

Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors,

As current Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I continue to focus on ways in which the state can improve our schools and support our students and teachers. In this issue of my newsletter you will find examples of excellence that are truly inspiring and encouraging. We applaud **Cindy Takara's** investment of time and talent with her **Waipahu High School** students who achieve national and statewide recognition year after year. We congratulate the more than 40 public school teachers - **including three from Mililani schools** - who worked hard to achieve national board certification in 2014. And, of course,

we were all thrilled with the news earlier this week that **Jana Fukada** - a K-2 teacher at **Mililani Uka Elementary** - has been named **Hawaii's 2015 Milken Educator**.

Being named a Milken Educator is like winning the "Oscar of Teaching." The award honors top educators not necessarily for lifetime achievements but for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future. With the designation, the Milken Foundation provides a \$25,000 grant that the honoree may use as wished. Most dedicate the award to further educational programs and goals at their respective schools. We salute Jana and all of our teachers for their commitment to their profession.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

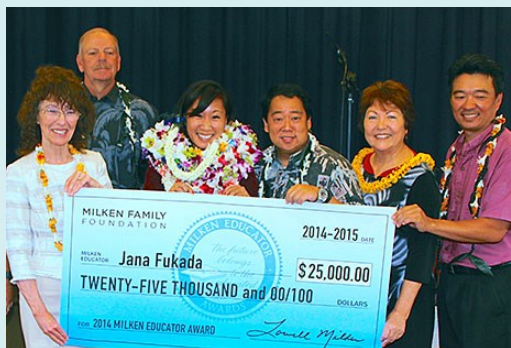
Michelle

Update on the Little Fire Ant

The eradication program for the little fire ant infestation in Mililani Mauka is showing early signs of success. After completing five of the eight planned treatments in the infestation zone, spot surveys have not detected the ant.

The pest was first found in June 2014 and subsequent surveys showed the invasive ants covered homes on both sides of a greenway.

A multi-agency group has been working to survey and treat the area. According to treatment plans developed by the Hawaii Ant Lab and the Department of Agriculture, several alternating types of pesticides and bait formulas are applied every six weeks. The last scheduled treatment is in May 2015, after which extensive surveys will be conducted. Monitoring will be conducted for the next several years.



The announcement of her selection as Milken Educator was a total surprise to Jana Fukada. Joining her for the award presentation, left to right: Jane Foley of the Milken Foundation, Complex Area Superintendent John Brummel, Representative Ryan Yamane and me, and Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui.

The Senate voted this week to confirm Governor Ige's appointment of Randy Iwase to be new Chair of the State Public Utilities Commission. We are pleased that Randy has agreed to return to public service in this critical position. He is a longtime resident of Mililani who



has served us as a member of the City Council and for ten years in the State Senate. Randy's son Jarand joined us following the vote of approval.

Congratulations to the State Champion Mililani Girls Varsity Soccer Team!

A packed house watched into overtime as the Trojan girls wrapped up their comeback season in thrilling fashion. **Good luck now to the Varsity Boys, who play in the quarterfinals of the State Championship Tournament on Thursday.**



Notes from the Capitol



We welcome visitors to the Capitol as an opportunity to explain the business of the Legislature. This month I had a chance to meet members of the Student Council from **Mililani Uka Elementary School**.



Taking advantage of technology in our schools

In summer 2013, the Department of Education unveiled Access Learning, a pilot project to study impacts of technology and digital curricular resources on teaching and learning.

Laptops or tablets have been in use at eight schools statewide – including Mililani Mauka and Mililani Waena Elementary Schools.

At an informational briefing at the Capitol last week, participating students and teachers shared their experiences – some using remote technology to participate in the briefing via teleconferencing from their campuses.



We are considering student learning and teacher instructional outcomes and effectiveness as we decide whether and when to expand the pilot to additional schools in the state. One concern is that students now in the pilot program will be moving on to schools where all of the technology-based learning tools to which they have become accustomed may not be available.

I was honored to be invited to speak to public and private school teachers who qualified as National Board Certified Teachers in 2014. The nearly four dozen public school teachers included Kaiewa Muranaka - Mililani High School, Andrea Kubo-Nakasone - Mililani Waena Elementary, and Lance Fujioka - Mililani Uka Elementary – with me in the photo at right.

Over the past three years, Hawaii has experienced the fastest growth in the number of Certified Teachers in the nation and now has more than 500 with Board credentials.

In the background, other teachers on stage at the Capitol, and Governor David Ige as an honored guest.



Martinez Scholarship Applications Available

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) is once again encouraging high school seniors to apply for the John S. Martinez Scholarship awarded to eleven students from across the country each year to recognize academic excellence. Applicants must be of Hispanic background and attend schools in districts represented by legislators of Hispanic ethnicity – in this case, Senators Michelle Kidani and Donovan Dela Cruz, who are both active in the Hispanic Caucus. Last year, **Ms. Isis Usborne – Mililani High School Class of 2014** – was one of the national scholarship awardees. She has used her \$3,000 grant to help with college expenses at UH Manoa. More information and the application forms are posted on the Caucus Web site – www.nhcsl.org.

Application deadline is March 13, 2015

Celebrating the Arts



Henry Akina, 2014 Preis Honoree

The logo on the wall (*above*) is for the **Hawaii Arts Alliance** that “builds creativity through advocacy, community and education for all the arts.” I was pleased to represent the Senate in presenting a congratulatory certificate to **Henry Akina**, a “local boy” who has had a distinguished career with the world’s top opera companies in Europe and Asia. Back at home in the islands, Akina is the Artistic Director of the Hawaii Opera Theatre.

7th Annual Art Open House

The Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts owns many hundreds of art works that are on exhibit at State offices and building sites – about 500 of them in offices at the State Capitol. You are invited to the **Art at the Capitol** open house to visit lawmakers’ offices to enjoy and learn about the State’s art collection on the first Friday of March. Anyone who has visited my office in Room 228 is familiar with the photo at right – entitled **Keeper of the Meek**. *It’s a real eye-opener!*



STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
ART IN PUBLIC PLACES COLLECTION
AT THE LEGISLATIVE OFFICES



Kauai photographer **Sally French** visited my office for last year’s **Art at the Capitol** open house. Stop by this year on **Friday evening, March 6, beginning at 5 p.m.**

Congratulations Mililani Student Artists! A painting, a photograph and an illustration are on display for the next few weeks as part of the 2015 Scholastic Arts Exhibition at the Hawaii State Art Museum across Richards St. from the State Capitol.



At left, this painting by **Mililani High School Senior Mark Ciparro** – **The Fathomable Night** – won a Gold Key Award. It will be considered for the National Scholastic Arts exhibition in New York later this year.

Above left, a photo entitled **Puff** by **Mililani High School’s Kalani Kenui**, who specializes in underwater pictures.

At right, **Elise Page** from **Mililani Middle School** submitted her illustration **Deep Sea Racing**.



More than 140 public school students’ art works are on display at the Hawaii State Art Museum through April 10. Hours and information at 586-0900.

Saluting Our Students



Kipapa Elementary



All Mililani schools incorporate the “Six Pillars of Character” into their programs: *Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring & Citizenship.*

Mililani schools took over Mililani Town Center for a day this month to celebrate *Character Counts*.



Hundreds of students and their families enjoyed a day of entertainment, games and a variety of informational booths.

The *Character Counts* program involves not only students’ behavior with one another, but also student/teacher interaction and families in the home as well.



Singing out with “Uka Power”



There’s an App for that . . .

Congratulations to Waipahu High School students who are in the school’s Academy of Information Technology. They approached the Academy’s director, **Cindy Takara**, this year with an idea for entering a national tech competition, the Verizon App Challenge. Their *myFuture* app concept is designed to help students shape ideas for future careers by asking them 100 questions about their personality. The idea was good enough to win this year’s “best in state” award from Verizon. Waipahu students and a team from Waiakea High School on Hawaii Island won top honors in the state from more than 1,000 app concepts submitted nationwide.

Front row, from left: **Cesar Catchin, Renz Sagabaen and Cia Dela Cruz**; standing: **Jimwel Aguinaldo, John Guerrero and Mark Ramirez**



Some of the Waipahu Tech Academy students above – along with coach and mentor **Cindy Takara** – also competed in the annual *LifeSmarts* game show style consumer skills match at the State Capitol this month. Two Waipahu teams were among the four finalist entries – winners from more than 40 teams that competed across the state.



From left, Coach **Cindy Takara** and 2nd place **Team West Force**: **Timothy Chinen, Marjorie Raquiz, Alysha Paz, Lawrence De Leon and Edsen Casintahan**



WHS Team No Ka ‘Ohi, 3rd place: **Renz Sagabaen, Jimwel Aguinaldo, John Guerrero, Cia Dela Cruz and Marc Ramirez**

Teams from Campbell High School and ‘Iolani joined the two Waipahu entries this year. They spent the day fielding questions about the environment, health, technology, consumer protection and finance. **Waipahu** sent a team to the nationals in Florida last year, but this year it’s hats off to ‘Iolani who advances to the finals.