

# Ke Kumu Wai

A Newsletter from the Office of Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland—Hawaii Senate District 13

August 2009



## THE SENATOR'S MESSAGE:

### *Mahalo Nui Loa*

**ALOHA!** As the State Senator of District 13, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all those community members who have helped to make this past year a successful and rewarding period. The residents of Senate District 13 have made tremendous contributions to the well-being of our local ohana. And to all those in the State of Hawaii, mahalo, truly, for all your support throughout this past legislative year. Senate District 13 has a very special place in my heart and I thank and appreciate all of the thousands of you who cared enough to share your concerns and communicate with me on the many important issues that we faced this past legislative session; for you too are truly responsible for the accomplishments we have made thus far despite the difficult economic times.

A few very special mahalos belong to my office staff: my office manager, Alda Mae Takabayshi, Administrative Assistants Laurie Lush and Alisha Leisek, Committee Clerk Jane Seymour, Committee Assistant Tyrell Ma'ae, Community Relations Assistant Leolani Oyama, Administrative Assistant Russell Higa, Legislative Interns Linda Ichiyama and Jay Williams, Volunteers Marcus Fisher, Myrna Murdoch, and Anna Walden. It has only been with your strong and unwavering support that we have made it so successfully through the past legislative session. Thank you for your bright attitudes, teamwork and kokua. The excellence and proficiency with which you conduct and complete your work has been outstanding.

My deep and sincere appreciation is also owed to my legislative colleagues and to the support staff of the Legislature. They inspire me daily with the passion and sincerity that they pour into their work. They are in constant service to the people of Hawaii. Also a grateful mahalo to the Executive and Judiciary Branches for all of their noble efforts to serve the citizens of this state.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## McKinley High Upperclassmen Igniting Success in Freshmen

McKinley is the first school in Hawaii to implement a program called Ignition, which is geared toward helping freshmen succeed and transition into high school. The program calls for teacher recommendations of upcoming juniors and seniors to become mentors to a group of 8-10 of the upcoming freshmen. Each mentor then undergoes a two day training camp in which they learn skills and activities which they will be facilitating throughout the upcoming school year. Honolulu, HI (McKinley High School) July 31, 2009 – On this day, the first day for freshmen, we will be kicking off our Ignition program with a series of activities which teach life lessons and skills. There will be a total of four field activities. However, to succeed in these activities the freshmen will have to trust each other, work together, form strategies, and communicate with one another. After each activity, there will be a debriefing session which the student mentor will lead. In debriefing sessions, the freshmen will be asked to relate the skills they used in the activities to real life, for example, to high school.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- M.H.S. Ignition Program 1
- District 13 Schools 2
- Budget Deficit Solutions 3
- District 13 CIP Projects 3
- Key Bills of 2009 Session 4
- Mahalo Aloha 'Aina  
Earth Day Volunteers! 5

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HIGH PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

# Senate District 13 Schools



Congratulations to **Pauoa Elementary School** and **Principal Roberta Richards**. Pauoa Elementary School took first place in the research division of the state wide Lego league robotics competition. This was their first year involved in robotics and their students only started in October. The finals took place in January 2009.

Kudos to **Kapalama Elementary School** and **Principal Patricia Dang**. Kapalama Elementary was named a State Blue Ribbon School in 2008.

This accomplishment validates the efforts of the staff, students, families and community for their support of our children in making student achievement a priority. They hope to be given National Blue Ribbon Status this year and are simply awaiting their scores from this year's Hawaii Standards Achievement Tests.

**“Our vision states Life Long Learning... together we make a difference [at Lanakila].”**

**MICHAEL ONO, PRINCIPAL**

Congratulations to **Lanakila Elementary School** and **Principal Michael Ono**. Lanakila Elementary School was, like Kapalama Elementary School, named a State of Hawaii Blue Ribbon School in 2008 and is now waiting to see if they are given National Blue Ribbon status this year. Principal Ono proudly expressed “Our vision states Life Long Learning... together we make a difference. It is through the efforts of staff, students, families, and the community that Lanakila has come so far”.

**Nuuanu Elementary School** did well on the Hawaii State Assessment testing in science and writing in the fall of this year, scoring higher than both the state and district averages.

Also, in an on-line math competition held in April, which allowed students from all over the world to compete, Nuuanu was ranked in the top ten of all schools taking these tests.

Aside from their impressive academic achievements, Nuuanu Elementary School students have been active in serving the community. In an October food drive, the school

collected nearly 800 pounds of canned and packaged items that they then gave to a Title I public school in the Kaimuki district.

In December of this past year they had a clothes drive and collected a van full of clothing which they then gave to a Title I school in Kalihi.

**Central Middle** has been busy at work this past 2009–2010 school year. Congratulations to them for acquiring the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) three-year Accreditation, also for their great improvements in the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) exams. Their English Language Learner (ELL) gained a 17% increase in proficiency in Reading and they gained a 14% increase in proficiency in Math.

Central Middle School has also experienced continuous improvement in school wide technology upgrades, particularly in their Computer Managed Instructional Programs: ALEKS, ELLIS, Read 180, and Accelerated Reader.

The general classes have been improved upon as well. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination): a guided program within the instructional day was created to prepare students for four-year college eligibility. Those who are accepted into the program are placed in the most rigorous of classes and the AVID elective.

During this one period elective, the students are exposed to a myriad of academic and enrichment activities that strengthen their skill set while improving their self image.

Along with this guided program, there has been increased rigor across the curriculum: Curriculum maps have been implemented in all classes, Pre-Algebra offered in Grade 7, Pre-Algebra required in Grade 8 and Algebra offered in Grade 8. Central Middle has converted to a web based Accelerated Reader program which now allows students accessibility to over 100,000 Accelerated Reader quizzes (up from 5,000).

## Senator's Message

(continued from page 1)

Many thanks to the incredible individuals who have donated their time and resources to the betterment of the state and the people it represents as well to the community service organizations, committees, task forces, Neighborhood Boards, PTSA's, businesses, labor unions, faith-based organizations, and caucuses, that many of those same individuals sit behind. Your unwavering support and timely responses, your dedication, perseverance, and incredible efforts have caused significant legislative change for the better that has and will continue to impact many lives in Hawaii and throughout the world. Not only have the people of Hawaii benefited by your incredible contributions but also the national and global communities who are a part of our larger ohana.

Lastly, I give a deep and heartfelt thank you to my family and friends who have been my constant source of guidance and light. Your personal sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. I am forever grateful to you for all that you have done in allowing me to best serve the public. Your patience, support and unfaltering love have kept me going, and working hard.

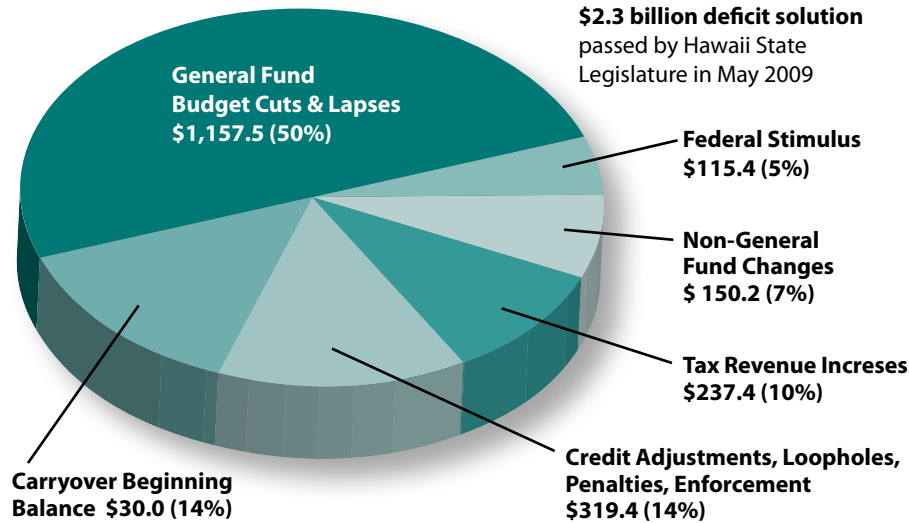
You have all played a unique and crucial role in the State of Hawaii's 2009 Legislative session. The people of Hawaii are better today, as am I, because of your all hard work this past year.

*Me ke aloha pumehana,*

Susie Chun Oakland  
State Senator, District 13

## Budget Deficit Solutions

July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011



**\$2.1 billion revenue shortfall** projected by Council on Revenues as of April 2009

**\$2.3 billion deficit solution** passed by Hawaii State Legislature in May 2009

## Senate District 13 CIP Projects

### Kawananakoa Middle School, Oahu

Design for the renovation of the auditorium.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2011: \$ 900,000

Method of funding (MOF):

Education Special Fund

### Lanakila Elementary School, Oahu

Design and construction for the installation of Lanakila Elementary Building I and C security screens, replacement of campus program bell, and parking lot resurfacing.

FY 2011: \$ 270,000

MOF: Education Special Fund

### Maemae Elementary School, Oahu

Construction for the installation of a safety fence near grade 5 rooms near the street.

FY 2011: \$ 35,000

MOF: Education Special Fund

### HMP-Kapalama Military Reservation improvements, Honolulu harbor, Oahu

Design and construction for the development of a new container terminal facility and other related improvements. This project is deemed necessary to qualify for federal aid financing and/or reimbursement. This is a harbor modernization project.

FY 2010: \$ 24,800,000

FY 2011: \$ 105,400,000

MOF: revenue bond

### Interstate route H-1 and Moanalua freeways improvements, Puuloa IC to Kapiolani IC, Oahu

Construction for an additional lane on the H-1 freeway eastbound lanes from the vicinity of Middle Street to the vicinity of Vineyard Boulevard. This project is deemed necessary to qualify for federal aid financing and/or reimbursement.

FY 2010: \$ 20,000,000, \$ 80,000,000

MOF: revenue bond, federal funds

## M.H.S. Freshmen Program (continued from page 1)

Studies have shown that more students fail ninth grade than any other grade. Additionally, a study of 56 Georgia and Florida high schools, found that schools with extensive transition programs had significantly lower failure and dropout rates than schools without transition programs. It is hoped that with the implementing of Ignition at McKinley, we too will see our retention and dropout rates diminish.

"This is the first year for Ignition and the advisers and mentors have just been recently trained so

I am a little anxious about everything working out on New Student Orientation Day," said counselor Lisa Panquites.

"However, after seeing the excitement and enthusiasm of the mentors at the training I am very excited about the first day for freshmen and to see the relationships blossom throughout the year," she added.

"Having a mentor during your freshman year of high school is very important," said Ignition mentor and McKinley student Cindy Le. "I was very fortunate to have a loving and supportive older brother to help guide me through the many tribulations I encountered. However, some freshmen aren't as fortunate as I am. But with the implementing of Ignition, all incoming freshmen to McKinley will receive the kind

of championship and encouragement that will help them succeed in high school and in all aspects of life."

"I think Ignition will be a success because the mentors that we have are awesome! They are energetic, take initiative, and want Ignition to be successful," said Jodi Akasaki, an Ignition adviser, teacher, and counselor at McKinley.

**"...after seeing...the mentors at the training, I am very excited about the first day for freshmen and to see the relationships blossom through the year."**

LISA PANQUIETES, COUNSELOR

together as a team, build self confidence, form lasting friendships as well as study skills and time management, to name a few," she added.

"The mentors will reap an incredible amount of benefits," said April Nakamura, an Ignition adviser and history teacher at McKinley. "They will learn how to work with people, understand them, be patient, teach and guide them, becoming a role model, and basically live outside of themselves and give to others. They will learn lessons and skills that cannot be taught in a classroom or through books."

"I think all schools should implement a program such as Ignition to have an additional support group for freshmen since it is a very critical year," said Mr. Oshiro a counselor at McKinley.

# Key Bills of the 2009 Legislative Session

## THE STATE BUDGET

Hawai'i faces unprecedented economic challenges; the legislature has not confronted a budget shortfall of this magnitude in the history of our state. Challenged with producing a fiscally responsible budget, state legislators worked painstakingly this session to reduce government spending and streamline state government. Their goal was to not only help slow Hawaii's economic downturn but also lay the groundwork for future growth and prosperity.

HB200, the Hawaii State Budget, appropriates funds for the operating and capital improvement costs of the Executive Branch for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. It covers general fund expenses totaling \$5.1 billion in FY2010 and \$5.2 billion in FY2011, and capital improvement projects for fiscal years 2010 (\$10.8 billion total) and 2011 (\$10.4 billion total). A key detail in the state budget: legislators have provided increased funding in the first year of the biennium for construction projects that can be executed immediately in order to help stimulate the economy and to provide jobs.

However, there are many other ways to economize and conserve. We personally have numerous opportunities to cut back, and legislative offices have already taken advantage of many of them. We have turned off all computers, telephones and overhead lights that are not absolutely imperative to our working environment and efficiency. We will be hand delivering much of our newsletter, instead of by post; continue using e-mail to correspond to thousands of constituents to address their concerns, recycle bottles, cans, paper and other materials, employ many different methods to reduce paper usage. You too can build into your house and home settings many of these practices to preserve our precious resources.

## CEDED LANDS

A critical decision in the continuing debate on the issue of ceded lands in Hawaii has prompted state legislators to clarify policy regarding the sale or exchange of state-held lands. Following the March 31, 2009 opinion of the United States Supreme Court in *Hawaii et al. v. Office of Hawaiian Affairs et al.*, legislators passed SB1677 to protect the legislature's right to exercise its power over the use of ceded lands. SB1677 requires that any sale, gift or transfer of state-owned land be approved by the adoption of a concurrent resolution requiring a two-thirds majority approval by the legislature.

## EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

The unemployment rate in the state of Hawaii has reached its highest point in 26 years and more than doubled since January 2008. Given the current economic downturn, many employers have had to make difficult choices because they cannot afford to retain their employees at regular hours, forcing them to either reduce hours or layoff employees.

While existing law would make employees who keep their jobs but face reduced work hours ineligible to receive unemployment insurance, SB1568 allows individuals employed part-time or seeking part-time employment to receive unemployment insurance, providing protection to those who need it most. It also provides unemployment insurance to employees when, due to compelling family emergencies, they are forced to take a leave of absence from work. SB1664 seeks to help employers retain their employees during this critical time by clarifying and recodifying the partial unemployment system. The bill adds partial unemployment definitions and requirements relating to eligibility, claim filing and reporting, and amends the conditions in which partial unemployment benefits may be extended beyond eight consecutive weeks.

## PAY CUT AND SALARY FREEZE

Given the declining economy and budget shortfalls confronting the state, a growing number of Hawaii residents are experiencing extreme economic hardships. Faced with layoffs, possible furloughs, and increasing cutbacks, Hawaii residents are looking to their lawmakers for leadership. Legislators passed HB1536 to ease these burdens and help reduce the impact of the current fiscal crisis.

Over the next few years, salary increases for top state officials set by the Hawaii Salary Commission would have cost the state an estimated \$4.1 million for the fiscal years 2009-2011. HB1536 mandates a salary freeze and a five percent pay cut of the salaries on June 30, 2009 of the governor, lieutenant governor, department directors, judges and state lawmakers, for a two year period beginning July 1, 2009. This ultimately will save the state \$2.1 million. HB1536 also ties vacation and sick leave to that of collective bargaining for a two year period beginning July 1, 2009.

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

First launched in 2007, Keiki Care is a program aimed at providing health insurance coverage to all Hawaii's keiki under 18 years old, and ensuring that they receive the quality care they deserve. The program was terminated,

however, when Governor Lingle eliminated funding for the program in October, 2008.

This session, legislators revived Keiki Care and passed HB989 which amends Act 236, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, to extend the Hawaii Children's Health Care Program to June 30, 2012. The bill also requires that the Department of Human Services provide the legislature with any findings or recommendations relating to Keiki Care. To fund the program, the legislature has appropriated \$200,000 each year for the fiscal years 2009-2011. Approximately 600 keiki will be covered annually.

## PRESERVING PUBLIC HEALTH CARE

The Hawaii Health Systems Corporation is the fourth largest public health system in the nation, providing essential hospital and long-term care health services to Hawaii residents, especially those living in rural areas. Currently, HHSC faces grave economic shortfalls and is in a precarious financial position.

SB1673 seeks to ensure that the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (including Maluhia Hospital) remains intact and maintains its level of safety net services. The bill makes significant changes to improve the operations of the HHSC, including temporarily transferring the community hospitals to the Department of Health, allowing regional health care systems to transition into a corporate structure, and authorizing the corporation to conduct criminal history checks. SB1673 also establishes the Community Hospital System special fund.

## PROVIDING NEW WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES

In this critical time of economic downturn, workforce sustainability is crucial to Hawaii's economic recovery and revitalization. Workforce sustainability gains strength by providing services such as workforce development training that help meet the rapidly changing needs of both employers and employees.

SB1665 establishes a Skilled Worker and Business Development Center in Hawaii community colleges to provide enhanced workforce training programs to students just entering the workforce or to employees returning to school to seek greater opportunities. The bill also appropriates \$2.4 million for fiscal year 2009-2010 in Reed Act funds, with \$200,000 given to each community college in the University of Hawaii school system.

*(Continued on page 5)*



## Congratulations! 5th Anniversary Aloha `Aina Earth Day

The members of this community effort have generously donated their time and resources these past 5 years encouraging and facilitating community recycling, most recently at Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center. A big thank you to all those who have volunteered their time each month to help numerous schools and community organizations island-wide to recycle items for free and turn trash into cash during Aloha Aina Earth Day.

### Special *mahalo* to the following businesses and organizations:

Access Information Management	Hawaii Lions District 50	Paradiselua, Inc.
Alliance Trucking/Contracting	Hawaiian Earth Products	Penske Truck Rental
Alternate Energy	Honolulu Fire Department	Refrigerant Recycling, Inc.
City Department of Environmental Services	Honolulu Recovery Systems	Rolloffs Hawaii
Family Towing	Interstate Batteries Systems	Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corp.
Goodwill Industries of Hawaii Inc.	Intrade Corporation	T&N Computer Recycling Services
Hagadone Printing Co.	Menehune Water Co.	Unitek Solvent Services
	Nike Town Re-Use A Shoe	Walmart
	Pacific Biodiesel	

## Key bills (continued from page 4)

### PRESERVING THE SAFETY NET

The Hawaii State Legislature worked diligently to preserve Hawaii's safety net funding for our most vulnerable and working families. Funding for health care services through Med-QUEST and Medicaid, adult dental services, mental health services, child and adult protective services, Kupuna Care, youth services, services for persons with developmental disabilities, vocational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities, chore services for residents with long-term care needs, Lanakila

Multi-Purpose and Moiliili Senior Centers, domestic violence services, legal services for indigent persons, homeless services, public housing funding, Healthy Start, pre-school services, youth gang services, food stamps, public assistance for very low income families and disabled individuals, foster youth programs, respite services, and substance abuse treatment programs were all included in the state budget, HB200, CD1. Funding must now be released by the Governor.

### SUPPORTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Throughout the course of this past legislative session, numerous bills were passed containing many aspects of public education significant funding was allocated by the Legislature in HB 200, CD1, supportive of excellence in education. Funds must now be released by the Governor.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Key bills (continued from page 5)

**Charter Schools**—Clarifies the functions, duties, and roles of the charter school review panel in the administration and operation of charter schools, and improves fiscal and budgetary accountability.

**Comprehensive Sexuality Health Education**—Requires any recipient of state funding specifically for sexuality health education programs to provide comprehensive medically accurate sexuality education.

**College Savings Program**—Supports investment in a child's future by allowing third parties to make contributions directly into a State-established HI529 college savings account for a designated beneficiary.

**Education: Military Children**—Enacts the interstate compact on educational opportunity for military children to remove barriers to educational attainment faced by children of military families due to frequent moves and deployment of parents.

**Education: School Meals**—Adds a definition of "school meals" to include breakfast and lunch; clarifies that the department of education shall set prices for all school meals, based on the previous year's cost.

**Energy Efficiency and Environmental Standards: Public Schools**—Requires construction and renovation of public school facilities to meet the Collaborative for High Performance Schools standards; requires replacement of old portable buildings with high performance classrooms. Also requires prioritization of public school facilities projects in accordance with certain criteria.