HĀ-lights Issue 1
September 2017

Hā Breath
Nā Hopena Aʻo

Strengthened Sense of Belonging
Strengthened Sense of Hawaiʻi
Strengthened Sense of Total Well-being
Strengthened Sense of Responsibility
Strengthened Sense of Excellence
Strengthened Sense of Aloha

Hawaiʻi Department of Education (HIDOE)
Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE)
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Introduction

The Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) is tasked to lead a 3-year pilot of Nā Hopena Aʻo (HĀ) from February 2016-2019. The HĀ pilot focuses on the need to build capacity and support structures within the HIDOE and develop a system wide implementation plan informed by the greater education community. Rather than mapping out a plan for implementation and then training stakeholders on the plan, OHE offered an open invitation to those within and beyond HIDOE to engage with HĀ, ensuring the framework’s implementation remained relevant and informed by the on-the-ground contexts and needs. Over Year 1 of the HĀ pilot, smaller pilot sites have organically emerged across the state in various contexts. These were led by “early adopters” or “introducers” who saw immediate value and usefulness in the HĀ framework and began experimenting with implementation. The pilots provide examples of how the HĀ framework is being intentionally integrated to suit unique contexts. The pilots also inform the greater system-wide implementation plan and the direction of the overall HĀ pilot.

HĀ-lights is an opportunity to highlight the moʻolelo [stories] of pilots from across the state and inspire a new wave of “HĀ adopters.” As you continue reading, we hope you can find ways that HĀ may be applied in your context and feel a greater sense of readiness to engage deeper with HĀ.
The Teacher Perspective

ʻAʻohe pau ka ʻike i ka hālau hoʻokahi.
All knowledge is not learned in just one school.

This ʻōlelo noʻeau serves as a guiding perspective for teachers Mathieu Williams, Bill Chen, Ethan Porter and Sandy Webb who were all inspired to pilot HĀ. They each acknowledged that while teachers are an excellent source of knowledge, they aren’t the only source, and by exposing students to the many ways of learning and knowing, their experience can be greatly enriched. Through the moʻolelo shared by these four teachers about how they’ve connected to and implemented HĀ, we see how other sources such as place, family, and community offer incredible learning opportunities not only for students, but for all of us in the system leaders and learners working towards strengthening our sense of Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Well-Being, and Hawaiʻi (BREATH).

Place as a Source

HĀ is a framework of outcomes for all of us in the system, which means that it is critical for the adults who have control over the learning environments to understand, experience, live and model HĀ in order to share with others. Mathieu Williams, a media tech teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate in Kailua-Kona, and Bill Chen, a 3rd grade teacher at Kahakai Elementary also in Kailua-Kona, believed wholeheartedly in this and thus spearheaded a beginning of the year, school-wide, place-based staff PD day that would ground the adults at his school in HĀ and allow them to truly experience BREATH. The two teachers has been collaborating on HĀ the previous school year. Both were inspired by the HĀ Summit¹ that they attended in May 2017 on the Leeward coast of Oahu and wanted their staff to experience something similar, but within their own community context. Both approached their respective principals with the idea to do an opening school year huakaʻi [learning excursion] for all staff, including security, custodial, Educational Assistants, etc. Once approved, the two partnered up with Kamehameha Schools to plan and execute the two PD days.

Kealakehe Intermediate staff spent the day at Keauhou, a sacred, historical site in Keahou being restored by Kamehameha Schools. They explored the theme of building relationships and community engagement through various activities including tending the dry land kalo and team building activities that built pilina [connection, relationships] with one another. Kahakai Elementary staff toured along Aliʻi Drive from Old Airport Beach to End of the World (Lekeleke Burial Grounds) in Kailua-Kona to learn more about the place in which they serve and the incredible moʻolelo it holds. The feedback that both Mathieu and Bill received from the staff

¹ HĀ Summit 2017: http://hasummit2017.weebly.com
was overwhelmingly positive in regards to their feelings about how the day strengthened their sense of BREATH. Here are some of the quotes taken from the post-survey the staff completed alongside photos taken by Mathieu and Bill from the day:

“I absolutely loved this morning’s huaka’i! I enjoyed being on the trip as a staff, listening to our school’s cultural experts, and learning more about the history of Hawai’i.”

“Thank you for the informative and enlightening field trip especially for those of us that are new to Kona! So refreshing to let our island home be our classroom for a change!”

“I LOVED it! It was a great community-builder, informative, and gave me a definite sense of belonging to Kahakai’s community, and a stronger sense of BREATH overall.”

Mathieu noted that the staff came out of the day super energized after experiencing HĀ and understanding more deeply the importance of strengthening relationships and communities in order to create positive, fruitful learning environments for
all of us. In his write-up on the PD day\(^2\), Bill spoke of how the experience helped the staff at his school to better understand the HĀ framework and recognize that it’s not just “another thing” to be implemented but is rather a lens for approaching all that we do and that it is actually something that thrives in and is inspired by the cherished place that surrounds us. As he put it, “HĀ is really all around us – we’re just strengthening it!”

**Family as a Source**

Ethan Porter, a 9th grade Social Studies teacher at Campbell High School echoed a similar sentiment that HĀ already exists in our community. He also believes it is especially present in the stories and history of our people and place. Ethan spoke of moʻokūʻauhau [genealogy] as being a powerful source of knowledge. He will be teaching Modern Hawaiian History and Participation in Democracy this school year and will be grounding his curriculum in genealogy to set the theme of “these are our stories.” He asserted that each student has a story and so he wants the first project for his class to be an opportunity for students to share their family stories. Ethan noted that out-of-class assignments should be meaningful and that they can indeed be if students seek out other sources of knowledge out of the classroom such as their family stories.

One other project he will have his students complete this year is a project that he did himself while studying at the University of Hawaii Mānoa that he felt was influential in helping to strengthen his sense of self through learning about his ʻohana [family]. The project is a “once upon a time” story they must write. They will do three different versions, the first being about themselves, the second featuring their parents, and the third starring their grandparents. Ethan believes that by students digging deeper into moʻolelo, they will be able to ultimately strengthen their sense of BREATH.

**Community as a Source**

Providing meaningful out-of-class experiences that allow for students to learn from other sources of knowledge and wholly experience HĀ is something that Sandy Webb has also worked hard at. Sandy teaches Biology and AP Environmental Science at Mililani High School. Acknowledging the fact that Hawaiʻi has an incredibly beautiful and unique natural environment to learn from, Sandy takes advantage of the opportunity to take her students out into the community and experience the land as much as possible. She believes that ʻāina-based learning is crucial to understanding how science works in our context.

\(^2\) Chen, Bill. (2017). Kahakai Huakaʻi Write-Up: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/170Gd0JvPUDTIBAAavoX30ToeZOm_tD-DVJqJT90QWIA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/170Gd0JvPUDTIBAAavoX30ToeZOm_tD-DVJqJT90QWIA/edit?usp=sharing)
The Loko Ea fishpond located in Haleiwa is one location where she has taken many of her students to engage in what she deems as “science that matters.” In addition to setting the stage for interactive scientific research, the fishpond serves as an important resource and gathering place that bridges schools to community and place. Sandy credited the Mālama Loko Ea staff for not only providing her students with valuable knowledge, but for also supporting student leadership in connecting the community to place as her students were given the opportunity to be introducers and bring other students along to the fishpond to expose nearby schools to this remarkable source of knowledge. Sandy remarked that, “The key is to connect with community partners who have tons of manaʻo [ideas, thoughts]” or ‘ike [knowledge] “because teachers do not have to know it all.”

Sandy went on to note that, “HĀ is a vital part of traditional science, so it should be a part of biology curriculum everywhere.” She thus grounded her students in the framework before taking them out to Loko Ea fishpond so they could make their own connections between their research, the framework, and the place. Her students engaged in projects such as high-level water testing of the ponds that allowed them to link culture and history with scientific observation all while continuing to connect back to HĀ via a board that they created as a class for Loko Ea that lays out the six outcomes (image above). Sandy said that it is her goal to help get a big plywood, plastic coated poster board installed at every community site so that students from all the schools that come for huakaʻi can have a visible reference to HĀ. The Mālama Loko Ea staff has been using this board to share with visitors how HĀ is existent in their particular context and environment.

One of Sandy’s students who felt an especially strong connection to HĀ took initiative to further the engagement for his fellow students by creating a reflection activity where people wrote on a paper shaped as a fish what outcome resonated with them throughout the day and then posted it on a separate plywood board. As more students visit Loko Ea and experience HĀ first-hand, they are able to add fish
onto the reflection board. This space allows for all visitors to gather and reflect on how their ‘āina-based experience strengthened their sense of BREATH.

**Collaboration as the Key**

With teachers Mathieu, Bill, Ethan and Sandy drawing from various sources of knowledge that expand students’ learning in order to provide greater space for HĀ to thrive, their curriculum has become further enhanced and better aligned to BREATH so that students are more prepared to model and live these life-long learning outcomes. For each of them, the HĀ framework serves as the foundation upon which they build their classroom values, school-year themes, curriculum content, and project contexts. These four teachers have extended their ideas and impact beyond their own classroom, serving as crucial introducers for spreading HĀ throughout their schools by collaborating with other teachers and inspiring more school-wide HĀ initiatives, just as Mathieu and Bill did with the staff PD huaka‘i in Kailua-Kona.

For Sandy, she was an introducer for her own students who then formed their own connections to HĀ and took initiative to spread HĀ beyond their own school and out into the larger community. Sandy and her students embraced their kuleana [responsibility] of working in partnership with the ‘āina and the community to allow for HĀ to be experienced and integrated not only within the classroom but also beyond the school. When it comes to spreading HĀ within a school, Sandy stated that, “you have to have willingness among other teachers.”

Collaborating with other teachers in a school around HĀ is something that Ethan Porter has been working hard to do. He believes that HĀ “is a kākou thing” and that it shouldn’t be done in isolation. Last school year, Ethan gathered together his cohort of 9th grade teachers for a HĀ orientation followed by a discussion on how they could each begin implementing HĀ in their classrooms. Campbell High School was using a team teaching structure where a Math, English, and Social Studies teacher form a cohort and teach the same group of students. The purpose of this structure was to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and learning. Ethan took advantage of this team structure by grounding his teaching team in HĀ and
collaborating around implementing the framework in their classrooms. The team was able to incorporate reflections on HĀ using the HĀ assessment wheel throughout the school year to see how their students were growing in their sense of BREATHE in all subjects. He shared the following thought-provoking quotes that show his belief in the great value and depth of the HĀ framework for producing meaningful outcomes for both students and teachers:

“In a world of automation, we have to have something that distinguishes our students as humans. That is what HĀ does.”

“HĀ is THAT good that you’re not going to implement it overnight, it is deep and long. It requires you to change your philosophy and the way you think.”

Bill Chen is another introducer who was successful in leading collaborative efforts to implement school-wide HĀ initiatives. He believes and stated that, “HĀ is a great way to connect behavioral learning and implement ‘restorative justice’ themes in school.” With that, Bill decided to talk with the PBIS committee at Kahakai Elementary about integrating HĀ into their positive behavioral intervention efforts. The committee decided to implement what they called “WOW” assemblies held every Wednesday. They focused on a different HĀ outcome each month so the activities led at that assembly revolved around that outcome. For example, January’s focus outcome was having “a strengthened sense of Excellence.”

One of the activities at the first WOW assembly involved a whole school circle where students had to describe the meaning of excellence. Bill made note that “excellence looks different to everyone and so it becomes empowering when we allow kids to drive what they think excellence looks like.” Reflecting on the changes he has seen among students and staff since implementing HĀ, Bill replied “we have seen greater open-mindedness and changes in mindsets.” He added that because HĀ allows for multiple interpretations of the indicators of the six outcomes, “HĀ has opened the scope of what BREATHE looks like and has allowed our school to foster a thriving environment that celebrates diversity in thought and experience.” Seeing the positive impact that HĀ has had, Bill hopes to further expose HĀ to others within and beyond his school. After all, as Bill said, “that’s what HĀ is. It’s a grassroots movement where you expose it to others and then they go off and take it on their own.”
Keliʻikanoe Mahi and ‘Ilikea Kam have served as HĀ introducers on an administrative level by introducing the framework to their entire school and leading various HĀ initiatives for all teachers, staff and students at Ke Kula ʻO ‘EhunuiKaimalino, a K-12 Public Hawaiian Language Immersion school located in Kealakekua, Hawai‘i. Each year, the school sets a theme for their Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) focus. While ILT in most schools typically has an “academic” focus, ‘Ehunui instead chooses ʻōlelo hawai‘i goals each year, which can be connected to either academic or behavior goals. This past school year, ‘Ehunui chose to focus on pilina, or relationships, and tie in the HĀ framework. Keliʻikanoe shared that in the past couple years she was witnessing misalignment between the students’ behaviors in school and the immersion philosophy of having a safe, positive, and close-knit community. She felt that building relationships on campus needed to be the new focus and that Nā Hopena Aʻo would help set the foundation for doing so. She said, “We wanted to make lawena, or the students’ behaviors, something that we strengthen in line with an immersion setting, but we didn’t have any standards to go by, so we decided to use HĀ as a solid guiding framework.”

What ‘Ehunui did was create whole-school HĀ initiatives throughout the year that would focus on each of the six HĀ outcomes in order to build a stronger community where not only students’ behaviors would improve, but so would their strengthened sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being and Hawai‘i. ‘Ilikea, who taught for years at ‘Ehunui and now serves as the school’s Registrar, noted that nurturing relationships in the classroom would allow students
to feel a greater sense of belonging and aloha. So ‘Ehunui launched an “acts of kindness” initiative where all teachers on campus would take note of positive interactions between students in and out of the classroom and either log it into an app called Dojo or give out tokens to students displaying kindness or aloha. The school then gave away prizes at the end of the school year to students who gained enough points or tokens. The parents got involved in the initiative by donating prizes, with one of the grand prizes being an enormous teddy bear. Keli‘ikanoe noted that these extrinsic incentives allowed students to get on board initially, which is what it first takes to then eventually build intrinsic motivation among students. Overall, she said, the students got really excited over the initiative which led to positive outcomes of strengthening pilina.

‘Ehunui implemented a similar HĀ initiative for teachers and staff in which they selected an “Employee of the Month” who exemplified the HĀ outcomes. Faculty and staff were nominated by their peers via an email, which had to include an explanation of the connection of that teacher’s actions to HĀ. The faculty or staff member who received the most nominations was awarded a prime parking spot called ‘io hanohano for the month since parking is very limited at the school, and they were also recognized at the beginning of the month during faculty meetings. This initiative got the adults on campus equally excited and invested in living out the HĀ outcomes as the students were.

Other HĀ initiatives were also implemented to more intentionally target outcomes such as responsibility and Hawai‘i. The teachers decided to incorporate more service-learning and place-based projects into their curriculum to allow for students to deepen their understanding of their connection and responsibility to ‘āina and wahi [land and place]. A few of the projects that Keli‘ikanoe and ‘Ilikea spoke about included canoe refurbishing, trail restoration, native out-planting, and mural painting. ‘Ehunui partnered with various non-profit organizations in the community such as the Estria Foundation who houses the Mele Murals project, which allowed the ‘Ehunui students to create 7 large-scale murals down at the Keauhou shopping center as well as a mural on ‘Ehunui’s campus. These murals explore mo‘olelo ‘āina [stories of place] and allow for students to connect with their cultural and historical heritage.
Lifting up stories of self, place and community is what HĀ is all about. Another site that has used HĀ as a tool for connecting students and others to moʻolelo in order to strengthen their sense of BREATH is the School of Education at the University of Hawai‘i Hilo. Michele Ebersole, a professor for the Master of Arts in Teaching program, has been leading the effort to introduce HĀ to the student cohorts going through the Masters program. The first year of the program is a route to teacher licensure. Michele feels it crucial to have their students experience HĀ while training to be teachers so that they enter their own classrooms already understanding, living and modeling the framework.

The very first course that the Masters students go through is a 3-day intensive called “Teaching in Hawai‘i Schools.” In this course, the students are introduced to the HĀ framework before digging deeper into moʻolelo. As Michele affirmed, “HĀ sets the foundation for using stories to guide us.” Michele takes her students through ancestral stories of Hawai‘i as well as their own family and individual stories so that they may understand and make a personal connection to the unique context of Hawai‘i. The final work piece for the course is writing your own moʻolelo with the purpose being for students to look at their identity and understand who they are in this particular place. With this design, Michele said, “We are using HĀ as a lens to guide us through this course.”

When teaching the course this past year, she introduced HĀ to her students through our basic orientation, sharing the moʻolelo of the creation and construction of the framework. Then they took the six outcomes and created their own set of indicators for each one, asking “what does BREATH mean to you and to us in this context?” After being grounded in the framework and having a shared meaning for BREATH, the cohort of teacher candidates then went on a huaka‘i led by Michele and another professor, Huihui Mossman, to experience HĀ. They traveled to different places in Hilo and Huihui shared the stories of each of those places. Michele also provided opportunities for her students to learn from the stories of other people in the community. She brought a guest speaker, who happened to be one of Michele’s former 3rd grade students, into her class to talk about her own life story. Her name is Celeste Manuia Haʻo and she is a navigator who told of her journey of identity exploration as a Hawaiian and Samoan and her return voyage to Samoa. Listening to Celeste’s story served as inspiration for Michele’s students in further exploring their own stories.

This school year, Michele plans on starting her course off the same way so that her students are first grounded in the moʻolelo of HĀ before then exploring their own personal moʻolelo in order to build connections. The intent is that the next part of
the Masters program course will allow the teacher candidates to move into learning methods for incorporating HĀ into their classrooms so their students can explore their individual and collective moʻolelo. By Michele getting teacher candidates to ground in, experience, and live HĀ before going out into the field, she is building teachers who are entering their classrooms already modeling and putting intention to HĀ which will better set them up for success in guiding their students to strengthen their sense of BREATH.
Teach for America

Lindsey Bailey is on the Hawai‘i staff of Teach for America (TFA), a national non-profit organization comprised of promising leaders committed to teaching in low-income schools. The diverse network of TFA corps members work to confront educational inequity through teaching. Many TFA alumni then continue their impact in the field through multiple avenues whether its teaching, serving as a school leader, developing education policies, etc. The Hawai‘i region of TFA has made it a priority to strengthen the connection that the organization, its corps members and its alumni have to this unique place and the communities that they serve. One way the organization has set out to do so is by recruiting more Native Hawaiian and kamaʻāina [from Hawai‘i] corps members so that the TFA teachers better represent the communities where they work. Simply recruiting more people from Hawai‘i however is not enough. There must be more intention put to fostering meaningful collaboration between TFA staff, corps members, alumni, schools, and communities so that we are working collectively to better educational equity and excellence in Hawai‘i.

For Lindsey, who serves as the organization’s Manager of Values, Diversity, and Culture, she sees HĀ as a solid foundation for building those connections. She shared, “I’m excited to see a statewide framework that grounds everyone in place and similar values.” When internalizing HĀ in her organization’s context, she has seen the framework as an intention-setter and has thus worked to incorporate it into every meeting and professional development opportunity this year for TFA staff and corps members so that, as she put it, “Regardless of the content they go over that day, everyone is grounded in context.” Participants for the day are thereby grounded in intention and reminded of the larger outcomes driving the work of the organization, which is to ensure there is a strengthened sense of BREATH as they enter not only the TFA community, but more so the school communities in which they serve.

Last school year, TFA hosted a “TFAmily Day” where all the first and second year TFA Hawai‘i Corps Members (CMs) gathered together at Ka‘ala Farms in Wai‘anae, O‘ahu to go through place-based PD. Since the majority of the TFA Corps teaches on the Leeward Coast, it was a great opportunity for the members to strengthen their connection to place and experience BREATH as they were grounded in the HĀ framework at the beginning of the day. The corps members were given the HĀ Wheel Assessment Tool at the end of the day for them to reflect on how their sense of BREATH was strengthened by their day’s experience at Ka‘ala Farms.
Lindsey affirmed that HĀ allowed for the TFA staff to be intentional about the design for the day and thoughtful about the environment they were fostering in which corps members could connect and reflect. What Lindsey also acknowledged, was that while the staff were creating a meaningful opportunity for the corps members to experience and ground in HĀ, they weren’t actually providing that for their own selves as the leaders of the organization. Lindsey’s goal for this coming year is to provide this professional development opportunity grounded in HĀ to the TFA staff, because as she admitted, “At an organizational level, everything is about modeling so that members can take HĀ and apply it on their own.”

Lindsey reached out to OHE for guidance on developing their TFA staff retreat. OHE staff connected her to Keoni Kuoha at Papahana Kuaola, a mālama ʻāina based learning organization that is connecting the area’s past with a sustainable future, located in the ahupua’a of He‘eia in the ʻili of Waipao. As the Executive Director of Papahana, Keoni has been very involved with the HĀ pilot from the onset and has been using the framework within his organization for their own staff and curriculum development. Keoni reiterated what OHE as well as others who have been piloting HĀ continue to note, which is that HĀ already exists all around us and many of us have already been doing it.

3 Papahana Kuaola Website: [http://papahanakuaola.com](http://papahanakuaola.com)
Papahana Kuaola

At the beginning of 2017, Keoni and his staff at Papahana were involved in strategic planning to set goals aligned to their mission: “to create quality learning focused on Hawai‘i’s cultural and natural resources, environmental restoration, and economic sustainability fully integrated with Hawaiian knowledge in order to exemplify a lifestyle respectful of kānaka, ʻāina, and akua.” As they looked at their core organizational values, they started seeing alignment with Nā Hopena Aʻo and decided to adopt HĀ as their organization’s outcomes. In speaking of the value of HĀ, Keoni touched on the fact that the framework creates values and goals while providing a lens that will help the organization prioritize what they should be doing to ensure all they do, whether its related to professional development for staff or to curriculum development for their school partners, works towards those outcomes. Papahana has a curriculum development team that has been reaching out to school partners to bring more students to come to their ʻāina because they believe in the great benefit that ʻāina-based education offers. Keoni noted that HĀ has created an incentive for schools to reach back, saying that, “For us and our ʻāina education partners, HĀ has created some common language, we are all trying to reach schools in similar ways.”

Keoni also stated, “HĀ is also one of the lenses I’m applying to our professional development and how we work together as an organization internally,” and echoing Lindsey’s thoughts that, “everything we do needs to be placed in this context or moving in this direction in order for it to trickle down.” Being that both Papahana and TFA have a similar vision for grounding their organization in the HĀ framework, it is only fitting that they partnered to host a TFA Staff Retreat at Papahana on August 18, 2017. Just as Lindsey said, HĀ has indeed allowed for valuable collaboration among organizations. And as Keoni notably added, “as we all work towards implementing HĀ and strengthening BREATH, we will know we’re successful if it’s embedded in the culture of the organization.” This is not only the goal for our community orgs, but ultimately for the entire HIDOE system.

TFA staff clearing weeds from the kahawai at Papahana Kuaola
Photo Courtesy of Teach for America
Mahalo to all of the interviewees of HĀ-lights Series 1 for sharing your moʻolelo! Look out for HĀ-lights Series 2 coming out in Fall 2017 with more stories from the four different perspectives of how HĀ is being implemented in various contexts.

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