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Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Ronald Kouchi, Vice Chair

April 1, 2015

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kouchi, and Committee Members,

This testimony is submitted in support for the Hawaii Board of Education Budget Request for the Fiscal Biennium 2015-2017 as it applies to the State Budget, HB500 HD1.

Hui for Excellence in Education, or “HE’E,” is a statewide coalition of diverse stakeholders committed to working collaboratively to identify opportunities to improve public education in Hawaii. HE’E seeks to be the focal point for community and parent engagement while serving as a public resource for educational policy. The Coalition currently has over 40 members. Our member list is attached.

The Coalition supports the Hawaii Board of Education’s budget request for Fiscal Biennium 2015-2017. We support the additional investment in operating and capital improvement funds to assist at the school level. As reflected by the continuing positive The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores for Hawaii schools, the improvement in student readiness indicators including increasing graduation rates, AP exam participants and dual enrollment, decreasing remediation at the University of Hawaii, as well as the recent praise received by the US Department of Education on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver Monitoring Report, school transformation is progressing and moving in the right direction. Therefore, we want to continue providing adequate resources to schools to continue the positive trajectory.

In addition, we also support the restoration of \$6 million in the HB500 HD1 Biennium Budget for the Preschool Open Doors Program. Having a strong foundation in school readiness not only gives children the advantage to transitioning to the K-12 system, but also can have lasting effects to positive outcomes over the span of a child’s lifetime. The Coalition has particularly been concerned about the late-born four year olds, who have not been able to attend public Kindergarten from the 2014-2015 year. We like the fact that Preschool Open Doors prioritizes late born four-year olds as well underserved and at-risk children.

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
Alliance for Place Based Learning
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
Coalition for Children with Special Needs
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawaii
*Good Beginnings Alliance
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Charter School Network
*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
*Hawaii State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
*Kaho'omiki
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
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
Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu
Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*