

# EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

## PREL Receives ESA Designation

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In March 2005, the 23rd legislative session of the Hawai'i State Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution Number 199 designating Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) an educational service agency (ESA). This coveted designation means two things: PREL is the only organization in Hawai'i and the Pacific Region to receive this distinction and PREL can provide expanded technical assistance, professional development (PD), and other educational services to Hawai'i schools.

House Concurrent Resolution Number 199 recognizes that "PREL's activities at the local level in Hawai'i have proven to be enormously successful" and designates PREL as a statewide ESA "charged with helping to equalize educational opportunities, meeting the needs of schools, and supporting the efforts of the Hawai'i State Board of Education."

Senators Norman Sakamoto and Suzanne Chun-Oakland and Representative Roy Takumi were instrumental in getting support for and ensuring passage of Resolution 199.

Across the country, ESAs play a key role in providing teacher PD and alternate certification programs, technical assistance, and data management services that allow schools to meet accountability requirements. More than 620 ESAs have been established in 42 states. Thanks to their in-depth understanding of state and federal mandates and close contact with local education agencies, ESAs are often in the best position to quickly and effectively respond to the individual needs of local districts and schools. They provide a wide range of educational support services to schools and school districts, including teacher training, supplemental services for eligible students, integration of technology into school improvement plans, student testing, training for alternative certification, and distance learning. PREL has been serving Hawai'i in these areas since 1990.

While the Concurrent Resolution 199 did not speak to the role of PREL as an ESA, the following areas in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) remain opportunities for PREL to assist the state to develop, expand services, and ultimately serve more children in effective and efficient ways:

- Professional Development
- Technical Assistance/Grant Writing
- Early Childhood Program
- Assessments and Annual Reports
- Special Supports for Disadvantaged Children
- Infusion of Support to Low-Performing Schools
- Development of Innovative Programs
- Administration of Alternative Programs
- Media and Technology
- Partnerships
- Participation of Private School Students and Teachers
- Support and Involvement of Parents

Having listed all of the potential opportunities for ESAs, most federal funds, in this case NCLB, flow through the State Education Agency (SEA), and state statutes and SEA interpretations of an appropriate ESA role may limit those opportunities. The role PREL will play as an ESA in Hawai'i is yet to be defined. For school year 2005–2006, the Hawai'i DOE has determined that PREL can provide supplemental educational services for eligible students in the state. Similar services may be extended in the future.

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