Introducing Hoʻohaʻaheo

Aloha, HIDOE students, staff, administrators, parents and community members. We're excited to launch our revamped monthly newsletter under a new brand with this inaugural issue. Hoʻohaʻaheo replaces the Education Update, Strive HI and Inspire newsletters, and will be distributed toward the end of each month in print and electronic formats. As HIDOE's primary external publication, we aim to live up to the meaning of haʻaheo — “to cherish with pride” in Hawaiian — by bolstering and sustaining pride for our public education system. We strive to tell the stories that galvanize community support and instill pride by celebrating successes around the significant work underway at schools across the state as we deliver on the power and promise of public education. We invite you to help us tell these stories and join the conversation. On the cover of each issue we will have a recurring feature to hear from HIDOE alumni, staff and students about what makes them #PublicSchoolProud. And on our back page, we have a dedicated space to highlight the top photos, tweets and posts for the month, using the hashtag #HI4PublicEd on Twitter and Instagram.

We look forward to touting your stories of innovation, collaboration and excellence. If you have story ideas, written pieces or helpful feedback, please reach out to us at doe_info@hawaiidoe.org.

Teacher Voice: What does Mister Rogers have to say to us as educators?

The school year has begun. I've been busy reorganizing my classroom, planning lessons, and catching up on summer emails all in an effort to prepare for this upcoming school year. With a constant stream of new strategies and programs, the beginning of the year can easily be overwhelming. Today I want to slow down though, and leave you with a reminder of what really matters in the work that we do. If you haven't seen the documentary, "Won’t You Be My Neighbor?", please add it to your Redbox list. This movie takes you behind the scenes of the beloved childhood television show, "Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.” Beyond just sharing archived footage and history, it paints a picture of Fred Rogers' passion for educating children.

He believed that: “Deep within us — no matter who we are — there lives a feeling of wanting to be lovable, of wanting to be the kind of person that others like to be with. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving.”

Man, what a power thought. That the greatest thing we can do as teachers is communicate to our students that they are loved just as they are.

One practice I started last year was giving each student a high five as they left my classroom at the end of the day. I was tired of the mad rush to the door as soon as the bell rang, so I made it a rule that students couldn’t leave until they gave me a high five. Although it seemed so simple, it allowed me to end each day with a personal connection and time to pull aside the kids I needed to check in with. Especially on those days when I struggled to be patient with certain students, I saw the importance of ending our time with a smile and a “have a good day.” I plan to continue this practice because I want to communicate to my students that no matter what transpires during the day, I still care about them, and they are noticed.

As this new school year gets underway, it is amazing to see the students who come back to my room at the end of the day and wait in line for their high five. It’s usually not the students who always had high marks and no behavior problems; it was the ones who tested and challenged me the most coming back at the end of the day to see me.

So while I may still be overwhelmed by the daily tasks of teaching, I can slow down and remember this: My first job is to love my students and communicate to them their value. Like Mister Rogers’ message, it is simple yet profoundly impactful. "Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life," he said, "is a hero to me."

Melissa Peck teaches second grade at ‘Ele‘ele Elementary on Kaua‘i. This year, she’ll have a combined general education and special education inclusion classroom.

#PublicSchoolProud

Many say good weather and natural beauty are Hawai‘i’s greatest assets. But what makes us “great” are our people and culture. Our families, teachers and students must be committed to honoring our culture while developing our young to reach their full potential as productive citizens in a diverse community.

As a Farrington High School grad, I’m proud to see the excitement in students and teachers at our innovative schools as they work together to not only “learn to live” in our fast-changing world, but also become passionate to “live to learn.” I see it when I visit our schools. I know that we can make this happen in all of our schools.

Alan M. Oshima is the president and CEO of Hawaiian Electric Co., Inc.
Innovative partnerships help build a solid foundation for teacher recruitment and retention

As HIDOE transitions to the next iteration of our strategic plan, the 2030 Promise Plan, one pillar of our core purpose remains constant: Ensuring that every student has a qualified and dedicated teacher throughout their K-12 educational career. Given the size of our public school system, roughly 1,000 teachers, counselors and staff leave the department each year for various reasons. The Office of Talent Management (OTM) works year-round to fulfill our teacher-staffing needs with about 1,200 new hires annually. We’re continuing this important work this year to recruit new educators and develop our current talent pool to address shortages in key areas as we work toward a goal of a 96 percent fill rate by 2020.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO TEACHING

One of the key areas we’re focusing on is in special education (SPED) K-12 teachers. We’ve made significant steps toward increasing recruitment and retention of SPED teachers by partnering with Leeward Community College, Chaminade University, and other partners on a new SPED “3+1 Licensure Pathway.” The 3+1 program gives candidates a clear academic path of requirements with coursework that leads to a bachelor’s degree in special education. The first three years of study are completed at LCC, with a final year and degree issued by Chaminade. Approved by the Hawai’i Teacher Standards Board, this collaborative teacher preparation program assists not only college students deciding on a SPED teaching career, but also substitutes, emergency hires, educational assistants and paraprofessional tutors who are already working at schools by creating an alternative pathway that allows for individually customized academic plans. These individual plans remove a previous commitment that required two full semesters of unpaid student teaching, which often posed a substantial barrier. Upon entering the HIDOE system, new SPED teachers can work with veteran mentors to get support as they acclimate to the classroom.

In addition to the 3+1 program, OTM continues our partnership agreement with SPED teacher preparation programs at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and West Oahu campuses. Tuition stipends are available for participants in bachelor’s, post-baccalaureate, and master’s programs, including dual-licensure pathways.

GROW OUR OWN

Meanwhile, our Grow Our Own Teachers initiative continues to develop our local talent pipeline of secondary teachers. We graduated 32 new teachers this past summer, with 24 more graduates expected in 2020. In partnership with UH-Mānoa, this state-funded program provides tuition stipends for post-baccalaureate teaching certificates, offering a flexible schedule of online courses in return for a three-year teaching commitment. Applications for the third cohort are open until October 1.

The federally funded Hawai’i Troops to Teachers program, now in its second year, continues to help eligible members of the armed forces transition from military careers to education as K-12 teachers. In its first year, seven veterans were hired as new teachers with five more in the training pipeline. Following extensive outreach at military installations and career fairs last year, the program got over 50 applications and will build on this momentum to bring more qualified service members into classrooms.

As we develop new partnerships to improve teacher recruitment locally, we’re continuing to recruit the best teachers available nationwide. Over the last year, we’ve made over a dozen recruiting trips to major U.S. cities including Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago and Atlanta, and held online workshops to find talented educators worldwide. For mainland applicants, a relocation bonus of $2,000 to $3,000 is also offered, depending on their starting location.

RETENTION AND MENTORING

To improve retention among new teachers while strengthening teacher leadership from within, we provide guaranteed mentoring for those new to the profession. HIDOE’s Teacher Induction Center provides a comprehensive three-year induction program for novice teachers that includes working with a highly skilled, trained instructional mentor to accelerate teacher effectiveness within a strong support system. This early induction and mentoring program works with over 1,400 in their first and second year, beginning teachers, and has received tremendous praise from both new and veteran teachers and their school administrators. This year an additional 15 SPED mentors will be working with newly hired SPED teachers.

Innovation is creating exciting new partnerships aimed at improving teacher recruitment and retention in Hawai’i public schools, and is helping us to deliver on our promise of equity for our students.
Beginning this school year the Hawaii State Assessment-Science (HSA-Science) will be fully aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The NGSS reflect current research and best practices in science teaching and learning in grades K-12 and set expectations for what students should know and be able to do in science. Development of the NGSS was guided by a three-dimensional approach: integrating Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas.

The NGSS were adopted by the Board of Education in 2016, with the goal of fully implementing the standards in schools by the 2019-20 school year. The next step involved aligning our science assessment to the standards. The test and item design will be different than previous HSA-Science to reflect the three-dimensional nature of the NGSS and the emphasis on phenomenon-driven learning.

The assessment is designed to be used as a snapshot of student knowledge and skills related to the NGSS; it should be used as one component of a larger suite of assessments to provide a detailed understanding of student proficiency.

The 2019-20 scores will set a new baseline and should not be compared with previous HSA-Science scores. As with any change, there will be a period of adjustment as teachers and students get used to the new standards and tests.

To learn more about HIDOE’s NGSS Assessment and implementation, please visit bit.ly/HIDOE-NGSS-2019.
We have spent the past two years building on a foundation of our three high-impact strategies — School Design, Student Voice and Teacher Collaboration. This has been about empowering our school communities and having them own the educational experience of their students.

This year is a momentous one as we prepare to enter a new decade with an exciting vision, a 2030 Promise Plan that will build on this foundation in order to deliver on five promise themes — Hawai’i, Equity, School Design, Empowerment and Innovation.

We’ve engaged the community throughout the summer to help us navigate how we will get there; another opportunity for feedback on a draft plan is coming this fall.

I hope you all are as motivated as I am to continue to build on the positive momentum we experienced last year, including the incredible increase in students taking both AP and Early College courses. This couldn’t have happened without the vision and guidance of our outstanding leaders, kumu and haumana. We will continue to develop and implement Ideas That Transform to lead our schools toward becoming incubators of innovative ideas and leadership preparation that we believe will ultimately transform all sectors of our state.

High-quality public education is the key to a thriving, sustainable Hawai’i. This will require all of us — parents, students, teachers, administrators and the community as a whole — contributing as one. Working together, we can achieve great things for our communities. We are public school proud!