



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education  
Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.

By  
David Lassner, President  
University of Hawai'i

### SB 2827 – RELATING TO THE EARLY LEARNING BOARD

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2827 relating to the inclusion of the director of Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education (Hawai'i P-20) as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Early Learning Board.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports SB 2827. Since its establishment by the 2016 legislation, the Early Learning Board (ELB) has been responsible for:

1. Directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) on how best to meet the educational needs of children, from prenatal care into kindergarten and improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early care and education programs.
2. Promoting collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children.
3. Serving as an independent voice for children's health, safety, development, and learning.
4. Appointing and dismissing the director of EOEL.

Hawai'i P-20 strengthens the education pipeline from early childhood through postsecondary education and training with data-informed decision making, advocacy, policy coordination, and shared action. Its work is focused on high expectations and equitable access so that all students thrive in school, career, and life. This mission aligns with ELB's responsibilities to support young children's academic and life-long outcomes.

Hawai'i P-20 has served as a partner, advocate, and voice for the entire education pipeline, including but not limited to programs and initiatives that strengthen early learning. Specifically, its P-3 Initiative has worked closely with EOEL and early childhood stakeholders to develop the Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS) and the Hawai'i State Literacy Plan. A recent partnership includes the management and implementation of the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five program, which led to the Hawai'i Early Childhood Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the Hawai'i Early Childhood Strategic Implementation Plan.

Furthermore, Hawai'i P-20 is capable of data analysis and facilitating of data sharing agreements throughout the educational pipeline and into the workforce, which could lend valuable perspectives to ELB.

The importance of establishing a solid educational foundation for our youngest students is paramount, and UH supports all efforts to proactively support, expand, and improve early learning opportunities throughout our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.