

Senator Michelle Kidani
Thirtieth Hawai'i State Legislature

(D) Senate District 18 - Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park & Royal Kunia
Ph: (808) 586-7100 Email: senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

I welcomed fall with open arms this month and utilized it as the perfect time to check in with the community--especially the schools in my district. As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I have many statewide education issues that come across my desk. But as the Senator from the 18th District, I also have a responsibility to you, my constituents, and the needs our students and schools have. I might be a little biased, but I believe that we have some of the best schools in the State and I wanted to take some time and listen to the schools and hear what are some of their success, challenges, and areas of opportunity. It was amazing for me to visit each school and to have the opportunity to sit with principals, teachers and staff to learn about exciting initiatives happening at each which continues improving Hawai'i's educational landscape for our young people.

Mahalo to all the principals and staff who took time out of their busy days to welcome me and generously share their time with me during our visits. It is these efforts that make the future bright for our students here in Hawai'i!



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Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
(808) 586-7100

senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov



HANALANI AWARDS LUNCHEON

I had the pleasure of attending Hanalani's recent school luncheon and presented awards to two very deserving students. Congratulations to Benjamin Scully for being awarded the Royal Merit Scholarship in two categories; Fine Arts and Leadership--it was a pleasure getting to know such a bright and polite young man and his wonderful parents, Carolyn and Brad.

Another big congratulations to Cristofer Harrison for being awarded a Royal Merit Scholarship for Leadership as a wonderful scholar and role model. Cris was joined by his parents, Dex and Nina, in celebration of this fine achievement.

I wish these young men the best of luck in all of their future endeavors!



CHARTER SPECTRUM



I was excited to visit Charter Spectrum earlier this month to share a bit about myself--why I got into politics, what motivates me and what makes my community so great. It's always easy for me to talk about the community that means so much to me and it was wonderful to do so with the Spectrum 'ohana!

UHWO ACM BEAM SIGNING

The University of Hawaii - West Oahu's Academy for Creative Media (ACM) building is finally going up! This has been a project I have been passionate about because the creative media industry offers so much potential for our next generation who are looking to make a career in our fast growing creative media industry. The ACM will be a hub for digital arts, creativity, and skill building for hundreds of students who will fill the jobs on productions shoots like Hawaii Five-O and Jumanji.

I stood proudly alongside this esteemed group in the blessing of rain: Senator Clarence Nishihara, former Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa and celebrated film producer Chris Lee, founder and director of the Academy for Creative Media System at the University of Hawai'i to sign a building beam.



Above: Senator Kidani with Chris Lee, founder and director of the Academy for Creative Media; Senator Kidani holding an umbrella for Kahu Kordell Kekoa during the morning blessing amidst a rain shower

WAIPAHU HIGH SCHOOL HOMECOMING

Congratulations to the Waipahu High School football team for a homecoming game win against Aiea High School and unforgettable homecoming events...it is in those moments that life-long friendships and lasting memories are made!



WAIPAHU HIGH SCHOOL: NEW MODEL ACADEMY DESIGNATIONS

Congratulations to Waipahu High School's Academy of Health and Sciences and the Academy of Natural Resources who received the "National Model Academy with Distinction" honors by the National Career Academy Coalition! This new designation for model academies is scored between 128-130 on a national rubric, and Waipahu High School was recognized as **two** of the four total national academies honored in 2019! We are thrilled to celebrate the educational innovations of Waipahu High School and the incredible leadership of Principal Hayashi, teachers and staff.

FALL SEMESTER SCHOOL VISITS

In my tour with Principal Alika Ahu at Kaleiopu‘u Elementary School, I was so pleased to find a crown flower tree! Butterflies LOVE crown flower trees and I have planted several in my yard in order to provide a home for butterflies.



As a proud grandparent of a Mililani Uka Egret, I appreciate Principal Steve Nakasato’s leadership and enjoyed a beautiful day for school tour.



In my visit with Mililani High School, Principal Murphy shared valuable updates with Senator Donovan Dela Cruz and I about campus life and how the students are doing thus far in the school year.

I was so proud to see the new renovations at Kipapa Elementary School’s library. Principal Corinne Yogi showed how they transformed the library using the award she received as the 2018 Masayuki Tokioka Principal of the Year. I loved the concept of the “Calming Zone” and told her to expect to find me here when legislative session gets too crazy!



I always love talking with Principal Stacie Kunihisa and hearing about her vision for the students of Kanoelani Elementary School. She the 2019 Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in school leadership winner and is using her award to establish the “Lokahi Lounge,” a room where parents and families can receive support too.



SCHOOL VISITS



Mahalo to Principal Troy Tamura and Vice-Principals Uyeno and Takashima for sharing their concerns with me regarding facilities on their campus. Like my own, many households are becoming multi-generational and our elementary schools are feeling its impact, pushing the limits of our schools' capacities. I am looking forward to working with Mililani Waena on some innovative ways we can manage this next generation of students.

I know that Kanoelani has had a wonderful "Choose Love" conference but I was totally blown away by this succulent and rock garden that Waikele Elementary created by their administrative office building. Each rock was painted by students with an inspiring message about what "Choose Love" means to them. Great idea Principal Oshio!



While visiting with Principal Hayashi at Waipahu High School we ran into Mark Sillman, who updated me on the amazing work they're doing with their early college program. I am blown away by the fact that they have not only lead the State in graduating high school seniors with their AA scores but are now fine-tuning their programs to focus on building a teacher pipeline. I am excited by the prospect of students earning AAs in education while they're in High School, then moving on to get their BAs and teacher certificates, and returning to the schools they graduated from as teachers.



PRINCIPAL AWARDS LUNCHEON



I am SO proud of Mililani High School Principal Fred Murphy and Waipahu High School Assistant Principal Meryl Matsumura, who were recognized on October 20th as National Distinguished Principal and Vice-Principal of the year! Their leadership and dedication has had a tremendous impact on their students and there is no doubt in my mind that they are absolutely deserving of such recognition for the hard work and commitment to Mililani and Waipahu High Schools. Congratulations and mahalo for all that you do for your students and communities!