

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-ninth Hawaii State Legislature

(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Senate Vice President

Chair: Committee on Education

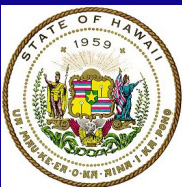
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Aloha, friends and neighbors,

The first day of school for Hawaii public school teachers is next Tuesday, August 1, and students return to their campuses a week later. I think all of us can remember first-day-of-school excitement either from our own experiences, or through those of our children or grandchildren. This year, there are several "new beginnings" to look forward to.

Hawaii's 13,000 teachers will be back in their classrooms under terms of a new four-year contract. Their first day back to school is also the official start date for new Superintendent of Education, Dr. Christina Kishimoto. Department of Education administrators will be making the transition *with her* to new guidelines developed by the Board of Education's Strategic Plan, along with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that seeks to give states more autonomy in meeting educational goals. We will be monitoring this transition period with good wishes for success for all involved.

Other issues remain unresolved. Earlier this month, the DOE reported progress on the "thousand classrooms" air conditioning program that was promised last year. As of July 7, bids for cooling 1,000 + classrooms had been solicited; 1,000 + air conditioning units had been ordered, and nearly 700 classroom a/c units had been installed. The legislature authorized additional sources of funding for other heat abatement measures such as fans, insulation, solar panels, heat-reflective white roof treatments and so forth. We continue to monitor progress on this issue as well.

Also, if recent history is a guide, we will soon be reading about the shortage of qualified teachers to staff our classrooms as the new school year begins. It's a chronic - and critical - problem. Filling classrooms with emergency hires and unlicensed teachers not only short-changes our youngsters, but instruction and learning suffer badly.

The Board of Education heard a presentation at its last meeting about a new curriculum developed by the UH Manoa College of Education and the DOE to offer substitute teachers already in our schools the opportunity to work toward teacher licensure. I brought several entities together nearly a year ago to find ways to recruit teachers locally - teachers who are more likely to stay in Hawaii to the benefit of hard-to-staff schools since they already live and work in our communities. My idea was to start with substitute teachers and include others such as Educational Assistants once this program is established. It's being called *Grow Your Own*, with the College of Education expecting to enroll its first cohort of teacher candidates in January.

We have high expectations for this program as well as we begin the new school year in this always-dynamic environment.

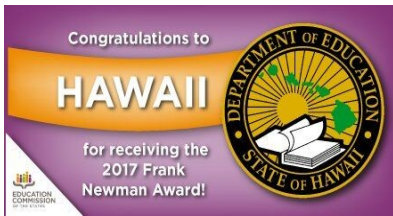
Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,

Tax relief legislation is now law

With the signing of HB 209, Hawaii has established an **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**, an adjustment that will benefit lower-income taxpayers. The new law also makes permanent a temporary state tax credit designed to offset the state excise tax paid by lower-income residents on food purchases. State revenues from the EITC will result in lower revenues to the state, but those losses will be more than offset by increased tax rates on higher incomes. The new credit and tax rates take effect in calendar year 2018.

All of the deadlines for the Governor's action on bills we approved in the 2017 legislative session have now passed. Most bills were signed into law, some bills were allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, and 13 bills were vetoed. Bills that did not make it through to final passage in the 2017 session are still alive and may be brought back for action in the 2018 session.





The Hawaii Department of Education officially received the prestigious **Frank Newman Award for State Innovation** at this year's conference of the **Education Commission of the States** in San Diego. In selecting the DOE for honors this year, the



Commission cited the Department's broadly-supported education improvement efforts, including focusing school accountability for students' college and career readiness; teacher and education leader support across the state; and development of a comprehensive data

At the ECS Education Policy Forum, left-to-right, outgoing DOE Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, 2017 Hawaii public school Teacher of the Year, Sung Man Park of Washington Middle School, and Hawaii Representative Roy Takumi, who just completed a two-year term as Vice Chair of the Education Commission of the States.

Solomon Elementary School
re-build now underway



Artist's rendering of the new Solomon Elementary school at Schofield; groundbreaking photo courtesy of Hawaii News Now.

Earlier this month, I joined state and federal officials as we broke ground on a major renovation project to build four new classroom buildings, a new playfield and new parking areas that will transform **Solomon Elementary School** with modern facilities designed to serve 1,100 students in kindergarten through grade 5.

Originally opened in 1969, Solomon Elementary is one of two public elementary schools located at Schofield Barracks to serve military dependents.

The school is named for **Samuel K. Solomon, Jr.**, a Hawaii-born enlisted member of the 25th Infantry Division who earned a Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart for courage in saving wounded members of his company in the Vietnam War.

The project received a \$70 million grant from the Department of Defense with state funding to provide an additional \$20 million.

With me and Hawaii Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa in the photo above are Dann Carlson, DOE Assistant Superintendent for Facilities (at left), and DOD Program Manager Sigmund Csicsery.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (formerly State Civil Defense) has revised its recommended guidelines for island residents to make sure we're prepared for disasters. With the season's first tropical storm – Fernanda – now dissipating in the Central Pacific, and the National Weather Service predicting an active storm season through the end of November, **HEMA now says it's a good idea to have a two-week supply of food, water and other necessities on hand.**

Along with my colleague, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, I sponsored a disaster preparedness town hall meeting at Mililani High School earlier this month (photo at right) where officials shared important tips with the audience. You can update your emergency plan and find a detailed list of suggested supplies at the HEMA website: <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/>.

Basic supplies include water (one gallon per person per day), non-perishable food items, batteries for portable radios and lights, a first aid kit and sanitation items. Don't forget prescription medications and specialty items such as diapers and food for infants, and anything you might need for pets.



Congratulations

At left, UH Manoa Athletics recognized the 45th anniversary of the landmark Title IX legislation that has meant so much to women athletes across the country. It was an occasion to honor **Marilyn Moniz-Kahoohanohano**, retiring after more than two decades as a women's athletics administrator.

At right, **Kaila Chock Nihi** of Mililani was one of five recipients of scholarships from Ukulele Festival Hawaii that has for many years supported outstanding students with college scholarships. I sponsored Kaila's award that will support her studies as she enrolls at UNLV this coming semester.

