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COMMUNITY COALITION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION LAUNCHES TODAY

(HONOLULU – Monday, January 31, 2011) – Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) was launched at the state capitol today. HE'E, a statewide coalition of diverse stakeholders, is committed to sharing resources and identifying opportunities to improve public education. This is the first time such a broad group has come together to focus on education.

HE'E representatives outlined the coalition's development, mission and priorities for 2011-2016 to legislators, other stakeholders in public education, and the superintendent. Over 40 representatives from constituency groups attended and were available to answer questions about their participation in the Coalition.

"Family and community engagement is a critical component of Hawaii's educational reform efforts," said Kathy Bryant, HE'E spokesperson. "We look forward to collaborating with the DOE as we all work toward transforming our public schools."

"Transforming Hawaii's public schools is a huge undertaking. As citizens, we must acknowledge and embrace our shared responsibility for education in our state and collaboratively work with each other so that every student is successful," said Kathryn Matayoshi, state superintendent of schools. "I would like to extend my congratulations to the Hui for Excellence in Education for their leadership, proactive approach, and investment in expanding community and parent engagement statewide."

HE'E's priority areas for 2011-2016:

- Enhancing family engagement in schools
- Influencing public policy that affects education
- Building trust within the Coalition
- Engaging families as component of school leadership
- Creating family empowerment by collaborating to meet the basic needs of every child
- Strengthening schools-community relationships
- Matching school needs with community resources
- Removing obstacles to good teaching
- Building faith in our public schools

“HE’E’s membership will support `ohana and community engagement at the local level, and will serve as a bridge to policy-makers and the DOE.” Cheri Nakamura, HE’E director, said.

HE’E’s mission: The HE’E Coalition promotes a child-centered and strength-based public education system in which families, communities and schools are valued and empowered to help every student succeed. HE’E works to bring diverse stakeholders together to harness collective energy, share resources and identify opportunities for progressive action in education.

HE’E members and participants include leaders and representatives from the State of Hawaii Department of Education, policy makers, community organizations, unions and parent groups.

HE’E’s efforts in coordinating community engagement in support of the Department of Education’s new strategic plan will strengthen Hawaii’s Race to the Top, the federal program designed to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform.

For more information about HE’E, visit www.HEECoalition.org.

Media note: Photos of Cheri Nakamura, Kathy Bryant attached.

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