

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 17– Serving Mililani Mauka, Mililani Town, Waipio Acres and Waipio Gentry



Aloha, friends and neighbors:

Two issues have attracted a good deal of public and media attention this summer. In each case, the Legislature is doing its due diligence and conducting reviews to assure that expenditures of taxpayer dollars are legal, appropriate, and not wasteful.

First, the University of Hawaii has been under fire for its handling of what is apparently a scam in which a \$200,000 payment was authorized to secure an on-campus concert to benefit UH Manoa athletics. That money is missing, and in the somewhat clumsy efforts to investigate how that happened, UH has now expended tens of thousands of dollars on two law firms and for outside public relations counsel. More money was spent on attorneys' costs for falsely-implicated Athletic Director Jim Donovan.

This information was only part of what was revealed to a Special Senate Committee on Accountability at a six hour long hearing on Monday. The loss of the concert money and the mounting legal bills are serious enough. But it is also evident that the University has some grave flaws in the way its fiscal, personnel and legal procedures are carried out. Even the governing Board of Regents chair admitted that its own policies may have been misinterpreted, and the Board is doing its own review of these issues.

UH President M.R.C. Greenwood repeatedly apologized to the Committee and a statewide TV audience for all of this and assured legislators that policies and procedures will be put in place to prevent these kinds of things from happening again. Our job is to hold the university accountable for that and to assure that taxpayer dollars appropriated to UH are spent to further the institution's educational mission.

Second, the Legislative Auditor has found that the Department of Education has lost control of costs for its student transportation program. The Auditor also determined that in many cases, no one was evaluating school bus routes to make sure they were best serving the needs of our students. We directed that the audit be conducted when it became clear last session that we weren't getting the answers we sought about these matters in hearings before the Senate Ways & Means and Education Committees - two of the Committees on which I serve as Vice Chair.

In each of these cases, money has been spent without clear accountability from our public educational institutions. Both UH and the DOE must answer to the public; they will be the focus of considerable attention during the 2013 session.

Me ke Aloha,

Waipahu High School welcomes new Academy of Engineering

Waipahu High School – approaching its 75th Anniversary Year – has opened an Academy of Engineering to an inaugural cohort of nineteen students who will move through the Academy's math, science and technology curriculum to graduation in the Class of 2016. *WHS is the only school in the state to establish such a program, and one of only 62 such schools nationwide.*



Above, Academy of Engineering Director Bill Speed; at left, Senator Kidani at the center of the inaugural celebration with AoE students and fellow legislators.

We our Schools!

Construction funds continue to flow to our public schools.

There are two important goals:

- to reduce the tremendous backlog of repair and maintenance projects – with major focus on health and safety issues – that have been put on the back burner for so long due to budget restrictions
- to put people back to work in the many construction jobs that are required to complete these tasks.

Since the start of 2012, more than \$187 million in construction funds have been released for public school facilities across the state. Some of these funds were in the \$400 million accelerated repair and maintenance package initiated by the Senate in the 2012 session.



In our neighborhoods, Waipahu High School and three elementary schools are on the list for the latest allocations just this month, totaling just over \$6 million.

- ◆ **Kaleiopuu Elementary - \$810,000** for electrical upgrades and air conditioner unit replacement
- ◆ **Kanoelani Elementary - \$1.326 million** for a new fire alarm system, electrical system improvements and other work
- ◆ **Waikele Elementary - \$253,000** to improve campus drainage, refurbish the fire alarm system and for other projects
- ◆ **Waipahu High School - \$3.646 million** for improvements to athletic facilities, replacing some air conditioning equipment, classroom, library and lab upgrades, and lighting, driveway and parking lot improvements



Photo: Jacqueline McBride
LLNL Public Affairs Office

Spotlight on Waipahu High science teacher Michael Sana

Waipahu High School biology teacher **Michael Sana** is featured in an article in a newsletter published by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where Michael went back to school for several weeks this past summer. The program is designed “to create a cadre of outstanding science and math teachers with the proper content knowledge and scientific research experience to serve as leaders ... in their local and regional teaching communities.” Michael has been a committed teacher at WHS for more than a decade. In the photo at left, he and student **Kahealani Uehara** are working on a project at a teacher development program at Rutgers University.

Michael has been associated with the Livermore Lab for several years. “I want to remain in education but in more of a leadership role where I can not only be a resource for fellow science teachers but a champion of science programs for Hawaii’s public schools.” ***Congratulations, Michael. Thank you for your dedication to our students!***
On the Web: https://www.llnl.gov/news/aroundthelab/2012/Aug/ATL-082312_teacher.html

Check out these events happening on Oahu in the next few weeks

Saturday, September 29 – Jump Into Health Mililani! Head over to the Mililani High School Gym from 10am-2pm for a community health and wellness fair in cooperation with the American Heart Association. Includes a Jump Rope for Heart event, and a chance to meet community partners and vendors that promote all aspects of physical, mental, emotional, and social health in Mililani. More information on the Web at <http://jumpintohealth.tk/>.

October 2-4 – 11th Annual Native Hawaiian Convention at the Hawaii Convention Center. This year’s meetings include participation by officials from President Obama’s White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders. Registration information and a complete schedule of presentations are on the Web. Enter ***Annual Native Hawaiian Convention*** in your Web browser’s search bar.

October 7 – Children and Youth Day at the State Capitol and civic center grounds– sponsored by the Hawaii State Legislature’s Keiki Caucus and other organizations. Non-stop entertainment on six stages, along with games and rides, demonstrations and tours, lots of food and refreshments. More information at www.HawaiiCYD.org.

**It’s your right . . . and your responsibility!
General election day is Tuesday, November 6.**

You may still register to vote until Monday, October 8, or you can request an absentee ballot by October 30. Watch for announcements about walk-in voting opportunities. Questions? <http://hawaii.gov/elections> or call 543-8683

