

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-ninth Hawaii State Legislature

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



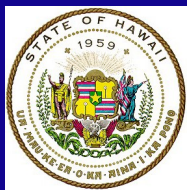
Senate Vice President

Chair: Committee on Education

Vice Chair: Committee on Higher Education

Member: Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228



Aloha friends and neighbors,

The annual College and Career Readiness Report was released earlier this month. It shows that public high school graduates have made significant improvements in preparation for post-high school study and training. The information applies to graduates in the Class of 2016.

The most important predictor of success after high school is enrollment in "dual-credit" courses that award college credit for courses that students take before they graduate from high school. These opportunities have risen steadily since 2011, and the research shows that students who earn at least six college credits before completing high school are more likely to earn a college degree.

Here's the good news from our area schools:

Waipahu High School has focused on early college studies. The Class of 2016 graduated 529 seniors, 28 % with honors, up from 15 % in the previous year. The number of WHS seniors who took Advanced Placement courses was up significantly, and AP exam scores were higher. Of these grads, 48 % enrolled in colleges, down just slightly (by 24 students) from the Class of 2015. The numbers of students pursuing Career and Technical Education opportunities increased significantly - from 32 percent to 40 percent.

Mililani High School Class of 2016 numbered 602 graduates, with 25 % earning honors recognition - up from 8 % for the Class of 2015. The 2016 graduating class sent 72 % of its seniors to college, up from 67 % the year before. The numbers of students taking AP courses and those in dual-credit courses also increased.

Congratulations to campus leadership - **Principals Keith Hayashi and Fred Murphy** - and their dedicated teachers for nurturing student success!

Me ke Aloha Pūmehana,

Lawmakers Mark Education Week at the Capitol

The Senate and House Education Committees set aside one week each session to recognize excellence in teaching, campus leadership and student achievement and service. We honor the DOE's Teachers of the Year, principals, vice principals and counselors, as well as students who have excelled in and out of the classroom. This week we have also welcomed Hawaii's public charter schools, nearly 20 organizations that advocate for early education and the UH Manoa College of Education.

At left below, on Charter School Day, I met leaders from **Kamalani Academy**, opening in July in Wahiawa. On Early Childhood Day, my Senate colleagues and I honored **Lynn Cabato**, (below right) the outgoing Director of **HCAP-Head Start**. Lynn is retiring after more than 40 years with Head Start.



Notes from the Capitol



Legislative session update

Our Legislative session has passed the half-way point, with Senate bills now sent to the House and House bills scheduled for hearings in the Senate. As noted previously, the focus this session is on the State's budget. The latest forecasts for how much tax revenue we have to work with when determining budget priorities tell us that we have less than we anticipated, and so revisions to the spending plan are being made before a final budget is before us for a vote closer to adjournment on May 4.

As our process works, the draft budget is laid out in House Bill 100. My main interest is in funding for education, and the spending plan as it now stands includes good support for early childhood education and several other programs that help fund needed programs:

- ◇ \$5.6 million to expand the Hawaii Keiki Healthy and Ready to Learn Program
- ◇ \$1.04 million and 20 positions to expand pre-K programs in the DOE
- ◇ \$845,000 and 18 positions to support children from homeless families
- ◇ Funds for 40 preschool teachers and 20 education assistants to support special education students in DOE preschools

The legislature continues to work on the appropriate levels of support for the city's rail transit project, roads and highways, affordable rental housing, programs to help house the homeless, Kupuna Care, much needed repairs, maintenance and upgrades to schools and other state facilities, along with health and safety issues that need attention.

Several of the measures that I introduced continue to move through the legislative process; an up-to-date list of those bills and others has been posted online at the Capitol website at <http://capitol.hawaii.gov> – click on Senate, and then click on members to find my Senate page.

Contracts have been awarded for two important school campus construction projects.

- ◆ Re-roofing work will begin shortly for several buildings at **Kipapa Elementary School**. A contract for \$260,686 has been awarded to Tory's Roofing to do the job.
- ◆ Amethyst Builders now has a contract in the amount of \$350,000 to work on several pending repair and maintenance jobs at **Mililani High School**.

Contractors will be meeting with campus administration to come up with a schedule to minimize disruptions.



Mililani Hongwanji Mission celebrated the temple's 40th anniversary this month. Membership has grown from a handful of worshipers meeting in peoples' homes to a vibrant Central Oahu congregation, providing not only a spiritual home for more than 200, but also a wide variety of community services. *Mahalo and congratulations!*

Hongwanji Mission forum discusses assisted dying issue

As Mililani Hongwanji marks four decades of service to our community, we are grateful that the mission recently offered the opportunity for information and reflection on an important issue now before the Legislature. The temple hosted a public information meeting organized by Compassion & Choices (C&C), the nation's oldest, largest and most active nonprofit organization committed to improving care and expanding choice at the end of life. They have been active in Hawaii this year in support of SB 1129, which would legalize medical aid in dying here.

Guest of honor was **John Radcliffe**, well-known at the State Capitol as a lobbyist for a number of businesses and longtime former Executive Director of the Hawaii State Teachers Association. John is terminally ill with cancer, and so he brings that perspective to his presentations in support of the Senate bill.

I will admit that I have changed my views on this issue. After a family member pleaded for a merciful way out of his ten-month battle with cancer that left him debilitated and somewhat humiliated, I now support legalizing physician assisted dying. With the appropriate safeguards to assure that caregivers, family members or others are not taking advantage of the dying, I believe that individuals who have no hope of recovery should have the choice of requesting such assistance. *After a lengthy hearing on the bill this morning, the House Committee on Health deferred the measure.*