

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

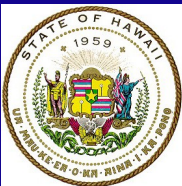
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Aloha, friends and neighbors,

This is the first opportunity to report to the Board in the two months since the July meeting. In this newsletter, you will find notes about our special legislative session to formulate a plan to support the city's rail project, as well as several items of interest to our communities.

During the past several months since our regular session, I have spent a good deal of time on what I believe is a true success story - and a remarkably quick response to a real need. Working with the Department of Education, the UH Manoa College of Education and other campuses in the UH system, we have created a hands-on approach to mitigate the perennial challenge of making sure all of our public school classrooms are staffed with qualified license professional teachers. It's coupled with a higher profile program to raise awareness of the vital part teachers play in our society, urging candidates to **"Be a Hero. Be a Teacher."** You'll find information about both of these efforts inside on page 3.

The teacher shortage here is no different from that in many other states. I accepted invitations to attend mainland meetings of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) this summer. These meetings outside of Hawaii provide valuable perspectives on this and other issues that many states have in common. I already serve as Vice Chair of the Education Committee for the NCSL. In July, I was elected Co-chair of the Education Committee for the NCSL Asian Caucus.

This summer I also accepted an appointment to the Senate's Committee on Ways and Means - the committee that reviews all state-agency budget requests and the Governor's spending plan before formulating the Senate's approach to responsible expenditure of public tax dollars. The session that begins in January will be known as a "supplemental budget session," as we take a second look at the two-year budget we approved in May. State departments and the Governor are expected to submit revised spending plans after seeing how their plans have been playing out over the last several months. We expect a busy session, and, of course, always welcome your input on neighborhood concerns.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,



Trojans capture OIA Red Division title

Mililani's varsity football team won their seventh game in a row this past weekend - a 44-33 victory over the Nanakuli Golden Hawks - to win their division heading into a final regular season game against Kailua for Homecoming this week.

The Trojans are 6-0 in league play, with one additional win over a mainland team earlier this month.

Hats off to the team and Head Coach Rod York for an outstanding season. OIA Division I playoff games begin October 6 and 7.

Game photo courtesy Scoringlive



Notes from the Capitol



My fellow Senator from Mililani, **Donovan Dela Cruz**, now chairs the Senate Ways and Means Committee (at left). Over the summer, I was also appointed to the committee, as we presided over hearings on proposed legislation to finance and monitor Honolulu's rail transit project. Below, Hawaii's Congresswoman **Colleen Hanabusa** was among those who testified at a full-house hearing during last month's Special Legislative Session.

The bill we approved, and now signed into law by the Governor, is a compromise package that extends the half-percent Oahu general excise tax surcharge and increases the hotel room tax on all islands by one percent. It also requires strict reporting responsibilities on the city as the state assumes more control over the project.

The new law acknowledges that the rail project is of such magnitude that statewide support is merited.



The Department of Education has an excellent program that assists military families and their 14,000 youngsters who attend our public schools. The **Joint Venture Education Forum** of military and civilian members recognized two individuals who have done extraordinary work to make the program a success this year. At left, DOE Superintendent **Christine Kishimoto** congratulates **Enrica Luz Guerrero**, an Education Assistant at Radford High School, as **Outstanding Civilian Contributor** to this work. At right, Chief Petty Officer **Jon Franquez** was recognized as the **Outstanding Military Contributor** for his volunteer work as a sciences mentor and sports coach.

Forty-five public schools in Hawaii are officially designated military-impacted campuses. Military dependent youngsters make up about 8 percent of DOE's total student count. *Mahalo—and keep up the good work!*



I joined several of my Senate and House colleagues to re-create a scene from a century ago to mark the 100th anniversary of the Red Cross in Hawaii. The Palace was chosen because not only did **Queen Liliuokalani** open the throne room to Red Cross volunteers, she also presented them with a Red Cross flag that was raised over the Palace.

It's an appropriate reminder that the Red Cross plays an important part in helping island residents recover from emergencies statewide and in our neighborhoods. Red Cross volunteers from Hawaii have also assisted people in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and elsewhere in their recovery from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Find out how you can help with relief efforts by calling (808) 734-2101.

Facing up to the Teacher Shortage

This news release from the University of Hawaii describes a program for which I included \$400,000 in each year of the two-year budget we passed in May. Mahalo to the UH College of Education and Department of Education (DOE) for quick work to implement this important way to address Hawaii's teacher shortages.

Becoming an education hero, is now more attainable, thanks to generous support from the State Legislature and the Hawaii DOE. The UH Manoa College of Education will award up to \$600,000 in scholarship stipends to recruit new teacher candidates who already serve in educational capacities in our public schools.

The scholarship stipends are available to DOE employees who are emergency hires, substitute teachers, or education assistants for enrollment in the college's statewide post-baccalaureate certificate in secondary education in spring 2018. The initiative, called **Grow Our Own**, is designed to address teacher shortage areas in Hawaiian language, world languages, English, mathematics and science.

"This partnership between the College of Education and the DOE is the first of its kind, targeting educators who have an undergraduate degree, but no teaching license, and who demonstrate content knowledge in a DOE federal shortage area," said Dean Donald B. Young. "This is the first time state scholarships have been available to support teacher preparation. We appreciate the leadership of **Senator Michelle Kidani** in helping to make this opportunity a reality."

"After reviewing several years of teacher shortage and retention issues, I partnered with the College of Education and DOE to find a way to recruit substitute teachers with bachelor's degrees to become licensed teachers," said Senator Kidani. **"This cohort pilot program is really a start. If it is successful, we should also recruit others with bachelor's degrees such as DOE emergency hires and others whose degrees may be underutilized. If they already live and work in our community and want to become teachers, we should focus on growing our own to provide the best possible educators for our keiki."**

Students of the **Grow Our Own** initiative will begin in January 2018 and graduate in May 2019 with an opportunity to gain teacher licensure from the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board upon completion. The program includes online courses as well as field experience and teaching residency in a DOE or public charter school. Graduates are required to commit to three years of full-time teaching (grades 6–12) in their designated shortage area. ***The application deadline is October 1, 2017.***

For more information, go to the **Grow Our Own** website: <https://coe.hawaii.edu/node/4507> or contact the College of Education's Office of Student Academic Services at osas@hawaii.edu.

The Grow Our Own program is paired with a new multi-media public awareness campaign aimed to encourage young men and women to become teachers. A prime mover in developing the program is Dr. Niki Libarios, Director of the College of Education Office of Student Academic Services. Sadly, Dr. Libarios passed away unexpectedly in August at the age of 47. Here's more about Dr. Libarios and the Be a Hero. Be a Teacher. campaign.

The key components of the campaign are two professional videos for use online, on social media and as part of a future public service announcement campaign. Posters have also begun going up at UH campuses and public and private schools across the state.

The videos and posters are meant to drive future teachers to the **Be a Teacher. Be a Hero.** website that showcases the pathways and programs available at UH to gain teaching credentials. Visit: <http://www.beaherobeateacher.com/> Four campuses offer teacher programs: UH Manoa, UH Hilo, UH West Oahu and Leeward Community College.

"Our hope is that students entering college or who are on their way to earning a degree will look at teaching as a profession that provides rewards on many levels," said Donald Straney, UH Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy. "This campaign speaks to the very important role that teachers play for students and our society, and aims to inspire those who may not have considered a career in teaching, to take another look."

One of the heroes of the **Be a hero. Be a teacher.** campaign was **Ernest "Niki" Libarios Jr.**, (photo at right) the UH Manoa College of Education director of the Office of Student Academic Services.

Libarios led a faculty discipline group on education, represented by educators at the four UH campuses, to develop the campaign, produced by local advertising firm Kai Media. "Niki took the lead in designing and creating the campaign on behalf of the UH System," said College Dean Donald Young. "The videos are a tribute to his knowledge, expertise and leadership."

"Niki was passionate about uplifting the teaching profession," said Denise Nakaoka, who worked with Niki in the Office of Student Academic Services. "He comes from a family of educators both at the high school and post-secondary level, he was himself a former elementary school teacher, and had devoted 18 years of his career at the College of Education, so this campaign was very personal to him."

Dr. Niki Libarios



Notes from our Communities



We all enjoyed blue skies, a parade of teams and lots of snacks at the opening day ceremony for the **2017 AYSO season.**

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People & pets galore at last months **1st annual Central Oahu Pet Walk!** The Mililani Mauka Dog Park is the **ONLY** night-lighted walk for pets in Central Oahu.



Adult Friends for Youth Graduation



Fifteen students completed their eight-months of course work in a program sponsored by **Adult Friends for Youth** that offers basic skills education for second-chance young men and women. I was so happy to meet them and offer some thoughts as commencement speaker last week. The additional good news is that these grads are going on for further education at Honolulu Community College.

Congratulations to the grads, and mahalo to Adult Friends for Youth, President & CEO Debbie Spencer, and their many sponsors!

Stranger Danger Reminders from the Department of Education

The Department of Education is encouraging parents to talk to their children about “stranger danger” and highlight measures that students can take to stay safe.

A letter to parents was sent home from all schools in the West Oahu area after similar “stranger danger” reports were made at three elementary schools earlier last week. In all three cases, students walking to or from school reported being approached by a male in a black or dark-colored truck who offered them a ride. In one case, a student reported being grabbed by the male in an attempted abduction. No students were injured and the incidents were reported to parents and/or school officials.

The Honolulu Police Department is investigating.

Parents are encouraged to reinforce the following safety measures with their children:

- ◆ Stay away from strangers. Do not talk to or take anything from them.
- ◆ Don't go anywhere with someone you don't know. Never accept a ride from a stranger.
- ◆ Stay more than an arm's reach from strangers. If a stranger approaches you, seek help immediately from a trusted adult.
- ◆ Use the buddy system. Avoid walking anywhere alone.
- ◆ If a stranger grabs you, do whatever it takes to stop the stranger and yell for help.
- ◆ Report any suspicious activity to a trusted adult.
- ◆ Be aware of your surroundings and let others know where you will be and what time you will be back.

