

Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors,

The current legislative session officially reaches the half-way point this week. Wednesday marked the 30th day of the 60-work-day schedule that will continue through adjournment in early May. This is Education Week that we set aside each year to recognize our excellent teachers, students and administrators - including, as noted at right, **Waipahu High's Principal Keith Hayashi**, recognized for his leadership and innovative initiatives.

Education support groups have been visiting the Capitol this week, many of them focusing on pre-school education that is a priority for me as Chair of the Senate Committee on Education. The **Good Beginnings Alliance** hosted the screening of a film that is part of a series on the importance of early childhood education to be broadcast on PBS later this year. Our good friends from **HCAP Head Start** stopped in at lawmakers' offices - and they, of course, have seen the value of pre-school over the 50 years they have served Hawaii's youngsters. And pre-schoolers from several community-based organizations came by as well.

My goal is to enact legislation (SB 844/HB 820) that creates a system of pre-school opportunities for as many youngsters as possible with state support. While the funding section in SB 844 was removed when it was heard by the Ways and Means Committee, I remain hopeful that we will be able to find funds to insert directly into the final operating budget at a later date. We must commit to our keiki to give them every advantage for success throughout their years in school.

You can follow the progress of these and other bills online at:

<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



Waipahu High Principal Keith Hayashi honored during Education Week

The Legislature sets aside **Education Week** each year to recognize student, teacher and administration excellence in academics, leadership and athletics. Among those who will be in the spotlight on Friday is **Keith Hayashi, Principal at Waipahu High School**, who was named by the Hawaii Association of Secondary School Administrators as 2015 Principal of the Year. ***Congratulations, Keith, for your fine work on behalf of WHS students!***



Congratulations . . . to Waipahu High School Division One varsity soccer players who were named to the **OIA West Division All-Stars**: **Girls** – Jessica Gonzales, Alysha Somera, Dezyria Martin, Karlee Manding and Summer Akau-Mika. **Boys** – Isa Agbayani, Dane Campos, Storm DeAsis, Desmond Major and Francisco Villa.



Waipahu High scores big at Leeward Science Fair

Waipahu High School's large contingent of science students (*at left*) came away with three dozen awards at the 30th **Leeward District Science and Engineering Fair** this month – more than the three other leeward high schools combined. Waipahu's **Rejina Marie Calo** earned a trip to the **Intel International Fair in Pittsburgh** in mid-May.

Congratulations to WHS science students and teachers – good work!



Top winners: Shanell Folger (Campbell HS), Alex Yamada & Eric Schlitzkus (Pearl City), and Rejina Calo (Waipahu).

Notes from the Capitol



I stood with members of the State Senate in support of the **Hawaii Says NO MORE!** campaign to end domestic violence and sexual assault that officially launched this month. **No more silence; no more violence.** Learn more at <http://hawaiisaysnomore.org/>.

Parents and leaders from **HCAP Head Start** were guests at the State Capitol last week. Head Start is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Hawaii programs are in 40 classrooms at Hawaii public schools and at numerous other facilities – serving just under 1,700 youngsters, each year. The program brings about \$15-million in federal funds into the state.

I previously served as a Board member for HCAP, and know that Head Start provides a real boost for youngsters heading into kindergarten. It ensures success by becoming partners with parents on behalf of their children, recognizing that parents are their child's first and most influential teacher.



With me at left, Head Start Director Lynn Cabato, Ramona Josue, Kapua Head Start Center; Danielle Apilado, Kauluwela Center; Head Start parent Shawna Vaouli; J-nel Cullen, Kalihi Kai Center; and Jasmine Arsisto, Salt Lake Pre Plus



A special visitor – Keoni from Ka Pa'alana Family Education Program – stopped by to give me a beautiful hand-made lei. He's among the thousands of island keiki we're trying to help with legislation to establish universal pre-school opportunities.



At a town hall meeting on transportation issues organized by **Representative Henry Aquino**, city, state and HART officials brought us up-to-date on rail transit construction. Much of the immediate focus is concern over lane closures and detours necessary as rail construction proceeds along Farrington Highway through the end of March.