

# Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors,

The current legislative session officially passed the halfway point last week. As Senate bills crossed over to the House and vice versa, the public hearings process will further refine those bills and determine which ones will be positioned for final approval before our scheduled May 7 adjournment. Our most important work this session is to complete the state budget for the two years beginning July 1. As had been expected, lawmakers to date have adopted a fairly conservative approach to a spending plan in light of economic

forecasts that say we can expect only moderate growth in the foreseeable future. Decisions on funding public programs, state construction projects and grants-in-aid to private, non-profit organizations are not expected to be made for another month. I'll be using this newsletter and my MidWeek columns to report on how the budget will impact Mililani and Waipio.

Education support groups have been visiting the Capitol this month, many of them focusing on pre-school education that is a priority for me as Chair of the Senate Committee on Education. The Good Beginnings Alliance hosted the screening of a film that is part of a series on the critical importance of early childhood education to be broadcast on PBS later this year. Our good friends from HCAP Head Start stopped in at lawmakers' offices - and they, of course, have seen the value of pre-school over the 50 years they have served Hawaii's youngsters. And pre-schoolers from several community-based non-profit organizations came by as well.

My goal is to enact legislation (SB 844/HB 820) that creates a system of pre-school opportunities for as many youngsters as possible with state support. While the funding section in SB 844 was removed when it was heard by the Ways and Means Committee, I remain hopeful that we will be able to find funds to insert directly into the final operating budget at a later date. We must commit to our *keiki* to give them every advantage for success throughout their years in school.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



### Mililani Uka teacher honored during Education Week

Jana Fukada, a curriculum coach for teachers and youngsters at **Mililani Uka Elementary School**, was among those honored in events scheduled during Education Week at the State Capitol last week. Jana is the 2014 Milken Foundation Educator who received the surprise announcement of her selection at a school assembly last month. The Legislature has set aside a week each year to recognize excellence among teachers, administrators and students. *A photo gallery from Education Week is on page 3. Congratulations to all of the honorees and the dedicated corps of teachers and principals in whose care we leave our keiki each school day.*



With me from left, Broadway star Loretta Ables Sayre, theater Artistic Director John Rampage and Deena Dray, Executive Director.

### *100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Diamond Head Theatre!*

The Senate recognized Diamond Head Theatre's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this week, with congratulations to **Loretta Ables Sayre of Mililani**, playing the role of Bloody Mary in DHT's *South Pacific*. Loretta played the role for 1,000 shows on Broadway.



### *Congratulations to Mililani High School varsity soccer players and coaches who were elected by media and coaches for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser All-State teams!*

**Girls: Coach of the Year Ray Akiona, Player of the Year Tia Furuta** and her teammates Kasey Isobe, Malia Napoleon, Kayla Braunthal, Andrea Kenagy, Kanoe Morihara, Jayna Morikawa and Kailana Kaeo.

**Boys: Coach of the Year Steve McGehee** and players Jeron Cunningham, Marc Matas, Jarad Choquette, Kalahikola Judd, Jamin Fonseca, Isaiah Kuloloia and Treyton Kong.



# Notes from the Capitol



I stood with members of the State Senate in support of the **Hawaii Says NO MORE!** campaign to end domestic violence and sexual assault that officially launched this month. **No more silence; no more violence.** Learn more at <http://hawaiisaysnomore.org/>.



Parents and leaders from **HCAP Head Start** were guests at the State Capitol this month. Head Start is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Hawaii programs are in 40 classrooms at Hawaii public schools and at numerous other facilities – serving just under 1,700 youngsters, each year. The program brings about \$15-million in federal funds into the state.

I previously served on HCAP's Board as a representative of the Mililani Neighborhood Board No. 25, and know that Head Start provides a real boost for youngsters heading into kindergarten. It ensures success by becoming partners with parents on behalf of their children, recognizing that parents are their child's first and most influential teacher.



With me at left, Head Start Director and Mililani resident Lynn Cabato, Ramona Josue, Kapua Head Start Center; Danielle Apilado, Kauluwela Center; Head Start parent Shawna Vaouli; J-nel Cullen, Kalihi Kai Center; and Jasmine Arsisto, Salt Lake Pre Plus



Several pre-school service providers filled the rotunda during a visit to the Capitol to appeal for continued state funding for their programs. **At left, Keoni from Ka Pa'alana Family Education Program** stopped by to give me a beautiful hand-made lei. Keoni is among the thousands of island *keiki* we're trying to help with legislation to establish universal pre-school opportunities.



# Education Week Celebrates Excellence in our Schools



The Senate honors Principals for leadership and the State's Blue Ribbon Schools for innovation & excellence. To my right are Keith Hayashi, Waipahu High School, and Elynn Chung, Mililani Middle School.



Catherine Caine  
Waikiki Elementary  
2015 Teacher of the Year



Milken Educator Jana Fukada with parents Patti and Edward and grandmother Elaine. Mom Patti and I are members of the Japanese Women's Society.



Edward Oshiro, recipient of the 2015 Tokioka Award for Excellence in School Leadership. Ed is Principal at Ewa Makai Elementary and a Mililani resident.



Principal Fred Murphy accepted honors on behalf of the State Champion MHS Trojan football team.



Elynn Chung, Mililani Middle School Principal of the Year



Mililani Boys Varsity with Coach of the Year Steve McGehee



Mililani Girls Varsity with Coach of the Year Ray Akiona

## Hawaii State Capitol is the focus of 'Olelo Video



'Olelo Community Media – Oahu's public access TV system – has produced a short video documentary about Hawaii's unique State Capitol that was a highlight of this year's Art at the Capitol open house event earlier this month. **This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the groundbreaking for the Capitol Building.** The video features former Governor George Ariyoshi, Judge James Burns (son of the late Governor John Burns), architect Frank Haines and Joe Tassill, who served as Capitol tours coordinator for more than 20 years. Use this link to watch the video when you have time. I think you will find it to be very informative.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWD\\_x\\_EVWYM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWD_x_EVWYM)



## In Our Communities

### ***Dyslexia Association sponsors workshop this Saturday, March 28***

A workshop this weekend will teach strategies to help adults and children with learning differences develop skills to better cope with school and careers. Sponsored by the Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (HIDA), Saturday's session is aimed at parents, teachers and tutors who want to help with "executive functioning" – such things as organizational skills, time management, and staying on task to complete assignments. The Saturday morning session runs from 8:30-11:30 a.m. at Wayland Baptist University on Ainamakua Drive. More information and workshop registration are online at [www.dyslexia-hawaii.org](http://www.dyslexia-hawaii.org) or telephone 538-7077.

***Pre-registration is NOT necessary; walk-in participants are welcome.***



At left, I took my Dr. Seuss Cat Hat with me to a read aloud story session at Mililani Public Library late last month. *We ALL had fun!* Above, the Mililani Middle School choral group serenaded us during the annual concert of choirs from a half-dozen Mililani schools. A VERY pleasant night out with family.



As a member of the Senate Committee on Transportation, I was invited to join Senate colleagues on a tour of Honolulu harbor facilities. The tour was conducted by the industry group – **Hawaii Harbors Users Group** – to familiarize us with needed upgrades to waterfront facilities. More than 80 percent of consumer goods – food, clothing, autos, building supplies and much more – are imported into Hawaii. About 98 percent of those materials and supplies enter the state through commercial harbors on six islands.



Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui invited me to visit Waialua High & Intermediate Schools on the north shore where he presented sports equipment to the REACH after school enrichment program that he has championed. Accepting the equipment is school Principal Avis Nanbu.

***Mililani Waena and Mililani Mauka Elementary*** are two of the eight schools across the state participating in the Department of Education's Digital Learning pilot program in which students and teachers are all supplied with tablets or laptops as primary instructional and learning tools. The DOE reported on progress in a recent newsletter that you can read online at:

***<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/VisionForSuccess/Newsletters/StriveHiNewsletter/>***

***Click on March 2015 – there you'll find a short video presentation about Mililani Waena's digital learning experience with comments from Principal Dale Castro, Waena teachers and students.***