



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
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February 9, 2022

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Advisory Council**

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Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Committee on Education
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2701 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura and Committee Members,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports the intent** of SB 2701 which makes an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund for SY 2022-23. This fund was established last year as a source of stipends to early educators to enable them to receive coursework in early education through the University of Hawaii.

Numerous research studies have shown the long term benefits of quality early childhood education programs for students with and without disabilities, including higher high school graduation rates, lower grade retention and drop out rates, and greater social and emotional maturity. There is also ample evidence that access to quality preschool programming can lessen referrals for special education services by providing prevention and early intervention strategies to meet students' diverse needs.

Additionally, high quality preschool teachers are better prepared to accommodate children with IEPs in inclusive classrooms. By creating a larger pool of these teachers through the stipend program, we are potentially increasing the availability of inclusive placements.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, we are happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair