

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

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



Chair, Committee on Education

Vice Chair, Committee on
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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

The Legislative session is a little more than half-way through the 60-day calendar, moving toward our scheduled adjournment in early May. Several people have told me they are curious about what's going on at the Capitol this year. They may be reacting to the fact that there do not appear to be many high-profile issues on the table this year.

I can offer a possible explanation for this. The state operates on a two-year budget cycle, with the major framework for state spending formulated in the first year. This year is the second or "supplemental" budget year, where additional funds are allocated for those programs that really need to make adjustments, or for genuine emergencies that need to be addressed. Our restraints on spending remain in place, of course, based on forecasts of state revenues by the Council on Revenues. The Council issued its last guidelines earlier this month - no anticipated change in tax collections for 2016. Their next meeting is not until late May, after our session has adjourned. The bottom line: the two-year budget and spending plan we formulated last year remains pretty much in place.

Having said that, there is no question that there are still challenges that need to be addressed. Suitable appropriate assistance for the homeless and affordable housing for our growing resident population have so far avoided any meaningful solutions. The goal of diversifying our economy beyond the sometimes fickle visitor industry has not yet been met, although the construction industry has shown strength. The unemployment rate reached a record low last month, and so conventional wisdom says that if someone *wants* to work, there are jobs available.

In my own focus on education, I have again and again attempted to gain funding for state pre-K programs we created last year. That will remain a priority until full support has been approved. And I *do* support cooling our classrooms.

Elsewhere in the newsletter, you'll find a list of education and other bills that remain alive at this point in the session. This month we took several days to salute excellence in education leadership, our wonderful state teachers of the year, and our inspiring students during Education Week at the Capitol. Check the inside pages for these items and more.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

Education Week ~ Hawaii's 2016 Teachers of the Year



Notes from the Capitol



Spot-checking some bills as Legislative deadlines approach

Here are some education and other bills that I am tracking. As we approach internal legislative deadlines, the status of these bills – including whether or not they are still alive, or will no longer be considered this session – may be determined at the online site: <http://capitol.hawaii.gov> . Enter the bill number in the appropriate box to find details.

Education bills:

- ◆ [SB3126](#), and a companion bill in the House, [HB2569](#): These bills would appropriate funds to the Department of Education for school air conditioning. The House bill includes additional provisions about sustainable energy use.
- ◆ [SB2782](#) creates incentives for Educational Assistants to become teachers, rewarding them for working at schools where there is high teacher turnover.
- ◆ [SB2425](#) would clarify ethics law provisions as they apply to teachers who arrange for travel for educational trips.
- ◆ [SB2426](#) would prohibit schools from denying a student a meal for lack of lunch money for a reasonable period of time.
- ◆ [SB814](#) Requires the Board of Education to name the new public high school in Kihei, Maui, the "Patsy Takemoto Mink Kihei High School" in honor of Hawaii's late Congresswoman Patsy Mink.

Some other bills of interest:

- ◆ [SB3034](#) proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to establish rights for victims of crime – also known as "Marsy's Law." This is a bill that the Mililani Neighborhood Board supported at the February meeting.
- ◆ [HB1072](#) authorizes the Board of Psychology to grant prescription authority to psychologists. Members of the Mililani Board have previously contacted me in opposition to this bill; I voted to approve it – with reservations. The Senate Committee on Ways and Means must act on this bill by April 8 for it to remain alive.
- ◆ [SB2886](#) lowers age of consent for mental health services from 18 to 12. I did hear opposition to this bill at the Mililani Board meeting last month; however, I voted to approve it. The bill is currently pending in the House Judiciary Committee.



Joycelyn Murakami and

Tyler Yoshioka

Add Rockne/UHWO (from Wednesday)

Noting Student Excellence ~ Arts and Sciences



I have enjoyed a variety of school programs and activities over the past few weeks as students showcase what they have been learning since the beginning of the school year. My grandkids and I thoroughly enjoyed **Waikēle Elementary's** student created "opera" – *The D.A.R.E. Life* – on stage earlier this month. At right, **Mililani Waena's** excellent choral group performed in a concert in which all Mililani schools – elementary through middle and high school – sang folk tunes, Disney, Hawaiian and more.



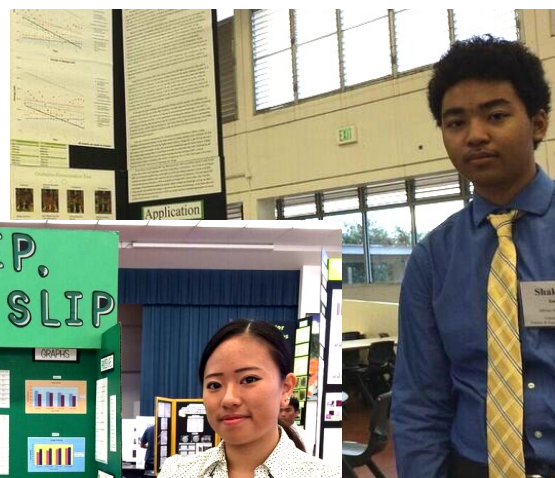
All Mililani schools also participated in the 9th Annual Character Counts Fair at Mililani Town Center. The school displays highlighted aspects of the program that are integral parts of curriculum and activities all year. The Six Pillars that students pledge to keep in mind and live by in all they do:

Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship.

Mahalo to teachers and families who support their youngsters in these efforts.



I shared the stage with top students from Leeward District schools who excelled in the district science fair. Among the winners are three young women from **Waipahu High School**. From left, senior **Liza Mae Mamuad**, first place individual research project, **Deserie Pagatpatan** and **Melara Faye Cabrera**, both juniors, who won the team research prize. They will be joining others from schools statewide at the Intel Science Fair in Phoenix, including the two **Mililani High School** students at right.



Mililani students **Shaksun Isaac** (above) and **Krystle Imamura** will represent MHS at the Intel Science Fair in Arizona in May.

OIA West Champs!

The Lady Trojans varsity soccer team swept through the OIA West Division with 12 wins and just a single loss. Mililani girls have won 15 OIA titles and have been state runners up five times. **Head Coach Ray Akiona** – selected OIA Coach of the Year – led the team to an overall 14-2 record and third place fin the State tournament. Coaches and media voted 11 Mililani girls to the OIA all-star roster, and eight players were named to the *Star-Advertiser's* All-State teams.

Congratulations to players, coaches, and supportive families who gave the Mililani community a great season to cheer about!



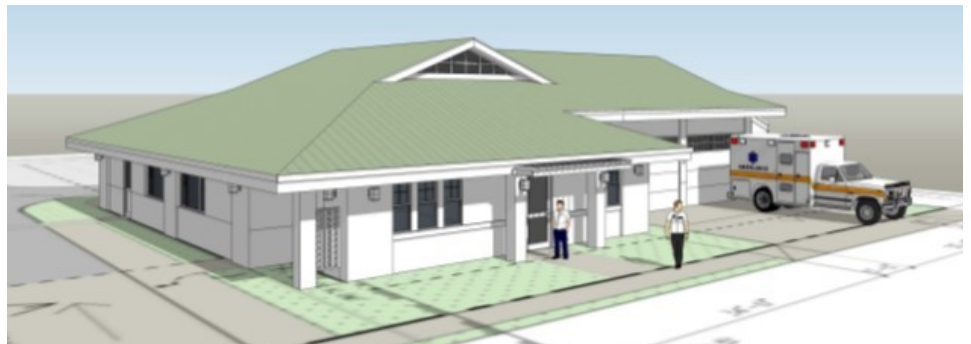
Governor David Ige congratulated **Waipahu High School Principal Keith Hayashi** for his outstanding leadership at the school since 2009. Principal Hayashi was honored by *Hawaii Business* magazine as one of “20 for the next 20” – Hawaii leaders who will make positive contributions to our communities in the next two decades. His initiatives at WHS have improved student achievements in reading, math and increased college enrollment for Marauder grads.



I serve as one of four State Directors of **Women in Government** – a national, non-partisan organization of the nearly 1,800 women state legislators. With me above are my fellow Directors, from left, **Representative Lauren Matsumoto, Senator Donna Kim and Representative Joy San Buenaventura**. National leaders met with us last month to discuss the year’s calendar that includes legislative conferences and expert forums, along with educational resources that address issues that many states face nationwide.

Construction underway

It’s been a long wait, but sometime next year we will be celebrating the grand opening of Waipio’s brand new Emergency Medical Services ambulance station. The state-of-the-art facilities will go a long way toward improving EMS capability for Waipio, Waikele and surrounding communities. Waipio crews already handle more than 4,000 emergency calls in a year.



Congratulations are in order . . .

Waipahu High School students Chelsea Bringas and Janelle Mateo have been awarded travel grants from the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council for a summer service learning program in Vietnam. Janelle also received a scholarship from the PAAC Global Leader Program . . . **Mililani Middle School math teacher Tori Ishihara** has been named the Central District’s **Teacher of Promise by the Milken Foundation**. She’s a MMS alum, now in her second year at the school, where she also helps coach the girls soccer team . . . A record number of Hawaii public schools received *Excellence in Wellness* awards this year from the Department of Health for setting and achieving standards for food and beverages for students, health and PE programs, and meeting their goals for school-based wellness. Schools in this area are **Kanoelani and Waikele Elementary, Waipahu Intermediate, and Kipapa, Mililani `Ike, Uka and Mauka Elementary schools. Great work!**