A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF HAWAII’S EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Jan
- Hawaii’s 2015 State Teacher of the Year, Catherine Caine, is selected as one of four finalists for the National Teacher of the Year Award. She has taught at Waikiki since 1992.
- The Department launches the Office of Hawaiian Education.
- Mililani Uka’s Jana Fukada, left, is named the winner of the $25K Milken Award. The “Oscar of Teaching” is awarded for significant contributions to the profession and efforts to ensure all students receive a top education.

Feb
- The USDOE’s monitoring report confirms Hawaii has made major progress as a result of reforms. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, “Hawaii is a model for the rest of the country.”

Mar
- College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI) show big improvements in public schools: higher reading & math proficiency, college enrollment and early credit attainment.
- Hawaii, Kaelepulu and Palisades elementary schools are named Blue Ribbon School nominees, in recognition of their exceptional student achievement gains and improvement efforts.

Apr
- The DOE’s Annual Financial Audit for the 2014 fiscal year shows the Department is doing a better job at keeping its finances in order. The independent report is coordinated by the state’s Office of the Auditor.

May
- The first phase of the renewable energy generation portion of the Ka Hei program begins at McKinley High.

Jun
- Waianae Intermediate and Nanaikapono Elementary earn national praise from the American School Counselor Association for efforts to raise student achievement through comprehensive services.

Jul
- Ho’okele Elementary opens. The new school’s 78,404 sq. ft. campus has seven buildings surrounding a courtyard and includes a library and a dedicated arts and science building.
- Students return to Keonepoko Elementary after the school was closed during the Puna Lava Flow. “It’s like being back at home,” said Principal Kasey Eisenhour.

Aug
- Celebrity artists Alfre Woodard, Jack Johnson and Jake Shimabukuro launch Turnaround Arts Hawaii at Kalihi Kai El. (pictured), Kamaile Academy and Waianae El. through 2017.

Sep
- Pearl Ridge Elementary’s Andrew Lagapa, above, named DOE’s 2015 Employee of the Year for his tireless work ethic and devotion to students. Kalihi Intermediate’s Science & Engineering Dept. named Team of the Year for their systematic and coordinated teaching approach.

Oct
- Kapunahala Elementary teacher Stephanie Mew, below, named Hawaii’s 2016 State Teacher of the Year, receiving the state’s top teaching award. Mew helps her students to become well-balanced individuals by emphasizing good character in addition to rigorous learning.

Nov
- Ewa Makai Middle named to Noodle’s Innovative Schools list for blending physical education and digital devices.
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Dec
- Kanoelani Elementary students, parents, staff and volunteers complete the school’s “Legacy Project” with a $25,000 Locations Foundation grant. Funds go toward a new STEM lab, improvements around classrooms and a mural by famed artist Hilton Alves, pictured above.

“The hard work we do is to assure that our students are ready for any and every opportunity.”
— Supt. Kathryn Matayoshi