



MOILIILI COMMUNITY CENTER

November 17, 2015

To: The Honorable Grant Chun, Chairperson
Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Subject: Testimony In Support of the Department of Education Afterschool-Plus Program
Monthly Fee Increase

The Moiliili Community Center (MCC) is a private, non-profit agency servicing elementary aged children, seniors, frail elderly, and provides the community with discounted merchandise at the Thrift Store. In Hawaii, MCC has been a long-time advocate of afterschool programs since the early 1960's and became a DOE Private Provider since the start of A+. The program continues to maintain family living and carries out its mission to the surrounding communities with the support services, and programs to enhance individual, family, and community life.

MCC supports the Department of Education (DOE) written recommendation to increase the A+ program monthly fees over the next three years based on the mandated state minimum wage increase and the rising cost of program operations from:

1. \$85 to \$100 per month/per child effective July 1, 2016
2. \$100 to \$110 per month/per child effective July 1, 2017
3. \$110 to \$120 per month/per child effective July 1, 2018

MCC supports the DOE recommendation to also include the elimination of the sliding scale fee based on the challenges of collecting these individual fee rates. Through past experiences this method is not cost effective administratively and programmatically.

The research reporting data from the DOE outlines the cost of the afterschool programs in the nation. In comparison to Hawaii's fees, the A+ program is the lowest in the nation. Hawaii's parent's pay the lowest tuition for afterschool care, and receives additional program benefits. For example, based on the first incremental fee increase of a \$100 per month per child, effective July 1, 2016 a family would pay a cost of \$5 per day, and \$1.43 per hour. ($\$100 \times 9 \text{ months} = \$900 \div 180 \text{ program days} = \$5 \text{ per day} \div 3.5 \text{ hours} = \1.43 per hour). Additional program benefits and continued supervised care is provided during early (Wednesday) dismissal days, parent-teacher conference weeks, and three additional days either at the start of the program, or at the end of the program, at no additional cost to parents.



In addition, it is essential to prevent latch key children from staying home alone and unsupervised. We realize that a fee increase could be a hardship for some families and look towards other alternative options such as bringing back the state subsidy program and/or find additional funding to support the A+ program via legislation session effective January 2016.

Under "Financial Implications" page 7, item k, MCC seeks to modify the DOE recommendation regarding "*the issuance of a new RFP's.*" Currently contracts are awarded and renewed up to 5 years to providers. We request that the current contracts continue to stay on the 5 year rotation plan, since fee increases has never been a factor in previous years. The Department has always awarded contracts fairly on the basis of service deliver. From now moving forward, the bidding and award process can still be implemented with sites ending their 5 year contract, and prevent disruption to the current contracts in place. Interested parties will still have the opportunity to bid at the end of any 5 year cycle. Please consider this request.

In closing, A+ is a vital program and continues to provide enrichment activities, supervision and quality care to approximately 20,000 children. MCC is supportive to carry out the DOE goals and objectives to provide the best care to the children and families we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Moiliili Community Center.

Sincerely,

Brenda Nakamura

Director
Moiliili Community Center

Attachment: Parent Testimony



November 12, 2015

Mr. Grant Chun
Finance and Infrastructure Committee
State of Hawaii Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. Chun,

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed monthly fee increase for the A+ After-school program. My son attends the program run by Moiliili Community Center at Lunalilo Elementary School. It offers him a safe place to have a snack, do homework, and also participate in activities carefully chosen by the staff. His attendance in this program allows me to continue to work while having peace of mind that he is well taken care of.

I realize that this increase may be difficult for some families but I believe financial assistance is provided for those who qualify. The proposed increase to \$120.00 a month over a 3 year period would assist providers in covering their operational costs and remaining financially self-sufficient. This would allow them to pay their employees a fair wage and in turn provide our children with quality caregivers. It should also be considered that to find care for a child during the school breaks can easily run \$40 or \$50 a day. A+ offers worry-free care for 3-4+ hours a day which includes parent-teacher conference weeks as well as early release days and so the way I see it, \$120.00 a month is a great deal. In the end it comes down to less than \$7 a day. That rate seems more than fair.

Thank you for your time,



Angela Kurahashi Takenaka
1707 Kalaauokalani Way Apt A
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
(808)351-5619

November 13, 2015

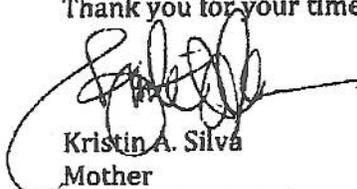
Dear Sir or Madem,

I am writing today to express my appreciation for and support of afterschool programs for Hawai'i's youth. My two youngest children, Robina (grade 4) and Robert (Kindergarten) attend the A+ Program at Lunalilo Elementary School, run by the Mo'ili'ili Community Center. Participation in this program is an integral element in our family's ability to thrive. My husband and I are both employed full time as educators. Having the ability to enroll our children in the A+ Program allows my children to receive quality, affordable care and enrichment while my husband and I work.

The ability to have child care while we work is, of course, a primary need for our family. However, the A+ Program run by the Mo'ili'ili Community Center provides so much more to our children than just "care." The program staff provide a healthy snack, time and assistance with homework completion, a variety of recreational and enrichment activities ranging from reading time to outdoor games to group performances, and they foster a continued sense of community among the children. But for me, the most valuable thing the A+ Program provides is genuine care and compassion. There is no value that can be placed on the way my children LOVE going to A+. They love the staff and they love the activities and snacks, which allows me and my husband to do what we need to do without worrying about our young children's well being.

As an educator and as a mother, I urge any and all individuals in a position to influence continued and increased funding for afterschool programs to do so. Please allow our schools and community programs to continue to offer this vital service to the children of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and support,



Kristin A. Silva
Mother
41-1435 Laukalo Street
Waimanalo, HI 96795
(808)381-3429



Hawaii Board of Education
Finance and Infrastructure Committee
Grant Chun, Chair
Brian De Lima, Vice Chair

November 17, 2015

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair De Lima and Members:

Subject: Hawaii Department of Education Recommendations to Increase the Monthly Fee for the After School PLUS ("A+") Program, effective 2016-17 school year.

This testimony is submitted in support of the Hawaii Department of Education's (HIDOE) recommendation to increase the monthly fee for the After-School PLUS ("A+") program.

The Hawaii Afterschool Alliance is a network of organizations putting their efforts together to secure sustainable, quality afterschool and summer programs that result in improved academic, social, emotional, and physical outcomes for children and families in Hawaii.

The After-School PLUS ("A+") program serves approximately 20,000 latchkey children and their families. In 1989, Lieutenant Governor Benjamin Cayetano created the After-School PLUS ("A+") program for Hawaii's public elementary school students with generous financial support from the Legislature. At inception, it was recognized as the first state-subsidized after-school program in the nation and today it's the only afterschool program in the nation that is offered in all the elementary schools in the State.

In 1990 the Legislature appropriated \$5.7 million to operate the After-School PLUS ("A+") program. An additional \$16.0 million was added to operate the program for school year 1990-91. In 2010, due to budgetary constraints, the general fund appropriation for the After-School PLUS ("A+") program was eliminated.

As it is stated by HIDOE, the operational cost of the After-School PLUS ("A+") program has risen. HIDOE also states that the current fee of \$85 per month for a 9-month year does not cover the cost of the program. HIDOE also notes that the After-School PLUS ("A+") program has not received general fund appropriations to support its operations since Fiscal Year 2010.

The Hawaii Afterschool Alliance sees the need for an increase of funds to sustain the After-School PLUS ("A+") program. However, we also recognize that if this increase is included in the parent's fee alone, there will be families that may no longer be able to afford this much-needed program and service.

In addition, the Hawaii Afterschool Alliance has been advocating for a reinstatement of the general fund appropriation for the After-School PLUS (“A+”) program. In the fall of 2009, while the “Furlough Fridays” took place, this budget allocation was taken away and the cost of the program was no longer subsidized. At that time, parents were informed that they would need to pay the full cost per student as a temporary solution to budget cut backs. However, this budget allocation was never reinstated for HIDOE’s A+ Program.

The Hawaii Afterschool Alliance is also building from national best practices and local bright spots to establish standards that are research-based, and will create mechanisms and systems for training, technical assistance and self-assessment. Hawaii currently lacks statewide standards for quality, self-assessment and evaluation for its afterschool and out-of-school programs, despite evidence that such standards are important. Reviews of numerous evaluation studies suggest that afterschool programs’ impacts vary and that afterschool settings that lack certain qualities are unlikely to enhance academic or developmental outcomes. The purpose of the quality standards will be to outline the path and steps that lead to quality afterschool programs. The standards will be based on national research, adapted to respond to the unique culture and climate of Hawaii, and will represent the very best practices in the field.

To summarize, the Hawaii Afterschool Alliance supports HIDOE’s recommendation for the rate increases to cover the rising operational cost of the After-School PLUS (“A+”) program. At the same time we ask that the State of Hawaii restore the original intent of the A+ program to be subsidized so that it can be affordable and accessible to all of Hawaii’s latchkey children and would also increase the quality of the After-School PLUS (“A+”) program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Paula Adams, Executive Director
Hawaii Afterschool Alliance
841 Bishop Street, Suite 301
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 380-1602
www.hawaiiafterschoolalliance.org

Testimony from the YMCA of Honolulu

Date: November 17, 2015

To: The Honorable Grant Chun, Chair
Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Hawaii Board of Education

Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Hawaii Board of Education

Subject: Testimony - Committee Action on Department of Education to Increase the Monthly Fee for the After-School PLUS ("A+") Program, Effective 2016-17 School Year

Overview

The YMCA of Honolulu is in support of the Department of Education's (Department) proposal:

- To increase the monthly fee of \$85 for the After-School PLUS ("A+") Program, effective 2016-17 school year;
- To implement an upward adjustment over the next three years (to \$100 per month effective July 1, 2016; to \$110 per month effective July 1, 2017; to \$120 per month effective July 1, 2018);
- That a sliding fee scale not be implemented because such a system would be burdensome to administer and manage as we have learned from previous experience. In addition, the flat rate per child per month would need to be substantially increased beyond what is being proposed by the Department if a sliding scale were to be used.

The YMCA of Honolulu further submits clarity on the mention of the issuance of a new RFP (page 7 item k, last sentence of paragraph one). Currently contracts awarded to providers are renewable for up to five years. This results in a staggered renewal schedule. The Y requests that contracts that are still within the 5 year time frame be honored and allowed to continue with any approved parent fee changes incorporated in the annual renewal contracts. The RFP process for 2016 and forward should continue to be for A+ sites that are ending the 5 year cycle to allow an open application opportunity for all interested providers. An open competition for all DOE A+ sites (130

schools or more), would be burdensome for key parties involved. An open competition process was not used for fee increases made by the Department in 2010 and 2011.

- DOE Administrative Staff and School Administrators - The RFP process involves engaging school administrators in determining whether providers applying for their schools meet the approved vendor of service criteria. Coordination involving all 130+ schools would be a significant undertaking particularly for the Department's administrative staff.
- Providers – Without knowledge of any secured contracted sites for the upcoming school year, the providers' ability to retain continuing staff over the summer will be impacted. It will be difficult to anticipate new hire needs for the new school year and to be financially prepared for any changes in the number of contracts that are actually awarded. Typically providers are not informed of their approved vendor status until early summer.
- Department of Human Services (DHS) – The new hire process involves finger printing and background clearances by DHS, at the cost of the provider or new hire. The possibility of changes to school assignments could generate a significant high volume of background clearances for DHS to process, in a very short period of time prior to the start of the school year.

Background

For over 145 years the YMCA of Honolulu (Y) has been taking care of Hawaii's people regardless of their age, race, mental or physical ability, income, gender, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs. The Y is grounded in its commitment to create and implement programs and services to strengthen communities, with a strong focus on youth development. Every year, the Y of Honolulu cares for more than 50,000 children and youth.

Testimony in Support

Specific to the Hawaii Department of Education's After-School PLUS ("A+") Program, the Y has worked in the spirit of collaborative partnership with the Department from the inception of this unique and much needed program that supports the child care needs for families. In 1990, the Y worked with the Department to launch the A+ Program, and has been an A+ Program provider ever since. We are currently privileged to be running the A+ Program in 54 schools serving nearly 7,000 children across Oahu. Our sites range in size from 20 to 390 children, all of whom are "latch key" children who would be left unsupervised after the school bell rings until their parents/guardians return home from work.

The Y's commitment to the Department's A+ Program and to our keiki and families is demonstrated in the extent to which we dedicate our energy and resources to ensure quality care. As a contracted provider we must meet HIDOE's program components,

and in addition, we self-impose high standards to provide enrichment experiences to support healthy growth and development of the keiki we serve. This requires additional funding which the Y works diligently to acquire through individual donations and foundation grants to supplement the fixed revenue generated by the current fee of \$85 per child. We embrace the honor of being part of the school community of our A+ Program sites and provide extended services and support to the schools beyond the A+ Program hours with no added compensation. Examples of these include assisting with school evening family events and starting the A+ Program day earlier when school is dismissed as early as 12:30 for parent-teacher conference weeks.

The Y shares in the original intent of the founders of the A+ Program, that it be affordable and accessible to any child that meets the "latch key" eligibility requirement. Therefore, it is due to extreme necessity that we come to you in full support of the Hawaii Department of Education's recommendation to increase the monthly fee for the After-School A+ Program. The rising operational cost, primarily due to the recent passage and phase-in mandate of the minimum wage increase, has had an immediate burdensome impact from the first effective date of January 1, 2015. We are now facing further mandates over the next three years. The monthly fee increase that is recommended by the Department will help us meet the state's minimum wage mandate and continue to provide the high quality afterschool programming that our keiki and their families deserve.

An attachment to our testimony is the Y's projected operating budget should the fee remain at the current \$85 per month, and with the recommended increased fees.

The Department provides compelling data that the recommended fees are reasonable and justified and that even with the increased fees, the A+ Program will continue to be on the lowest end of the range of fees charged by after school programs locally as well as across the nation. The Department reports on a trend of declining A+ enrollment over the last seven years. However, it is important to clarify that this trend is not only due to the increase in A+ fees, but influenced in part by other factors. These factors include more schools offering faculty conducted tutoring/academic sessions after school to support student outcomes, the transitioning of sixth grade to middle school, and as noted in Superintendent Matayoshi's memo, the change in the Kindergarten entry age. While some families may have had to make the decision to dis-enroll their children from the A+ Program due to the financial impact of a fee increase, our internal data shows that after some time these children returned to program. Parents of these children have shared with us that they made adjustments to their family budgets to return their children to the A+ Program, which they value and prefer for the safety and well-being of their children.

The Y fully supports the Department's position to implement a fee increase without a sliding scale system. A sliding scale was used in the past and proved to be very difficult to manage and administer.

Lastly, the Y asks that current contracts be honored and not nulled by an open competitive RFP process for all 130 A+ sites. The new RFP should only pertain to the sites that have completed a 5-year contract period with a provider and hence, up for "bid". As mentioned above, not only would the process of rebidding 130 A+ sites result in the unnecessary use of resources for both the providers and the DOE, there is precedent in which current contracts were not nulled but renewal contracts modified to incorporate fee changes that were made effective February 1, 2010 and July 1, 2011. An open competitive process was initiated with a new RFP once in the past, however, in that instance the change involved the scope of service; the term "education" was replaced with "child care" to meet TANF requirements.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your time and considerations on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Diane Tabangay

Diane Tabangay, M.Ed
Executive Director of Children's Programs
YMCA of Honolulu
(808) 541-5470 telephone
(808) 533-1286 fax
dtabangay@ymcahonolulu.org