Hawai‘i P-3 as an Early Childhood System Building Initiative

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In 2007, with primary support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the State of Hawai‘i launched its Hawai‘i P-3 Initiative (Hawai‘i P-3) to represent the early childhood component of its established P-20 work. Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education (Hawai‘i P-20) is a system change endeavor focused on strengthening the education pipeline, from early childhood through college. Being connected in a P-20 pipeline framework has opened incredible opportunities for Hawai‘i P-3. In this framework, Hawai‘i P-3 can work closely with early childhood and development providers across agencies, as well as be a catalyst in bringing in the K-12 public education system and the higher education community.

From its inception, Hawai‘i P-3 has focused on Formal and Informal Systems Alignment by connecting Hawai‘i’s multiple private, informal, family/child interaction, and Head Start learning environments with the Hawai‘i Department of Education [HIDOE]. Kagan and Kauerz (2012) identify three separate systems in the early childhood sector. The one that applies to the Hawai‘i P-3 Initiative is the Early Learning System which includes the program prior to kindergarten entry up to 3rd grade. Hawai‘i P-3 is built on the belief and evidence as identified in numerous studies including the longitudinal study, Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation, that early education is a fundamental determinant of children’s educational and life trajectories with the first child measurement point being 3rd grade reading scores. Creating this common shared vision and understanding of the significance of having children read at or above grade level by 3rd grade among key stakeholders is critical to creating a cohesive P-3 Early Learning System.

In April 2007, the BUILD initiative coordinated a task force that provided a framework in which system initiative building efforts could be analyzed. As a result of the work of over 60 evaluators, funders, state leaders, and national experts, a framework evolved which “helps clarify what complex systems initiatives are doing and aiming to accomplish, and thereby supports both initiative theory of change development and emulation planning.” (Coffman, 2007, p.2)

Five areas that systems initiatives might focus on were identified: improving the political climate and funding policies; establishing high performance components with results; creating linkages across systems; developing an infrastructure with support systems; bringing the system to scale.

This issue brief identifies how Hawai‘i P-3:

- works within and strengthens the context of the political landscape through its commitment to early childhood at the state level;
- establishes high-performing early childhood programs and kindergarten through third grade classrooms at the demonstration site level;
- creates strong linkages and connections across systems through horizontally aligning the early childhood programs and services and vertically aligning the early childhood sector and the HIDOE system; and
- works toward building a P-3 infrastructure statewide and takes the lessons learned in the Hawai‘i P-3 initiative to scale.

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COMMITMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AT THE STATE LEVEL

Several key events such as the creation of task forces, councils, and indicators of school readiness have occurred in Hawai'i many years ago; however, their results were seen only in recent years\(^4\). One notable event that occurred was the award of the federally funded Race to the Top K-12 grant in 2010 which expanded learning time for K-12 students and granted subsidies to children to fill newly created preschool slots.\(^5\)

In June 2011, Governor Abercrombie announced the newly-created appointment of an Early Childhood Coordinator in his cabinet. One year later, he signed into law Act 178 which established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). The EOEL Director is on the leadership team of Hawai'i P-20, together with the President of the University of Hawai'i and Superintendent of HIDOE.

DEMONSTRATION SITES

When Hawai'i P-3 began in 2007, the plan was to fund smaller grant funded projects throughout the state. In Spring 2009, Hawai'i P-3 refocused its efforts by designing a Hawai'i P-3 framework with seven key change agents that were identified as highly correlated with affecting the outcomes of children as measured by 3rd grade reading success.\(^6\) The reason for this change was to better coordinate the Hawai'i P-3 efforts with the aim of making a greater impact across sectors. In July 2009, two Hawai'i P-3 demonstration projects were launched to serve as proof of concept for the new Hawai'i P-3 design around seven focus areas (see Table 1). In 2010, Hawai'i P-3’s work continued to expand, creating an additional two P-3 sites. Currently, there are five pilot communities defined within the HIDOE complex boundaries that operate as P-3 demo sites. Two are located on the island of Hawai'i in the complexes of Honoka'a (H) and Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa (KKP) and on O'ahu in the Windward (W), Farrington (F), and Nānākuli-Wai'anae (N-W) districts.

These five demo sites were chosen due to their socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic diversity. They are comprised of large percentages of vulnerable groups of students who are challenged by factors highly correlated with poor outcomes on key educational domains. According to the 2012 Hawai'i State School Status & Improvement Report\(^7\), the five demonstration project communities, collectively, have a higher percentage of students who are considered low income (60%) and English Language Learners (9%), and a lower percentage of students with prior preschool experience (51%), relative to the State figures (see Table 2).

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\(^5\) In August 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Hawai'i one of 12 Race to the Top grants for K-12 education. Hawai'i’s Race to the Top plan included significant commitments to improve educational outcomes for vulnerable populations in which a persistent achievement gap exists, namely Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students and low-income students.


\(^7\) See: http://arch.k12.hi.us/school/ssir/ssir.html
The Hawai‘i P-3 demo site model has provided Hawai‘i with community-based, on-the-ground pilot sites to test innovative initiatives that impact low-income, underserved populations. Particularly in Hawai‘i where relationships are valued, a relationship-based and culturally-based model is essential to affect change. All five demo sites are expected to implement all seven Hawai‘i P-3 focus areas, but the depth to which they address the areas varies, depending upon the community needs. The following examples illustrate some of the ways the demo sites have addressed or have been included in addressing the seven focus areas.

### Comprehensive Early Learning Services/Access to 0–5 Opportunities

Educational opportunities for low-income children to attend a range of types of programs based on families’ needs, preferences and income were established in all five demo sites. The delivery method of these programs varies depending upon the communities in which they are based, such as a Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) program (in which an adult stays with the child); in a center-based preschool program located in a public school; and/or a short-term summer program, directly prior to kindergarten entry.

The N-W demo site is run by INPEACE which operates the Keiki Steps to Kindergarten program. This program is designed for children who have had no previous early learning experiences prior to enrolling in kindergarten. During this three-week summer transition program,

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parents/guardians of participating children are given opportunities to learn what is expected in kindergarten and how to help their child succeed in school. Due to this program’s success it has expanded beyond Nānākuli-Wai‘anae and is offered in other demo sites (W and KKP).

**Family-School Partnerships**

To increase young children’s access to books, the P-3 demo sites have distributed over 1,600 “Book Bags for Literacy” to ECE as well as K-3 classrooms to start a classroom lending library program. The Honoka’a demo site expanded their outreach and has distributed over 75 books to children when they and their families visit the local food pantry.

The Healani He’e Literacy Project in the Windward P-3 site is a community-based literacy program to create literacy and language awareness for young children while families shop. The families take a literacy activity card from a display posted at a business or store and work with their young children while they do their shopping. At the checkout counter, the families pay and their children receive a sticker for completing the literacy card. Currently, there are three businesses in the community that have the Healani He’e Literacy activity display posted for young children. This project has also opened up an opportunity to educate and share the importance of early learning with business personnel.

All of the demo sites conduct fairs in which parents can gain information about early learning programs and services within the community. For example, the Fern Fair occurred in the fall of 2012 in the Farrington demo site. The goal was to raise awareness of early learning opportunities and distribute applications and brochures for these services. Approximately 60 families attended the fair and over 100 books were distributed to young children. This family engagement effort was the first step in a series of five literacy-related training opportunities to provide parents with skills and support to enhance their children’s literacy at home.

During the 2011-12 year, this is a sampling of some of the CLASS activities that occurred in the Hawai‘i P-3 demo sites:

- CLASS Introduction Training: Pre-K – 61 teachers attended; K-3 – 17 teachers attended
- CLASS Observation Training: K-3 – 43 attended
- CLASS Training of Trainers: Pre-K – 8 trained trainers & K-3 – 6 trained trainers
- Making Most of Classroom Interaction: 10 trained instructors completed
- Supported coaching of 25 teachers: (9 preschool & 16 K-3)
- MyTeachingPartner coach support & ongoing training of coaches: 8 coaches
- MyTeachingPartner teacher support: 3 Pre-K teachers completed
- In the Farrington P-3 Site: 31 out of 31 (100%) K classrooms observed
- In the Ka‘ū-Kea‘au-Pāhoa P-3 site: 22 out of 23 (96%) K classrooms observed
Instruction

Hawai‘i P-3 has been intentionally building an infrastructure of highly qualified teachers through Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) certified coaches and trainers who support teachers in delivering high-quality classroom instruction that is developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and grounded in research-based practices. The CLASS tool, which measures child-teacher interactions, has been the key measure to impact teaching and implement coaching to help improve teaching practices.

Teacher Professional Development

In collaboration with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, College of Education, in 2010, Hawai‘i P-3 launched a post-baccalaureate professional development and training program for working educators in the demo site communities. In Spring 2012, seven of the first cohort participants graduated and received their PK-3 Graduate Certificates (PK-3 GCERT). Of the seven, two of the teachers decided to continue on to complete 12 additional credits to graduate with a Master’s degree in Education with emphasis in PK-3 Education. Currently, twenty-nine teachers are enrolled in the PK-3 GCERT program.

In all five demo sites, over 450 ECE and K-3 teachers have participated in at least one professional development activity hosted by the Hawai‘i P-3 staff or one of the demo sites. Topics of the trainings include the use of Common Core State Standards in language arts and literacy and mathematics, developmentally appropriate practices, and positive behavioral support for classroom management.

Another type of teacher professional development that all demo sites have utilized to some degree has been the support for cross-visitation between early childhood teachers and HIDOE teachers. In KKP, all 23 of the kindergarten teachers in the KKP Complex participated in a visitation event to Kamehameha preschool programs to observe the preschool in action. The demo site coordinator was able to orchestrate schedules and substitutes so that they could visit as well as have a debrief discussion after the visit to discuss their observations and identify successful instructional practices that impact student learning.

Leadership for Literacy

Each of the five demo sites regularly bring together administrators and teachers from the early learning community and HIDOE to work together to create a unified and strategic vision for improving instruction. Collectively, the five Hawai‘i P-3 leadership teams represent twenty early learning and development communities, including Head Start programs, private preschool providers, Kamehameha Schools, early intervention providers (i.e. Easter Seals), home visiting programs, FCILSs, and 47 HIDOE elementary schools. These leadership teams convene regularly as professional learning communities (PLCs) to assess and execute plans supporting project goals, outcomes and objectives. From these meetings, community-based initiatives are introduced, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

One of the extensions of the team leadership is annual leadership conferences in each of the demo sites. The Windward demonstration project held its 9th Annual School-Based Transition Conference in January 2013 that provided an array of breakout sessions on topics related to early childhood literacy, transition from early learning to elementary school settings, culturally appropriate instruction, developmentally appropriate practices and using data to inform instruction. Over 250 education leaders, practitioners, community members and parents participated in this district wide conference.

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9 The PK-3 Graduate Certificate is a 15 credit hour, graduate level certificate program. These courses can be applied to a Master’s level degree.
The Hawai’i P-3 staff continually assembles and convenes leadership teams with multi-level representation within the state to collectively explore frameworks, starting points and logical next steps for expanding and enhancing Hawai’i’s current early childhood systemic P-3 efforts. During 2012:

- A team of 16 leaders attended the W.K. Kellogg Learning Labs Conference in Mississippi, and participated in state consulting sessions to brainstorm actionable items on how to move Hawai’i toward public education reform aimed at racial equity and success by third grade;
- A special session with Dr. Ruby Takanishi, former president of Foundation for Child Development in New York, was sponsored by Hawai’i P-3 to discuss the sustainability of P-3 work in Hawai’i with representatives from all five demo sites at the 2012 Annual Leadership Symposium & Hawai’i Early Childhood Conference for Hawai’i Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC); and
- A team of six HIDOE administrators and 3 P-3 staff participated in the 2012 Learning Forward Conference. Breakout sessions included innovative strategies to improve horizontal and vertical alignment of the K-12 system, data to inform professional developmental needs of program and practitioners, and common core state standards.

Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment

Hawai’i did not have a statewide accepted or adopted set of child development standards for children from birth through kindergarten entry. With private funds, Hawai’i P-3 was able to convene a workgroup of representatives from: University of Hawai’i, Center on the Family; the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB); Good Beginnings Alliance (gBA); HAEYC; HIDOE; and Hawai’i P-20. These representatives worked closely with the Governor’s Early Childhood Coordinator.10 This group researched previous state-wide efforts and 29 states’ standards as well as national resources. Following this work a draft was created and disseminated to a larger group including representatives from various early childhood programs and a content specialist at HIDOE. Once a draft was finalized, 10 focus groups occurred statewide. These focus groups were coordinated by the demo site coordinators within their complexes. This included recruiting attendees and providing support with meeting logistics. Over 100 people attended and made comments which were then addressed by the initial workgroup.

In October the Governor endorsed the Hawai’i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDs)11 followed by the ELAB. In December 2012, an RFP was released for implementation guides of HELDS. After the proposals are reviewed and funded, any additional resources that may be needed will be developed by Hawai’i P-3 staff or contractors.

Since 2002, HIDOE has been using the Hawai’i State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA), a group assessment, to assess children’s readiness for school and schools’ readiness for children for the majority of a class (at 75% or higher). After researching other states’ kindergarten entry assessments (KEA), Hawai’i P-3 learned that a number of states have decided to use Teaching Strategies GOLD® (GOLD)12, as the tool for assessing kindergarten entry on an individual student basis. Moreover, Hawai’i P-3 discovered that all of the Head Start grantees in Hawai’i and a large chain of private preschools in Hawai’i are using GOLD® for ongoing formative assessment of students enrolled in their programs. Because GOLD® is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which was adopted by HIDOE and currently being implemented, Hawai’i P-3 developed a pilot for using GOLD® in October 2012. All of the kindergarten teachers within the demo sites were invited to attend the training and participate in future discussions about GOLD®. Information gathered from this pilot will be shared with HIDOE.

Data

Hawai’i P-20 was awarded a grant in 2012 to build a statewide longitudinal data system for education that will include ECE data to impact teaching practices and improve outcomes. In Fall 2011, student demographic data gathered by one of the state’s largest preschool providers in two of the P-3 demo sites was matched with HIDOE with an 82% success rate. This success rate is quite high since some children chose to attend independent schools or moved

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10 The Coordinator became the Director of EOEL with the creation of the office in July 2012
12 Teaching Strategies GOLD® is an authentic, ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten, proven to be valid and reliable by extensive field testing.
out of state. This project will be expanded to include the largest HS grantee in the state, with the potential to receive over 8,000 student data records within a ten-year period.

**CONNECTIONS ACROSS SYSTEMS**

In order to create a P-3 system, alignment must occur. Alignment occurs in two directions, horizontally within a system and then vertically between different systems. Washington State’s Department of Early Learning refers to this as coherence, which “clarifies how success will be achieved, reminding stakeholders that the system’s priorities should work together in a sensible, transparent, and well coordinated manner.” (Froelicher, 2012, p.230).

**Horizontal Alignment**

Aligning informal and formal systems that will impact sustainable change is crucial to Hawai’i P-3’s success. The three areas in which Hawai’i P-3 has been influential in aligning the early childhood sector are the development of the HELDS, supporting the program assessments within the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and the use of the CLASS observation tool.

As previously mentioned, the HELDS are a set of child development standards that describe what children should be able to do at particular chronological milestones, beginning with birth and proceeding through kindergarten entry. Since the HELDS are not program setting-specific, they can be applied to all settings. Currently, Hawai’i has four recognized program settings prior to kindergarten entry: center-based preschools; family child care (FCC); FCIL programs; and home visiting. The next step for the HELDS development is to create a Hawaiian Language Arts and Literacy domain for those children enrolled in Hawaiian medium education settings.

The QRIS is currently piloting in 9 centers and 9 FCC homes throughout the state; one third of the participating QRIS centers and FCCs are in the Hawai’i P-3 demo site zones. Part of the work of QRIS is establishing and maintaining a cadre of locally trained and reliable assessors. Hawai’i P-3 has paid for trainings of early childhood professionals living in Hawai’i on the use of nationally implemented program assessments including the Environmental Rating Scales and CLASS. In addition to the training, Hawai’i P-3 continues to support the efforts of the assessors by participating in inter-rater reliability activities and trainings.

In the fall of 2012, Hawai’i P-3 convened a CLASS Consortium. This consortium is an opportunity to gather key users of CLASS in Hawai’i to discuss how to best utilize CLASS efficiently, consistently and systematically throughout the state. Because much effort has been invested in the implementation of the CLASS observation tool in both early learning and elementary settings, including the Head Start programs, Kamehameha preschools, and the state’s QRIS pilot project, the Hawai’i P-3 team, with the Windward demo site project coordinator, hosted the first CLASS Consortium meeting in November 2012, which was attended by ten practitioners. The attendees shared their current CLASS implementation activities and their agency-specific resources. This group has continued to meet and membership has expanded beyond the demo sites.

**Vertical Alignment**

Through the nature of the five demo sites, professional learning communities (PLCs) were developed and have been a key reform strategy in developing a culture that fosters teacher and administrator leadership explicitly focused on building and sustaining P-3 improvement efforts. The PLCs in Hawai’i are unique in that they include two systems that typically do not come together: the early childhood sector and the DOE. Through these relationships the following bridges between the two communities have occurred:

- the creation of the HELDS for children from birth to kindergarten entry which are aligned with DOE child standards, including Common Core;
- the use of CLASS in both ECE community and K-3 classrooms which includes teacher observations and targeted coaching and support for teachers to improve child/teacher interactions;
- cross-training with ECE and K-3 educators on developmentally appropriate practices; and
- connecting child level data between the two systems.

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14 The three Environmental Rating Scales include: the Infant Toddler Rating Scale [ITERS]; the Early Childhood Rating Scale [ECERS]; and the Family Child Care Fating Scale [FCCERS].
BUILDING A P-3 INFRASTRUCTURE

In early 2012, a Hawai’i P-3 leadership cadre was created which is comprised of the five demo site coordinators, the Director of the EOEL, the Early Childhood Specialist from HIDOE, the Executive Director of Hawai’i P-20, and the Hawai’i P-3 staff. This group meets monthly and communicates both informally and formally to discuss P-3 successes and challenges, current Hawai’i initiatives, and national efforts. In addition to sharing efforts, this group will be given the opportunity to participate in trainings such as grant writing, facilitating effective meetings, and other areas of interest that emerge from the group.

Finally, in order to ensure sustainability and funding it is essential to communicate best practices and lessons learned. Three mechanisms have been identified: the Hawai’i P-3 website, video, and issue briefs. In July 2012, Hawai’i P-3 launched its new website which provides detailed information on the five demo sites as well as the HELDS and other efforts related to P-3 that are being implemented in early childhood programs around the state. The fifteen-minute video tells the mo’olelo (story) of the development, various approaches, best practices, lessons learned, and unique stories of educators, students and families in the five demo sites. The video mo’olelo is structured so that it provides an alternative means of traditional data representation and reporting by telling the story of Hawai’i P-3. Finally, we are documenting our work through as series of Hawai’i P-3 Issue Briefs of which this is the first. Our goal is to highlight our successes and explain our research and findings of various components implemented at various demo sites. These briefs will be distributed locally, available on the Hawai’i P-3 website, and shared at national conferences.

15 www.p3Hawaii.org
16 The video can be viewed at www.p3Hawaii.org.

The Hawai’i P-3 Initiative
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETS THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING!

The Hawai’i P-3 Initiative is dedicated to supporting the development and implementation of statewide initiatives for children from birth through age 8 with the goal of reading at grade level by 3rd grade. This effort is supported by generous grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation, and Kamehameha Schools.