



ORGANIZATION

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL), currently with a staff of 21, was established by Act 178 and signed into law by Governor Neil Abercrombie in June 2012. Through collaboration and partnerships, EOEL's mission is to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawaii's young children (prenatal to age five), meaningful engagement and supports for their families, and a stable, competent, and supported early childhood workforce. The EOEL works across state departments, organizations, and sectors toward a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system for the state.

Originally located in the Governor's office, EOEL is now a separate agency administratively attached to the Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE). Although EOEL has a mandate to build a comprehensive early childhood learning system, much of its focus to date has been on establishing a high-quality, publicly-funded pre-Kindergarten program for 4-year-olds in collaboration with the DOE.

EOEL is governed by the Early Learning Board (ELB), members who represent the full range of the early childhood development community. The ELB provides guidance on how best to meet the

developmental and educational needs of children, from prenatal to entry into kindergarten; makes recommendations on improving the quality, availability, and coordination of early learning programs; promotes collaboration across agencies and stakeholders serving young children; and appoints and evaluates the Director of EOEL.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The last Director departed EOEL in May 2021 after serving as Director for six years. Under her leadership, EOEL achieved several significant milestones that lay a strong foundation for Hawaii's early childhood development system.

Over the last several years, EOEL stood up 37 publicly funded pre-Kindergarten classrooms in DOE schools serving 740 four-year-old children across the State. The program provides learning experiences that address children's physical development and health, social and emotional development, cognition, language and literacy, and approaches to learning. Still in its infancy, the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program was recently recognized for meeting 10 of 10 quality standard benchmarks identified by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). The standards are indicators of a high-quality public preschool program, and Hawaii is one of only six states to meet all the benchmarks.

EOEL facilitated the development of the Hawaii Early Childhood State Plan. The five-year plan includes input from over 150 collaborators from all sectors and islands. The State Plan memorializes a unanimous priority to focus system-wide, beyond early learning, on the development of the whole child. Participators and collaborators included parent groups, health professionals, policymakers, early care and education professionals, advocates, philanthropists, higher education, attorneys, and State department personnel. The State Plan outlines an ambitious goal to develop a comprehensive and integrated statewide early childhood development system that emphasizes care, learning and wellbeing.

OPPORTUNITIES

The economic and social benefits to society far outweigh the cost of investments in early learning. While the creation of a high-quality, publicly-funded pre-K program was a significant accomplishment, there is much more to be done. Thousands of four-year-old children enter Kindergarten underprepared to learn every year because there is not enough public pre-K capacity to serve them. Thus, the accelerated expansion of public pre-K will be a critical growth opportunity for the next Director. This will require relationship development and ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders, funders, the Governor's office, DOE, and the Legislature.

The Early Childhood State Plan (<https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/hawaii-early-childhood-state-plan/>) lays out a comprehensive list of strategies to increase access and availability of services to children aged zero to eight. This includes creating pathways to increase families' abilities to navigate and access these resources, developing their own leadership and advocacy in supporting their children's development, and supporting the development and retention of a qualified and adequately compensated early childhood workforce. Because of cross-sector involvement in developing the plan and the ongoing work, the next Director will have the opportunity to continue working with the full spectrum of the early childhood community to build a comprehensive early

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childhood system, which is well-positioned to deploy Federal funding that is expected to flow to the State of Hawaii in response to the pandemic.

POSITION

To continue its distinguished program and systems work, the EOEL seeks a strategic, compassionate, and adaptable leader who will serve as Director under the supervision of the ELB. Qualified candidates must have a demonstrated passion for early childhood health, wellness, and learning. Working with a variety of stakeholders, this role requires a proven record of inclusive, collaborative leadership and a sensitivity to the history of Hawaii's early learning system. The ideal candidate will have remarkable interpersonal, relationship-building, and communications skills.

The Director has a broad statutory mandate to build and maintain an early childhood learning system, which involves advising the Governor, coordinating with State Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services, and representing EOEL to the Legislature. A keen understanding of complex systems, the legislative process, and the State and Federal government are critical. As the leader of EOEL, the Director must exhibit personal and professional integrity and a commitment to Hawaii's children and families.

The successful candidate will have senior-level management experience in one of the following: early childhood education and development, social work, education, and/or related fields. Supervisory experience, a strong financial management background, and a bachelor's degree are required. Advanced degree preferred.



TO APPLY

Applications and nominations are being received by Inkinen Executive Search. To apply, please submit your resume with cover letter, addressed to the Early Learning Board Search Subcommittee, c/o Inkinen Executive Search, by email to executives@inkinen.com.

Please note, because of the nature of this position, this is a public search. The names of the finalists and their application materials will be publicly posted, and finalists will present to the Early Learning Board in a public forum. For more information, please visit www.inkinen.com/eoel-director-2021 or email executives@inkinen.com.

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