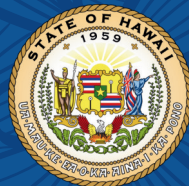


COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | NOVEMBER 2025

Serving Mililani Town, Waipi'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Hau'oli Ho'omaika'i to you and your 'ohana! As we welcome the holiday season, I'm excited to share updates from across our district and state. This month's newsletter features inspiring student creativity, educational excellence, and information on state food assistance available for furloughed federal workers with keiki.

Last month, a project I had been working on for two years with DOE and DOT finally came to life! Students from Mililani, Waipahu, and Pearl City High Schools collaborated with local artists and the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT) to transform nearly three-quarters of a mile along Kamehameha Highway, from Waipahu Street to Waipi'o Uka, into a vibrant visual story celebrating the Waipi'o Ahupua'a. It was truly inspiring to see students come together to create a piece of art they can take pride in while beautifying our community. Brought to life with the help of nearly 100 high school student painters, the mural presents a mauka-to-makai perspective, illustrating O'ahu's water journey from the mountains to the sea and depicting how it shapes the land and sustains the life around us.

Waikele Elementary earned national recognition for its innovative career pathway program, preparing students for success from an early age. Waipahu High School was honored with the prestigious North Star Award for its leadership in inclusive education. I also had the opportunity to visit Pearl City High School as part of the National Career Academy Coalition's tour, where I witnessed firsthand the incredible work being done through their College and Career Academies. Our schools continue to shine with accomplishments that reflect the dedication and hard work of our students, teachers, and staff!

As we close out the year, I remain grateful for the partnerships, progress, and community spirit that make our district so special. I look forward to continuing our work together in the new year to build on these successes and create even more opportunities for our keiki and families. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and peaceful holiday season!

Mahalo,

Michelle



Michelle
KIDANI

Senate Vice President

Chair
Committee on Education

Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Member
Committee on Ways and Means

Join our monthly digital mailing list!

To subscribe to our monthly digital newsletters, email senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov with your name, email, and mailing address.



Address
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 214



Phone
(808) 586-7100



Email
senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov



Website
www.bit.ly/senkidani

Waikele Elementary School Makes History

Ho'omaika'i to Waikele Elementary School for being the first elementary school in the **nation** to earn the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) Model Academies with Distinction award. The school was recognized at the 29th Annual NCAC Conference on October 20th for its Pre-Academy Pathway program, which is transforming education by helping students explore career passions early on and preparing them to be college, career, and citizenship ready. Congratulations to Principal Sheldon Oshio and the entire Waikele team for leading the way in integrating career and technical education and providing hands-on learning opportunities that inspire students and set a strong foundation for their futures.



Photo Courtesy of HIDOE

Waikele Elementary proudly stands as the first elementary school to be honored as a Model Academy with Distinction!

Waipahu High School Shines at National Conference



Photo Courtesy of HIDOE

Waipahu High School's 'Ohana of Excellence Academy proudly accepts the inaugural North Star Award at the NCAC conference

Waipahu High's Academy of Arts & Communications and 'Ohana of Excellence Academy were both recognized at this year's National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) conference for earning Model Academies and Model Academies with Distinction status, an incredible achievement that highlights the school's commitment to student success. Their programs continue to set the standard for innovative, hands-on learning that empowers students to explore their passions and prepare for college, career, and community leadership. The 'Ohana of Excellence Academy also made history last school year as the first special education class in the HIDOE to earn college credit through an Early College course. Congratulations to Principal Zachary Sheets, the academy teams, and the entire Waipahu High School staff and community for leading with innovation, compassion, and excellence. Hail Waipahu!

National Career Academy Coalition at PCHS

On October 22nd, I had the opportunity to also visit Pearl City High School as part of the National Career Academy Coalition's tour. Leaders and educators from across the United States and the Pacific visited ten public high schools to see Hawai'i's career academies in action and hear directly from student ambassadors. Listening to the students share their experiences reaffirmed how these programs are preparing them with real-world skills, confidence, and clear pathways toward future success.



Photo Courtesy of HIDOE

Exploring the different programs of study with a presentation from student Panelists

Mahalo to our dedicated educators, partners, and especially our students for their leadership and willingness to share their journeys.

HIDOE's New E-bike Rules and Regulations



Photo Courtesy of HIDOE

The Hawai'i State Department of Education has announced new regulations regarding electric bicycles (e-bikes) on school campuses, effective immediately starting November 5th. Emphasizing that student safety remains the top priority, as the use of motorized vehicles becomes more common.

Key updates include:

- Electric motorcycles (including those with "ghost pedals") are strictly prohibited on all HIDOE properties.
- Elementary and middle/intermediate schools: E-bikes are not allowed due to age restrictions, riders must be at least 15 years old.
- High schools: Students aged 15+ may bring e-bikes if they are properly registered and display a county-issued decal. Unregistered e-bikes will be confiscated and returned to parents.

Kamehameha Highway Mural Project

On October 25th and 26th, in partnership with HDOT and HIDEOE, High School students from Mililani, Waipahu, and Pearl City, successfully completed a collaborative mural project along Kamehameha Highway. Nearly 100 students participated through the HDOT Workforce Internship Program, gaining valuable hands-on experience in the field. The mural, with leadership by three local artists, depicts a mauka-to-makai lens, telling the story of O'ahu's water journey from mountain to sea, transforming the land and sustaining life along the way. What started as a vision to beautify our community has turned into something truly special — a collaboration between our students, artists, and agencies to bring color and pride to our neighborhood.



Myself with artists, [L-R]: Blythe Yoshikane, Solomon Enos, and Jesse Velasquez

Huge mahalo to all the students who helped make this project a reality and came out to paint this beautiful mural! Special thanks to DOT Director Ed Sniffen and DOE Superintendent Keith Hayashi, as well as school principals Fred Murphy (Mililani), Zachary Sheets (Waipahu), and Joseph Halfmann (Pearl City) for helping recruit the amazing students who brought this mural to life. A big shoutout also goes to our talented lead artists, Blythe Yoshikane, Solomon Enos, and Jesse Velasquez, for guiding and inspiring our students throughout the project. Mahalo to HDOT and HIDEOE, and their dedicated staff who ensured a safe and successful painting day. Together the students created something truly beautiful that celebrates our community pride and sense of belonging.



[L-R]: Director Ed Sniffen, myself, and Superintendent Hayashi



With students from neighboring schools



With Deputy Superintendent Heidi Armstrong



Drive with Aloha on the Road: Safety Starts with You!



As we enter the holiday season, let's all remember to drive with aloha. Here are a few simple reminders to help keep you and your loved ones safe on the road:

1. Always Wear Your Seatbelt – It's your first line of defense in an accident. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up.
2. Stay Focused and Avoid Distractions – Keep your eyes on the road and avoid texting, eating, or adjusting the radio while driving.
3. Follow Speed Limits – Speeding reduces reaction time and increases the severity of accidents. Drive at safe speeds, especially in school zones and residential areas.
4. Don't Drive Under the Influence – Alcohol, drugs, and even some prescription drugs can impair your ability to drive. Always choose to drive sober.
5. Use Turn Signals – Let other drivers know your intentions. Signal well in advance before turning or changing lanes.

Stay safe on the road!

Support Available for Families Impacted by Federal Shutdown

For the families who have been impacted by the federal shutdown through furloughs or job loss, I encourage you to apply for free or reduced-price school meals through HIDEOE. This year, students approved for reduced-price meals will receive free breakfast and lunch daily. No child should have to worry about going hungry, and this program helps ensure every student has access to nutritious meals to support their learning and well-being. If your family's financial situation has recently changed, I urge you to take advantage of this resource.

Application and program details are available at: go.hidoe.us/FRPM.



Photo Courtesy of HIDEOE

Other Helpful Programs:

Inspire Church Food Pantry

Inspire Church – 94-877 Lumiaina Street, Waipahu, HI 96797

Phone: (808) 677-8844

Offers small bags of food for individuals and families in need. Additional outreach services and food distribution are also provided through various church programs.

'Ohana Produce Plus Distributions on O'ahu

A food distribution program where you can receive free groceries like fresh produce, assorted dry goods, nonperishable food items and other essentials. There are no income requirements for this program, and anyone can receive food at through 'Ohana Produce Plus.

See website for more details: <https://www.catholichawaii.org/news-events/news-articles/2025/november/114-ohana-produce-distributions-on-o-ahu/>

Aloha United Way

200 N. Vineyard Blvd. #700, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: (808) 536-1951

Provides a wide range of services, including food, shelter, and clothing assistance; rental, housing, and utility support; family, keiki, and kūpuna programs; disability and veteran services; crisis intervention and disaster relief; domestic violence and mental health support; legal and financial assistance; employment education; SNAP prescreening, and more.

