

Act 14

“Keiki First Steps”

- ✚ **Establishes Hawai`i’s statewide early learning system**
 - *The early learning system, Keiki First Steps, shall benefit all children throughout the State of Hawai`i, from birth until the time they enter kindergarten. The system shall:*
 - Be widely accessible and voluntary
 - Be a cohesive, comprehensive and sustainable system
 - Provide high-quality early learning experiences in 4 delivery settings
 - Offer opportunities for family and community engagement
 - Be sensitive to family choice and diversity
 - ✚ **Creates Early Learning Council (ELC) attached to Department of Education (administrative only) with Governor appointees approved by Senate**
 - *Council may form subcommittees*
 - *Council hires Executive Director*
 - *Develops and administers Early Learning System*
 - *Recommends appropriate proportion of state funds distribution*
 - *Convenes, elects chairperson, hires executive director, and forms subcommittees*
 - Governance
 - Funding and Capital Infrastructure
 - Quality Professionals
 - Direct Services
 - Quality Assurance & Accountability (QAA)
 - *Offers recommendations for funding, direct services and professional development*
 - ✚ **Establishes Keiki First Steps Trust Fund**
 - ✚ **Establishes Grant Program – administered by Department of Human Services**
 - ✚ **Anchors Pre-plus program (facilities) provision in statute**
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Early Learning Council

State Agency Representatives

- ☒ DOE – Department of Education
- ☒ DOH – Department of Health
- ☒ DHS – Department of Human Services
- ☒ UH – University of Hawaii System

Early Childhood Settings Representatives

- ☒ Center-Based
- ☒ Family Childcare
- ☒ Family Child Interaction Learning

Community Representatives

- ☒ Philanthropic
- ☒ Kamehameha Schools
- ☒ (2) Hawai`i Council of Mayors
- ☒ Head Start State Collaboration Office
- ☒ HAIS – Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- ☒ Head Start Program

Chair: Robert Peters, Ed.D.

Vice-Chair: Dee Jay Mailer

MAHALO

So much of the work of the Early Learning Council has been in collaboration with other agencies and individuals who need to be recognized. GBA, (Good Beginnings Alliance) under the leadership of Liz Chun and supported by David Tom, was particularly helpful in facilitating the work of the sub groups and keeping the Council alerted to potential funding opportunities through federal programs. Speakers have also appeared before the Council on behalf of their organizations to share progress and to offer support of our efforts. Particular thanks go HCYC (Hawaii Careers with Young Children), P-20 and Head Start. (Melodie Vega, Tammy Chun-Oyadomari, Jean Osumi, Mandy Westfall-Senda, Amy Valdez).

Listed below are people who participated in our work groups and their organizations. As well, we need to thank those who attended as public members and offered their good ideas and support. We have tried to capture those most regularly involved and are sure to have missed some. Please accept our apologies and know your support is extremely valued and valuable. Finally, our thanks to the Council members who have given of their time and expertise on behalf of promoting the critical nature of early learning in Hawai'i.

Robyn Antonucci	HCAP Head Start
Jayne Arasaki	Seagull Schools
Cindy Ballard	PATCH
Kathy Bentley	Kathy's Parenting Solutions
Kaina Bonacorsi	Maui County Coordinator
Barbie Lei Burgess	Waianae Neighborhood Place
LaurieAnn Dunn	INPEACE
Mike Fahey	GBA
Noelani Iokepa Guerrero	Aha Punana Leo
Phyllis Ida	DOE/SPED
Cathy Javor	Partners in Development
Gordon Miyashiro	DOE/Family Support
Kathy Murphy	HAEYC
Keiko Nitta	DOH/ECCS
Susie Ota	DOH/EIS
Buffy Owens	Kama`aina Kids
Sharon Taba	Medical Home Works
Celia Takahashi	GBA
Clayton Takamoto	DOH/EIS
Amy Valdez	DOH/EIS
Melodie Vega	HCYC
Pokwan Wong	DOH/Children w/special health needs

Legislative Briefing: Early Learning Council

February 17, 2010

The Early Learning Council was created by legislation when Act 14 was approved in 2008. The original 13 member council is attached to the Department of Education for administrative purposes only. The members of the Council are a committed group of early childhood advocates with broad experience in early learning and family-related issues. A number are continuing members of the Act 259 Task Force. While some members represent public state departments and the Council of Mayors, others reflect the private communities of philanthropy, education and business.

The full Council meets monthly and working groups convene in between those meetings. The working groups expand membership to include broad early childhood community representation along with the Council members. These working groups are currently organized around the following: Direct Services, System Framework, Governance, Data and Quality Measures, Public Will and Funding. The Quality Professionals Workgroup completed a plan last year which now awaits implementation for lack of funding to support it.

The ELC, through Act 14, has been recognized as the primary entity in the State to address early learning policy, programs and coordination of efforts around a comprehensive system. In that capacity, the ELC participated in the Hawai'i Economic Summit this fall while the data gathered and working plans of the working groups are being used to support statewide efforts to secure grants including the P-20 longitudinal study, GBA's efforts to attain an federal earmark and as the early learning resource for the Race to the Top application. Currently, the ELC meets supporting data requirements but it is anticipated that the Council will provide more content specific support as the need arises. It is also anticipated that the efforts of the working groups will be needed for the SAC (State Advisory Council) as appointed by the Governor to complete the ARRA grant application.

At a retreat in August, the following goals were set for each of the working groups:

Direct Services: Develop and implement a Direct Services Demonstration Pilot to test strategies of the Framework as well as design features and requirements in high need communities where capacity, partnerships and synergies exist.

Framework: Design a comprehensive early learning system framework that can be used as a roadmap for Hawai'i, based upon existing successful State models but modified to meet the particular needs/circumstances of Hawai'i.

Governance and Operations: Build an enduring, shared vision that promotes the realization of the ELC mission as it defines what we are, what we are not, and how we will make a difference. (includes updating workplan to reflect the realities of current state of the economy and potential continuation of IDC). Committee has been responsible for the teleconferencing bill currently being reviewed in the House.

Data and Quality: Design recommendations for implementing a data system that informs practice, the public and stakeholders and that serve to improve quality at all levels. Quality Rating Systems for improvement of quality will be examined in light of relationship to, impact on statewide data system.

Public Will and Finance: Develop a campaign to create “public will” promoting early childhood as a policy initiative and priority sustained by a reliable funding stream. Incorporate research that addresses where we are currently, what we have accomplished and what needs to be done to create a quality, comprehensive learning system in Hawai`i.

At this point, an abbreviated framework and plan of action have received preliminary discussion by the Direct Services group and the next step is to solicit input on the document itself. The governance group has defined a role for the ELC as the primary entity in Hawai`I where early learning policy and programs are articulated, coordinated and assessed as assigned to the ELC in Act 14. The Council has discussed this definition of its role recognizing its complexity given the recognition of the IDC as the SAC. A key question is one of “positioning.”

The Council and its sub work groups are seriously involved in fulfilling its legislative charter. Challenges are presented by a number of things:

- The Council’s work force is strictly a “volunteer” one which limits the work it can get done and attention that can be paid to this critical issue. No staffing handicaps our efforts to move ahead.
- The potential continuation of the IDC until 2013 and the relationship/role of the ELC if it should. This relates directly to the issue of how to become the recognized and fully supported authority on planning ,designing and assuring the implementation of a comprehensive Early Learning System.
- The inability to leverage funds as hoped (DSH, UH) given the current state of the economy of Hawai`i.
- The upcoming change of governor and administration.

The opportunities that lie ahead include the work group’s commitment to accomplishing goals set at the Retreat, especially completing the Framework whose range of services identified will enhance our ability to identify who currently fulfills needs and where gaps exist, sharing our accomplishments and aspirations with the broader community, and becoming the “go to” entity by working our relationship with the IDC and our role state wide for Early Learning.