

Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors,

In just three short months, the Legislature will convene its regular 60-day working session at the State Capitol. Lawmakers have been preparing for this official business part of our responsibilities during the last few months, including public briefings on many issues.

As Chair of the Senate's Committee on Education, I have been meeting with principals to talk story and hear their concerns. Principals are closest to the action on their campuses and play an important role in the planning process.

I also convened an informational briefing with my counterpart, House Education Chair Representative Roy Takumi, to learn about pilot programs in five areas across the state that are designed to assure our students are reading at appropriate levels by third grade. Later, our two committees also met to hear about the State Public Charter School Commission standards for evaluating charter school performance as contracts come up for renewal.

While there are no charter school campuses within the boundaries of my Senate District 18, one charter school - the Hawaii Technology Academy - holds its classes on Moloalo Street in Waipahu town, in the district represented by my colleagues Senator Clarence Nishihara and Representative Henry Aquino. We all share the responsibility to see that this campus and the other 33 charter schools statewide are performing at the highest possible level and are accountable for the DOE funding made available to them. I anticipate further public hearings on charter schools as our session gets underway in January.

This coming session I will also serve as Vice Chair of the Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health, and as a member of the Committees on Higher Education and the Arts, and Transportation and Energy.

A primary focus of the session will be supplemental budget requests from the various state government agencies to accommodate needs that were not covered in the two year budget we approved last session. The departments are currently finalizing their budget requests, and legislative briefings will begin sometime in the next several weeks prior to our session.

At its meeting last month, the Council on Revenues raised its forecast for growth in state general fund tax revenues in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016 from 2.7% to 6.0%. The Legislature's budget is based on those revenue forecasts. When the Council meets again in two weeks to review current economic data, they are certain to take note of this week's announcement from the State Labor Department that Hawaii's unemployment rate has dropped to 3.4 percent - the lowest rate since 2008. That's welcome news for Hawaii's workers and their families as we all try to stabilize the state's economy and build for a secure future.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

Teachers of the Year announced

The Department of Education introduced its 2016 Teacher of the Year honorees at a Washington Place ceremony this month. They represent the state's seven school districts, nominated by their peers from among 11,000 public school teachers on all islands. Kapunahala Elementary School's Stephanie Mew accepted the state's top award. She'll represent Hawaii in the National Teacher of the Year Program with President Obama announcing the national winner in April.

At right, district winners, front row: Stephanie Mew; Lynn Yoshioka, Central District Mililani

Middle School; Joy Takatsuka, Maui District King Kamehameha III Elementary; Kathy Lin, Leeward District Highlands Intermediate; back row, Darryl Yagi, Hawaii District E.B. de Silva Elementary; David Paul Brown, Jr., Kauai District, Waimea Canyon Middle School; Alicia Chang, Honolulu District, King Liholiho Elementary.



Notes from the Capitol and our Communities



Hawaii
State Capitol
October 13

Always-enthusiastic fourth graders from **Kanoelani Elementary School in Waipio** paid a mid-day visit to the State Capitol last week. We always look forward to welcoming youngsters to the Capitol District so they have the opportunity to learn about State government. *Mahalo to Heidi Fukunaga and fellow teachers for organizing the field trip!*

Senate Special Session November 5-6

Governor Ige has appointed District Court judge **Shirley M. Kawamura** to a vacant circuit court post on Oahu and District Family Court judge **Melvin H. Fujino** to the Hawaii Island circuit court. The governor selected them from a list of nominees provided by the Judicial Selection Commission.

These appointments are subject to Senate confirmation, and we will convene a brief special session during the first week of November to consider their qualifications.

This is National Principals Month.

Board of Education members this week recognized all public school principals for their leadership and management skills that create safe and positive school environments.



DOE Photo

At the Board meeting, left to right, Board Chair Lance Mizumoto, Kaneohe Elementary Principal Derek Minakami, Kalakaua Middle Principal Lorelei Aiwohi, Waipahu High Principal Keith Hayashi, and BOE Member Maggie Cox. The three principals accepted a Board resolution on behalf of all principals and vice principals.



The Department of Education's annual Stop Flu in School program is underway at more than 300 public, private and charter schools statewide. This is the ninth year for the voluntary program that administers free flu vaccinations to Hawaii students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade at participating schools. Flu shots have already been made available at Waikale and Kaleiopuu elementary schools. Here is the schedule for remaining public schools in our area: Waipahu Elementary – October 28; Waipahu Intermediate – October 29; Kanoelani Elementary – November 13. I hope you will take advantage of this free program to help reduce influenza illnesses over the next few months.

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii invited legislators and community leaders to visit Oahu manufacturing companies.

I was so pleased that our itinerary included a stop at the **Coastal Windows plant in the Waipio Industrial Park**. Coastal is the only window manufacturing company in the state and has won national recognition for its record of support for employees who are in the National Guard.

That's Coastal President **Bob Barrett** at the center of our group proudly showing off his cavernous, state-of-the-art factory and warehouse.

