High schools show strong growth in Early College, Advanced Placement, CTE Concentrators

Hawaii’s students are reaching higher levels of achievement, with more students taking college-level courses while in high school and graduating with college credits.

The College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI) Report for the Class of 2016, released March 20 by Hawaii P-20, shows that Hawaii’s public school graduates have made steady, and in some cases significant, improvements in key indicators of readiness, including earning college credits before graduation, AP participation, and completion of career pathways.

High school students who graduate with college credits are more likely to enroll, persist, and succeed in higher education.

Of last year’s high school graduating class, 515 more students graduated with college credits. Remediaion rates for both English and mathematics have been steadily declining with each graduating class since the reports’ inception with the Class of 2008. The University of Hawaii System’s (UH) 10 campuses instituted a new placement policy beginning in Fall 2016 that allows students to be placed into college-level coursework based on relevant high school achievement. “The changes we’ve initiated from Hawaii Common Core to early college programs and the collaboration with UH are paying off for our students and community,” said Supt. Kathryn Matayoshi. “These results are a clear testament to the commitment of our school leaders and teachers who stayed the course in raising the rigor and setting high expectations for our students.”

**CCRI reports:** bit.ly/CCRI16

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Hundreds celebrate cultivation of leadership at Lanakila Elementary

On Mar. 17, Lanakila El was filled with families, community members and dignitaries eager to celebrate the school’s first Leadership Day. Students showcased yearlong projects they have been working on that incorporate The 7 Habits of Happy Kids curriculum based on the book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

“The few months that we have started this program our kids have become extremely confident, and today we are giving them an opportunity to shine and show what they have learned,” said Principal Katherine Balatico.

Attendees viewed interactive presentations and displays including a wax museum, the school’s garden, and student-created slideshows. “We’re showing everyone that anyone can be a leader, and can do anything they want if they set goals,” shared fifth grader Arkpan KC.

**Video:** bit.ly/HIDOE-LESeas

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Bright Spot  HILO-WAIKEA COMPLEX AREA

The latest College & Career Readiness Indicators data were released March 20, and in preparation for the event, Hilo High Principal Robert Dircks said, “We’re getting the college-going culture going here in Hilo. Between us and Waiakea (High), we would like to dominate the entire Hilo (community) if we could and get everybody going to college.”

And not just going, but being ready for it. Both Hilo and Waiakea are among those leading the state’s two-year improvements in:

- **Dual credit enrollment** (earning college credit while in high school) — Hilo is up 17 points, Waiakea up 11 points (the state is up 6 points);
- **Earning 6 or more dual credits** while in high school — Hilo up 8 points, Waiakea up 12 points (the state is up 4 points);
- Students completing a Career and Technical Education program of study (known as CTE Concentrators) — both Hilo and Waiakea are up 15 points (the state is up 8 points); and
- **Slashing remediation in English and math** among their students attending the UH System — Hilo has cut theirs by 24 points in both, Waiakea by 27 and 11 points, respectively (the state’s remediation rates are down 11 points in English, 8 points in math).

The dramatic improvements indicate a sea change in the approach of teachers and administrators in preparing students for post-secondary life that is not limited to the area’s two high schools.

Educators often talk about the K-12 construct, a focus on ensuring students receive the right academic and social-emotional supports to succeed through all school transitions, not just elementary to middle to high school. Complex Area Supt. Brad Bennett cites Hilo-Waiakea’s success in making its own transition from 13 schools to one K-12 organization that is beginning to deliver strong results.

“We’re approaching education as a K12 entity, not 13 different schools. Our principals shifting thinking towards operating as a complex area, it’s having positive effects,” said Bennett, who was a longtime educator and administrator in Hilo-Waiakea schools before stepping into the top job two years ago.

When Bennett came on board as CAS, each school was asked to come up with a five-year improvement plan. At the time, schools were on an annual cycle of goal setting with their Academic Plans, which is the governing document for how schools spend funds on academic and enrichment programming. (The state has since shifted to a three-year cycle aligned with the revised Strategic Plan.)

For Hilo-Waiakea’s five-year improvement plans, schools codified ideas and goals in four areas: Leadership, Response to Intervention (RTI is a process using data to track the effectiveness of resources and strategies to help struggling students), Community Partnerships and K-12 Construct. The plans give “big picture” context to the schools’ role not only in student readiness, but community health — engendering the skills and aptitudes for thriving families and economies here in Hawaii.

“We’re starting at the early levels of elementary and getting the college-going culture going, stressing the importance of moving past that into job markets that will support their families at some point,” Principal Dircks said.

The Complex Area office provides resources, such as the Alaka’i Academy to grow teacher and administrative leadership and the complex-wide professional development days, and then lets the schools design plans that meet common goals.

“It’s autonomy within a framework,” Bennett said.

There’s strong energy now around community engagement in particular. Hilo-Waiakea is moving forward with sector partnerships as part of Connect to Careers (C2C), to prepare students to work and lead in business sectors of value to the community. The business-led effort has identified agriculture as its first Hawaii Island-based sector to grow and expand.

“We’re trying to show our community that we want to be partners. We’re not just asking you for support, it’s going to be mutually beneficial,” Bennett said. “We are preparing our students to be leaders in this community. We want to prepare Hilo for the future.”

On a related note, the CCRI reports are starting to track CTE Concentrators, an enhanced high school diploma aligned to a particular industry that has greater labor market value and options for credentials. Hilo-Waiakea is showing strong 15-point growth over two years in CTE Concentrators, with Waiakea High running 10 points above the state’s average for students pursuing this option. The school also has one of the strongest on-time graduation rates in the state at 88 percent.

The academy structure in place at Waiakea High has played a key role in this, said Principal Kelcy Koga. Students can choose from four career academies after a year in the Freshman Academy, which helps with their transition to high school and fosters their engagement and connectedness. The academies each have community advisory boards comprised of individuals working in related fields.

“It provides experiences in potential career fields including both white and blue collar fields,”

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“We’re approaching education as a K12 entity, not 13 different schools.”

— BRAD BENNETT, Hilo-Waiakea CAS
Koga said. “Waiakea High attempts to support our students with community internships and other types of real world career experiences that will enable them to be successful with or without a college degree.”

**SUBJECT LITERACY**

Statewide, hundreds fewer Hawaii DOE graduates entering the UH System need English or math remediation. A change made at the community college level has edged that number down further with the Class of 2016, as students are able to use additional high school level work as proof of subject readiness, but even with that change the trend has been going solidly downward.

Over two years, the state has reduced English remediation by 37 percent and math remediation by 26 percent.

Hilo-Waiakea is outpacing the state — Hilo High is down 65 percent in English, 62 percent in math, Waiakea High is down 82 percent in English and 50 percent in math.

Supt. Kathryn Matayoshi reflected that greater rigor in those subjects via Hawaii Common Core and high expectations have prepared more students for college-level work. At the school-level, CAS Bennett also noted the importance of the RTI process.

“We have to be proactive,” he said. “We’re providing supports early rather than after the fact, trying to help them with credit recovery. We look hard at data, look hard at 9th grade transitions. We spend a lot of time as principals on this. It’s definitely a matter of paying attention.”

**COLLEGE CREDIT IN HAND**

More public school students have college credits in the bank before starting their freshman year. This is increasingly because of the Early College program, which was expanded to 12 schools including Hilo and Waiakea thanks to a grant from the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation. For the Class of 2016, 13 percent of Hilo’s seniors and 16 percent of Waiakea’s seniors graduated with six or more college credits through this program. (Statewide, the rate is 7 percent.) This credit amount is considered significant as it leads to more students enrolling and persisting in college — because they’ve already made progress, for free, toward fulfilling their degrees.

Principal Dircks said the value of Early College can’t be overstated, particularly for neighborhood schools where “we don’t have access to a lot of things.”

He said he’s also seen a shift in attitude among families. “A lot of our parents are supportive for their kids to pursue post-secondary education. They want their children to take college level classes. Support of the parents is really critical and we’ve seen a change in the mindset.”

**FACING FUTURE**

While the data show areas that need additional work for these schools, the complex area, and the state, the trajectory is positive; Principal Dircks noted the “momentum” is there.

The agility necessitated by using data to drive efforts (i.e., Strategic Plan, the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle) is allowing school and system leaders to adjust as needed. “What we’ve done really well is look at our results and have the courage to change course as necessary,” Bennett said. “Everybody’s really open to that.”

“I’m very fortunate to be working with these talented people,” he added. “My job is to support them and let them run. Great people, great community. I’m looking forward to what’s to come.”
Don’t Miss This! EVENTS, DEADLINES & FUN STUFF

APRIL IS

TSUNAMI AWARENESS MONTH
During a tsunami threat, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center will issue statements to the public that interpret seismic data from the Pacific and Indian Oceans that may generate destructive waves — a warning, advisory, or watch. Haleiwa El, which is in a tsunami evacuation zone, will kick off the month with an evacuation drill. Connect with emergency preparedness resources in your county: dod.hawaii.gov/hiema

APRIL IS

SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH
The American Association of School Librarians celebrates school librarians and their programs that provide materials for teachers and students that encourage growth and knowledge. Librarians are encouraged to host activities to help their school and local community celebrate the essential role that strong school library programs play in transforming learning. Share your stories on social media — #SLM17. Resources: www.ala.org/aasl/slm

APRIL 21

PURPLE UP!
April is Month of the Military Child, a time to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience. Please join us in honoring Hawaii’s young heroes by wearing purple on Friday, April 21. Purple is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military — a combination of Army Green, Marine Red, and Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard Blue.

APRIL 22

SUPERHEROES OF SPIN
For the past 31 years the annual Special Parent Information Network conference has given families the opportunity to meet and network with other parents and professionals and receive valuable information. It’s all about renewing partnerships, making new friends, and preparing for the challenging job of parenting and advocating for children with disabilities. At the UH-Manoa Campus Center. bit.ly/SPINHI17

Supt.’s Corner
Our partnership with our military ‘ohana has never been stronger. This was not something we could confidently say even just a few years ago.

It boils down to our shift to rigor, relevance, and relationships.

The rigor and relevance have been documented at length in recent years — we set a higher bar for standards that benefitted our students and territories. We will see similar benefits with the shift to Next Generation Science Standards.

The career and college readiness focus resonates with military families; many of our military-impacted schools (nearly four dozen) are showing robust growth in these metrics — Radford High was cited for its results in the latest College & Career Readiness Indicators report (See Page 1).

As important as the rigor and relevance have been, however, building and improving relationships may be the greatest impact. Caring for kids is most important.

A theme during this school year has been focusing on transitions — making sure students are supported with the right resources when they need them. This focus looks at common trouble spots, such as the 9th grade transition, but considers all transitions — grade to grade, school to school, any significant “move.” Military children are vulnerable to academic upheaval when their emotional worlds are challenged by PCS’ing to a new state, or having a parent deployed or injured in the line of duty.

Some examples of schools making military keiki part of the ‘ohana: Radford and Leilehua High have created world-class transition centers to help students learn about life in Hawai’i and make friends, and Mokapu Elementary winning hearts and minds with its one-on-one focus (video: vimeo.com/136268681).

Don’t take my word for it, you can hear it from the students themselves — see videos on our military page: bit.ly/JVEF808.

We all can do more to help our military keiki become part of our ‘ohana. April is National Month of the Military Child. In celebration, the Joint Venture Education Forum is encouraging everyone to wear purple on April 21 as a visible way to salute and honor our military children. Please join us!

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Education Update is a monthly newsletter by the Department’s Communications Office, distributed to schools, the first Board of Education meeting of the month, and posted to HawaiiPublicSchools.org. We encourage submissions! Please contact us at the phone, email or social channels above.