

**TESTIMONY**

**GM298**



# HAWAII TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY<sup>SM</sup>

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March 17, 2010

The Honorable Dwight Takamine, Chair,  
Senator Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair,  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor  
Hawai'i State Senate  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 204  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Takamine and the Committee on Labor:

I am honored to be nominated as a member of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and showcase how my expertise and experience will benefit the council and the State of Hawaii in development of a diversified workforce. **I ask that the committee support my nomination and I will be in attendance to answer any questions the committee may have.**

Due to my educational background I understand that there is not enough focus on developing high tech or STEM skills in our state. If Hawaii is going to develop a highly qualified workforce then we need to urgently develop diversified opportunities for our keiki.

I have been a member of the Hawaii community for a relatively short time in comparison to many of my colleagues (5 years) on the council. I deeply value my participation in such a visionary and supportive community. I believe that my experience and expertise are in direct alignment with Hawaii's Workforce Development Council's vision and mission and will help the organization to grow and become cohesive in our efforts to produce a scientifically and technologically literate workforce, in turn a scientifically and technologically literate society.

On this, the fiftieth anniversary of Sputnik, the need for a scientifically literate and skilled citizenry has never been greater. The students of today will be tomorrow's decision makers who will face increasingly complex political, social, ethical, and economic issues that will rely heavily on their understanding of science and technology. The jobs that require only simple instruction will become increasingly scarce as they are either outsourced or automated. Workers will be required to utilize advanced problem solving and reasoning skills.

We should be seen as national leaders on how we can contribute to the preparedness of our students and our workforce but at this point we are not. Your committee and your support for your constituents will help to direct the processes of preparing students for the challenges that lie ahead. Promoting and supporting quality science and technology education requires tremendous vision, energy, and a good dose of stamina. The ability to network and brainstorm ideas, share resources, and collaborate to address the issues that we face pertaining to STEM education, workforce development and reform are the true crux of our community.

We need to continually think “out-of-the-box” and efficiently, economically deliver programs and initiatives to support our citizenry. The Hawaii Workforce Development Council is the platform where ideas can be developed, shared, and transformed into sustainable solutions for our future. As a member of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council, I will work to seek out partnerships and collaborations with other organizations which have proven to be very successful.

As a member of the board of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council, I will ask the critical questions to help focus state resources that will best enhance the mission and vision of the organization and play a critical role to allow industry to better integrate into schools and programs into STEM learning.

The STEM education pipeline in Hawaii needs to be developed from the earliest age possible so that our students will have the ability to take higher level courses and thus develop a critically thinking, scientifically and technologically literate workforce.

As the Head of School of the largest and most innovative public charter school in Hawaii, the need for greater bandwidth, a more developed infrastructure and enhanced access has become even more apparent to me and my students. The need for an increased Broadband infrastructure will allow Hawaii to be competitive in the global economy. This is not a negotiable any longer; rather it is a necessity if we are to remain competitive in the global economy and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

My role as the head of school with over 40 employees across the state of Hawaii, I understand the unique circumstances that many of my employees are challenged with and we have been successful in adapting to their needs. This experience has prepared me for the challenges that are presented across the state with our diverse population.

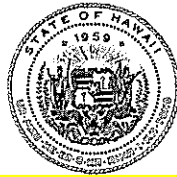
As a member of the board, I will significantly focus the vision of the organization on Hawaii’s future and our students in the development of a technologically, scientifically and globally competitive workforce. As a state, we have been fortunate to receive ARRA funds which will allow us to provide opportunities for our workforce to increase their education, to be retrained, and to increase opportunities for our community at large.

I express my gratitude for the ability to share my thoughts, and the chance to collaborate, create and communicate the vision of Hawaii’s future on behalf of all of the children across our great.

Aloha,

Jeffrey Piontek  
Head of School  
Hawaii Technology Academy, K12 Inc.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



GREGG YAMANAKA  
CHAIRPERSON

JAMES P. HARDWAY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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March 17, 2010

To: The Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor

Date: Thursday, March 18, 2010  
Time: 2:45 p.m.  
Place: State Capitol, Conference Room 224

From: James P. Hardway, Executive Director  
Workforce Development Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. Hardway", written over a horizontal line.

**RE: GM 298 – Jeffrey W. Piontek: Hawaii Workforce Development Council**

The Hawaii Workforce Development Council (“WDC”) strongly supports the confirmation of Mr. Jeffrey W. Piontek to this appointment. Mr. Piontek brings to the WDC critical knowledge of workforce issues and how they relate to technology and education.

Mr. Piontek, as founder of Hawaii Technology Academy, has demonstrated a passion throughout his career for issues related to science, technology, education, and engineering. In his current position Mr. Piontek has engaged in promoting matters related to developing education for Hawaii’s young students in the areas of technology over the past six years.

Previous to this, Mr. Piontek has worked with the State Department of Education, the Hawaii State Teachers Association, as well as with the school system of the New York City Department of Education, which encompasses one of the largest public school systems in all of the United States.

With his mastery of education, especially in the Science, Technology, Math and Education (“STEM”) fields, Mr. Piontek brings to the Workforce Development Council an understanding of what the scientific, mathematic and engineering fields are looking for in their workforce. With this knowledge, the WDC is better able to craft effective recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to fulfill this critical need in our workforce.

Mr. Piontek is an outstanding member of his community and profession, and is well-qualified and deserving of confirmation to the WDC. Mr. Piontek will represent the private sector on the WDC.