

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

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



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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Our Legislative session is just a few days away from final decisions on dozens of bills and on the State's supplemental budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2016. On page 2 of this newsletter, you'll find information about some of the bills we have been following, as well as some of the budget items that have been agreed upon by both the Senate and the House. On Thursday this week bills will be readied for final passage next week; the final budget and several bills appropriating funds for certain specific projects will be placed on final agendas the following day and evening. **We remain on track to adjourn as scheduled on Thursday, May 5.**

As we prepare for graduation season, we have enjoyed hearing about student successes and hard-won recognition for our outstanding public schools. I am so proud that both of the high schools that students attend from their homes in my Senate district have received attention this year.

The P-20 Partnerships for Education issued its College and Career Readiness Report about a month ago. It documents student achievement for high school grads through the Class of 2015, and indicates clearly that more and more of our students are earning college credits while still attending high school. **Waipahu High School** led the way, with 32 percent of 2015 graduates completing dual-credit classes. Also, Waipahu led in the percentage *increase* for grads heading off to college - from 36 percent in 2009 to more than half - 52 percent - in the Class of 2015.

These milestones are a testament to the leadership of **Principal Keith Hayashi**, who has refocused Waipahu High programs toward college and career readiness. We congratulate Keith and his team for their hard work and resulting success.

A rigorous academic program and opportunities for advanced studies have brought attention to **Mililani High School** this year as well. *U.S. News and World Report* issued its 2016 "Best High Schools" rankings earlier this month - and Mililani is ranked tops in the state.

The #1 ranking is based on scores for national tests and participation in Advanced Placement programs. MHS offers 18 AP courses, with about 42 percent of the school's 2,500 students enrolled. Student test scores far exceed state averages; 68 percent of 2014 grads enrolled in college or other post-secondary institutions.

Here again, campus leadership is a key to success. **Principal Fred Murphy** - himself a Mililani alum - has strengthened the school's academic focus in his time at the school. Mililani families invest time and hard work in their support for the school that is a real source of pride in the community.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

Michelle

Foundation recognizes Excellence in School Leadership

Island Insurance Foundation has recognized 12 public school principals for leadership skills on their respective campuses - including our Mililani neighbor, **Jan Iwase, Principal at Hale Kula Elementary School**. Top honors went to Hawaii Island principal Mahina Anguay of Waimea High School, who received the Masayuki Tokioka Award for Excellence in School Leadership. She receives at \$25,000 cash award to be used in part for a school project of her choosing.

Jan has been Principal at Hale Kula, located on base at Schofield, for the past 14 years, overseeing a current student population of about 800 students - most of them military dependents. **Congratulations, Jan, for your good work!**

Hale Kula is in the news for another reason. The State Board of Education last week approved re-naming Hale Kula in honor of the late **U.S. Senator from Hawaii, Daniel K. Inouye**. For more about that, see the story on page 3 of the newsletter.



Legislative Update

Funds for Senate District 18 in next year's budget so far ~ pending final approval:

- ◆ **Mililani Middle School - \$11.5 million** for plans and design for a 15 classroom building to move the school off the multi-track calendar to the conventional school calendar
- ◆ **Mililani High School - \$2 million** for ADA and other access improvements to the parking lot
- ◆ **Mililani Uka Elementary - \$760,000** for erosion control and drainage improvements
- ◆ **Kanoelani Elementary - \$500,000** for construction of a portable classroom
- ◆ **Waikele Elementary - \$4.9 million** for cafeteria expansion and renovation to add a performance stage (some planning funds have already been released – below)



In these final days of the session, important progress is being made to finalize bills that we have been working on since January. As of Wednesday morning, April 27, here is the status of a few of them:

- ◆ **Cooling our schools – Senate Bill 3126/House Bill 2569** – appropriates money to air condition school classrooms and provide other energy-saving, heat-abatement equipment and systems
- ◆ **Teacher travel – HB 1713** – amends ethics laws to allow teacher travel, with conditions
- ◆ **Ferry system – SB 2618** – provides funding for a feasibility study regarding establishment of an inter- and intra- island ferry system
- ◆ **Early learning – HB 2266** – provides additional support for the Executive Office on Early Learning to implement the state's pre-K programs.

I'm also pleased to note that both the Senate and House budget committees have agreed to support the Preschool Open Doors program with an appropriation of \$10 million.

Governor Ige has released state funds that were previously appropriated by the Legislature so that projects can now proceed. These include:

- ◆ **\$2 million** for initial design of the science, technology and creative media building at **UH West Oahu**
- ◆ **\$500,000** to design expansion and renovation of the **Waikele Elementary School cafeteria** to add a performance stage
- ◆ **\$420,000**, a portion of which will be used to improve traffic flow at the intersection of **Kunia Road and Interstate H-1**

In addition, a contract has been awarded to **Index Builders** in the amount of **\$608,850** to begin replacing wooden bleachers with aluminum seating at **John Kautinana Stadium at Mililani High School**

Recognizing our neighbors

The Senate formally recognized **Kumu Hula Hokulani DeRego and her husband Larry** (with the lei below) along with members of their family in ceremonies at the Capitol earlier this month. **Hula Halau O Hokulani** has kept alive the art and tradition of hula for more than 30 years in venues around the world.

Mark your calendars . . . the Halau will be performing at the Kapi'olani Park Bandstand as a part of the 2016 Lei Day program on Sunday, May 1.

They will be hosting dancers from Vienna, Austria, with whom they developed a "hula sisterhood" during their worldwide travels to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture.

We are so proud to know the DeRego family as neighbors from Waipio Gentry. Mahalo for all you have done to pass along Hawaii's proud heritage!



Notes from the Capitol & Our Communities



New members on the State Board of Education

Two members of our communities have stepped forward to serve on the Board of Education, with terms beginning July 1. As Chair of the Senate's Committee on Education, I convened hearings to review the credentials of **Hawaii Island educator Patricia Bergin and Honolulu attorney Bruce Voss** (pictured at left). Their appointments were approved by the full Senate last week.



The Board will also bid farewell to this year's Student Member, **Brennan Lee** (at right). Brennan is a proud member of the **Mililani High School Class of 2016** who will graduate next month. He'll continue his service through the summer; a new Student Representative will take his place on the Board beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

Mahalo, Brennan, for your willingness to serve and represent the interests of your fellow students.

Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School Home of the EAGLES!



The Hawaii State Board of Education last week approved a name-change for Schofield's Hale Kula Elementary School. Effective with the Board's unanimous vote, Hale Kula is now officially known as **Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School**. Built in 1959, the school currently enrolls about 800 students in special ed pre-school through fifth grade. Major campus expansion and – including the new classroom building pictured above – are expected to be completed this summer.

"Senator Inouye's commitment to Hawaii's public schools throughout his career continues to benefit thousands of students, from securing federal resources to advocating for military families," said **Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi**. "Naming this school in his honor is fitting for all he's done for Hawaii and the service to his country."

One of my favorite people . . .

I was so pleased that one of my favorite people – Honolulu's ukulele master **Roy Sakuma** – received national recognition for the tremendous amount of public service time he contributes to our communities in so many ways.

Roy is the fellow at right in this photo, and that's his wife Kathy at left. They look somewhat diminutive next to the fellow in the middle – but he's the *really tall* **Director of the FBI, James Comey**, who personally passed out **Community Leadership Awards** to more than 50 outstanding citizens from across the country.



Roy's citation reads: ***The Honolulu Division honors Roy Sakuma for his work to address the needs of his community, particularly in Hawaii's schools. He has given of his time and talents in support of youth programs for the past 50 years and has devoted his life to teaching, mentoring, inspiring, and bringing hope to thousands of people throughout Hawaii and Japan.***

Congratulations, Roy, and good wishes for many more years of service and "strumming."

At the Capitol . . .

AM690 radio host Mike Buck (below left) set up his broadcast booth at the State Capitol last month. He invited my colleague **Senator Roz Baker** and me – as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health – to discuss legislation to assist caregivers. Below right, **Representative Ryan Yamane** and I welcomed distinguished visitors to the Capitol this month. From left, Hawaii-born former Acting Surgeon General of the United States, **Ken Moritsugu**, and former California Congressman and U.S. Secretary of Transportation, **Norman Mineta**.





The **Waipahu Marauders** finished in third place in the *OIA Division 1 varsity baseball playoffs*; the **Mililani Trojans** finished 6th. Both teams advance to the State Tournament beginning **Wednesday, May 4** – games to be played this year at Iron Maehara Stadium in Wailuku, Maui.

The **Lady Trojans**, under head coach **Rose Antonio**, earned a first-round bye in the *OIA girls varsity softball playoffs*. The team takes the field in the quarterfinals on **Thursday, April 28**.



The **Trojans** will play Moanalua for the *OIA boys volleyball championship* on **Thursday, April 28**. The **Marauders** made it all the way to this week's semi-finals before a loss to Moanalua, but will advance to the State Championship Tournament beginning **Friday, May 3**.



Mililani High School commencement ceremonies will be held at Aloha Stadium on Sunday, May 15, beginning at 5 p.m. At last count there were more than 580 students in the Class of 2016 expected to receive their diplomas. Nearly ten percent of the graduating class (56 students, so far) have qualified to be valedictorians! That means earning a GPA of 4.0 or higher plus meeting the requirements of at least one Honors Recognition Certificate.

Waipahu High School's graduating seniors will take the stage at Neal Blaisdell Center Arena on Thursday, May 19, for the commencement ceremony beginning at 6 p.m. School administrators say about 530 seniors will "walk." More than a quarter of the class - a total of 143 grads - have already earned college credits through the WHS early-college program. An all-time high of 18 seniors have earned the right to be class valedictorians.



The University of Hawaii - West Oahu will hold its Spring Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 7, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Campus Courtyard. UHWO is marking the 40th anniversary of its establishment as a part of the UH system. Keynote speaker will be Hawaii State Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald. The ceremony will be streamed live on the UH West Oahu Web site: <http://www.uhwo.hawaii.edu>.



As our legislative session comes to an end . . .

Let me acknowledge my staff that has been working on behalf of residents in Senate District 18. We had the very good fortune to be assigned a senior intern from UH West Oahu – **Patrick Alvior**. Patrick and his family (at left) live in Mililani, and we welcomed **sister Caitlin, mom Mary Elizabeth and dad Jose** to the Capitol for a visit. *Mahalo, Patrick, for your work to support the Senate Committee on Education.*

At right, my session and permanent staff includes **Trevor Nagamine, Jim Manke, Geraldine Kaneshiro, Joan Manke and Park Kaleiwahea**. Park and Gerri are at the Capitol all year 'round to make sure we keep current on your concerns, to answer your questions and to schedule community events. *Don't hesitate to call if you need help!*

