campaign, the ELC's Public Will campaign and foundation established by Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA), has been growing in momentum and membership. The campaign's funding target is $2 million over 2 years.

October, 2011

- The RTTT-ELCG was submitted to the U. S. DOE. Hawaii was one of 35 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to submit an application. The general Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) demonstrated the state agencies' commitment to work collaboratively to implement the grant's initiatives. The Data MOU will expand upon the State Longitudinal Data System's development. The ELCG connected to the ELC's Framework strategies and is only the first phase of Hawaii's comprehensive early learning and development plan. Community partners and elected officials expressed high interest in the ELCG as demonstrated by the 70+ letters of support submitted with the grant. Shared goals, accountability, and successful child outcomes are expectations for state agencies to work collaboratively and avoid working in "silos".
- Planning and implementing the QIrS pilot sites continued to move forward.
- GBA, contracted by DHS to collect early childhood data and promote early childhood advocacy, shared critical statewide issues for early childhood. Statewide critical issues include: 1) Decreased % of children accessing preschool; 2) Lack of infant toddler care programs; 3) Shortage of qualified staff professionals – not enough substitutes and scholarships; 4) Availability of developmental, vision, and hearing screenings; and 5) Transportation, especially in rural and isolated areas.
- The Public Will Sub-Committee developed a communication plan to increase and expand the general public's early learning and development information:
  - 1st target: engaging early childhood community partners.
  - 2nd target: developing "talking points" to deliver a consistent message.
  - 3rd target: engaging public/private funders with the ELC Framework information and financial benefits of investing in early childhood.

- 4th target: engaging elected officials.

November, 2011

- Legislation was discussed and drafted to delay implementation of the repeal of the DOE's junior kindergarten program beginning school year 2013-2014. Terry Lock, along with Hawaii Public Policy Advocates staff, will continue to develop and submit legislation with an alternate plan to continue early childhood services for all children unable to enter public school kindergarten.
- The Finance Project, which was funded by Hawaii Community Foundation and the Omidyar Foundation, recommended fiscal strategies to advance goals for young children. The top 5 "Low Cost/No Cost" strategies to maximize current funding are: 1) Implement cost containment/reinvestment strategies to reduce administrative costs and increase access for families; 2) Revise state procurement system to reduce burden/inefficiency on community-based organizations; 3) Study shared services approaches and promote/pilot development at the local level; 4) Encourage blending and braiding through joint grant applications, reimbursement policies, eligibility; and provide guidance and training to communities on how to effectively blend and braid funding; and 5) Engage private funders, including business and philanthropic partners, with public agencies, in a co-investment strategy or early childhood funders' collaborative group.

2012 Work Plan and Beyond

As a convening institution, the ELC has successfully brought together leaders of public and private agencies in support of a shared vision for early childhood education and development in Hawaii. These coordination and collaboration efforts continue to make significant gains, yet funding shortfalls and cutbacks threaten to delay critical next steps.

The ELC will continue to work diligently to identify and work toward additional sources of public/private funding. The ELC will continue to advocate for funding of an early learning system to be a priority for the state, first coordinating existing resources and reprioritizing existing monies, and then by infusing new funds to support important care

and education of our youngest citizens. Hawaii is one of the last ten states in the nation to recognize the importance of an early learning system through a dedicated funding stream.

- The **Direct Services Sub-Committee** will continue its work servicing children prenatal to age 5 and focused attention to services for infants and toddlers.
- The **Governance Sub-Committee** will continue to monitor Hawaii's junior kindergarten programs and ensure Hawaii's 5,500 young children continue to receive quality early learning services necessary for their success.
- The **Professional Development Sub-Committee** will continue to find ways to ensure access and availability of classes to all professionals on all islands.
- The **Quality Sub-Committee** will continue to work with DHS to support the design of a Quality Improvement and Rating System. Priority continues to be given to define standards of quality in all settings (center based, family child interaction learning, family child care, and home visiting programs) affecting children prenatal to age five.
- The **Data Sub-Committee** will continue to work with state and private agencies to articulate the data components of a longitudinal, program level and system level data system.
- The **Finance Sub-Committee** will use the Finance Project report to decide next steps on mapping a statewide early childhood fiscal outlook.

The ELC will also focus effort on collaborating with demonstration sites via the programs of P-3 and Race to the Top to ensure the early learning design includes quality and public/private resources and supports.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the ELC appreciate and thank each ELC member for their dedication and tireless efforts in moving the *Keiki First Steps* mission forward. The ELC also wishes to thank community stakeholders, early childhood specialists, educators and others who provided their collective experience, wisdom and time. Together we continue to serve and provide services for the most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

Appendix A

Members of the Early Learning Council

Dr. Robert Peters (Chair)	Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
Dee Jay Mailer (Vice-Chair)	Kamehameha Schools
Kathryn Matayoshi	Department of Education
Dr. Steven Shiraki (designee)	Department of Education
Loretta Deliana Fuddy	Department of Health
Pankaj Bhanot	Department of Human Services
Julie Morita (designee)	Department of Human Services
Christine Jackson	Head Start State Collaboration Office
Dr. M. R. C. Greenwood	University of Hawaii System
Dr. Linda Johnsrud (designee)	University of Hawaii System
Charles Larson	Representative, Center Based Programs
Pamela Perkins	Representative, Family Child Care Programs
Lora Ann Perry	Representative, Family-Child Interaction Learning Programs
Kaina Bonacorsi	Representative, Hawaii Council of Mayors
Angela Thomas	Representative, Hawaii Council of Mayors
Frank Ranger	Representative, Head Start Agency
Dr. Kanoelani Naone	Representative, Philanthropic Organizations

Elementary Schools Reporting Vacant Classrooms		as of 5/1/2011
District	**School**	**# Vacant Classrooms**
Honolulu	Aliiolani	3
	Hokulani	1
	Kalihi Kai	2
	Koko Head	4
	Liholiho	3
Central	Nimitz	6
	Pearl Harbor	1
	Shafter	1
Leeward	Ewa Beach	11
	Kanoelani	3
	Manana	3
	Nanakuli	3
	Pohakea	1
Windward	Kahuku	1
	Parker	2
Hawaii	Hilo Union	2
	Kahakai	1
	Kalanianaole	1
Maui	Haiku	3
	Kekaulike	3
	Kula	1
	Pomaikai	9
Kauai	None	0
	TOTAL STATE	65