Superintendent’s
EDUCATION UPDATE
HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | AUGUST 2018

COMPUTER SCIENCE

S. Korean-U.S. team wins e-ICON challenge

The Hawaii DOE, Korea Ministry of Education, and Institute of APEC Collaborative Education hosted the e-ICON World Contest at the East-West Center this summer, the first time it was held outside of South Korea.

The winning South Korean-U.S. team built an augmented reality app focused on chemical simulations to reduce global economic hardships.

“Computer science skills and knowledge are critical in order to be competitive in today’s job market and prepared for careers of the future,” said Supt. Christina M. Kishimoto. “This contest provided a valuable opportunity for students to apply computer science lessons into real world solutions.”

The e-ICON contest brought together teams from seven countries and challenged students to create educational mobile apps to achieve Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations.

Students and teachers representing Hawaii/U.S. this year were from Campbell High, Kapolei High, Waipahu High, Kalani High, Kawananakoa Middle, Ewa Makai Middle, Hilo Intermediate, Kalama Intermediate, and Waiaula High & Inter. “This was a wonderful opportunity for me to make new friends and work with students from around the world. The biggest challenge was the difference in language, but we are able to get past that and come together to complete our project,” shared Hawaii student Jonathan Le.

PARTNERSHIPS

Maunakea Scholars launches scholarship, dual credit course

Honoka’a High senior Keilani Steele is the first Maunakea Scholar to be awarded the new Hōkūala Scholarship: $10,000 to attend the college of her choice in pursuit of an astronomy degree.

At a Maunakea Speakers presentation at ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center July 19, Steele was on stage to present her leading-edge research enabled by the Maunakea Scholars program. Keilani received an observing run at the Canada-France-Hawai’i Telescope last year and recently finished another observing run at W. M. Keck Observatory — research opportunities professional astronomers compete for worldwide.

The program paused for a set of surprise announcements including:

• The $10,000 Hōkūala (rising star) Scholarship is the latest addition to the Maunakea Scholars program. This scholarship will be awarded annually to one or more top performing seniors in the program who are going on to study astronomy in college.

• The Maunakea Scholars program is partnering with the University of Hawai’i’s Mānoa Academy. Starting in the 2018-19 school year, high school students attending Hawai’i Island schools hosting the Maunakea Scholars program will be able to take, at no cost, UH online astronomy courses, receiving college credit in the process. A $50,000 grant from Hawai’i Community Foundation is enabling this exciting expansion of the Maunakea Scholars program.

Maunakea Scholars is a collaborative agreement between the Hawaii DOE, the University of Hawai’i’s Institute for Astronomy, and the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope to develop more opportunities for local high school students to use Maunakea Observatories for their innovative research projects.
When I was asked to reflect on my public school journey, my immediate thought was to highlight the people who have supported me throughout the years. However, I believe the best form of gratitude is not just thanking them, but demonstrating how I’m using what they’ve taught me to be the best person I can be. Here’s my story.

It’s hard to believe now, but school was a place that I dreaded at first.

Like most kids, I remember thinking kindergarten was pretty traumatizing. I cried every morning when my mom dropped me off at school. I didn’t understand why I had to leave the comforts of home.

But school quickly became one of my favorite places to be. I began to enjoy it so much that I insisted on being as early as possible. In fact, my favorite days were when my sister Teresa had a test at her school — from Hokulani Elementary to my high school, because that meant I could be at school as early as 6:30 in the morning.

School was more than just a place to be for six hours a day. Over the years it ultimately helped shape me into a better person, someone who values education and seizes every opportunity to keep growing.

Throughout my years in public school — from Hokulani Elementary to Niu Valley Middle and Kalani High — I was fortunate to have engaging teachers who made personal connections. Every one of my teachers had their own style of teaching and getting through to students, but one thing they all had in common was compassion. They taught me more than a textbook ever could.

My first-grade teacher, Ms. Finnegan, taught me to challenge myself. I remember when she asked if I wanted to be in the advanced reading group. To be honest, I initially agreed because my friend was in the group. But my decision impressed Ms. Finnegan so much that she told my mother how proud she was that I was willing to take on the challenge. Her praise of me encouraged me to keep taking on challenges.

Mr. Pottenger, my fifth-grade computer lab teacher, taught me to be more outgoing and to expand my interests. I remember one morning he asked me to be a part of the FIRST Lego League (FLL) team the school was forming. I couldn’t resist because Mr. Pottenger was always a charismatic and fun person to be around.

Throughout the season we built and tested robots and had to design and present a skit before judges. Being in skits was outside of my comfort zone but Mr. Pottenger’s commitment to us and his enthusiasm was infectious. In our presentation replicating the human body, I was the proudest red blood cell.

Overall my elementary years were fairly comfortable. Everyone was always so nice and caring. But it was time for me to advance to middle school, where I wouldn’t know anyone.

I was initially terrified to embark on life as a middle-schooler in a new community. But I was pleasantly surprised to find countless supportive teachers and friends who helped ease the transition. My middle school teachers enhanced my curiosity while providing me stability.

As I moved on to high school, I learned the value of getting involved with school activities and extracurricular opportunities.

Before I unlocked that door, I remember I would sit on a bench and watch Netflix until soccer practice. Then one day my counselor Mrs. Yoshida called me in and encouraged me to apply for the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) Global Leadership Program.

The program for high school students is designed to groom future leaders and global citizens. It helped me gain new perspectives on world affairs and I even got to travel to China as part of my project on the invasive little fire ant.

My fellow participants and I found the experience so beneficial that we created a PAAC Club at our school.

After that, I began getting involved with more activities and pretty soon it seemed like there was never enough time for me to do everything that I wanted to do.

I played soccer and ran cross country and track. I was part of the Robotics Club, Math League, Science Club and orchestra. I participated in the Center for Tomorrow’s Leaders Fellows program and the Island Airs Explorers Program.

All the while, I took rigorous courses, including AP Statistics, Calculus, Physics and English during my senior year. This was all manageable because of the strong foundation my teachers gave me.

The summer before my senior year at Kalani, I took a college-level logic course at Duke University. The university’s 3-D printing lab piqued my interest and I began going in there to create small projects.

One day I saw a guy who was designing a prosthetic hand for a patient from the university’s hospital. The device itself wasn’t particularly fancy but watching their interaction and the patient’s reaction helped me decide what I want to do after high school.

I’m planning to study biomedical engineering at MIT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The biomedical field combines my love of human interaction and logical thinking. While other engineering fields allow you to create functional things, you don’t get to see the reaction of the people using them.

I never could have imagined all of the opportunities I’ve had to grow and improve myself over the past 13 years. All of the competitions, trips and events I was able to participate in were made possible through the support and mentorship of my teachers and administrators.

I hope I can make them proud as I continue my journey.
LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT STATE, COMPLEX AREAS

Supt. Christina M. Kishimoto announced several leadership appointments in July:

• Heidi Armstrong: Interim Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Student Support Services. Armstrong has been with the Department for 30 years, most recently as Complex Area Superintendent for the Campbell-Kapolei Complex. She previously held leadership and teaching positions at Iroquois Point Elementary, Pohakea Elementary and Waipahu High schools.

  Armstrong will lead the newly created office, the result of splitting the former Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support into two: the Office of Student Support Services and the Office of Curriculum. The reorganization took effect July 1 following approval by the Board in May.

• Keith Hui: Pearl City-Waipahu Complex Area Superintendent. A former special education and resource teacher, Hui has been with the Department for more than 20 years, most recently as principal of Waipahu Elementary. He also held leadership positions at Waimalu, Maili, Barber’s Point and Makaha elementary schools. Hui completed the Aspirant Complex Area Superintendent Program in June 2018 as part of the first cohort selected for this training program.

  Hui succeeds Clayton Kaninau, who retired after a more than 30-year career with HIDOE.

• Rochelle Mahoe: Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani Complex Area Superintendent. A former mathematics teacher, Mahoe has led Noeau Elementary as principal since 2006. She previously served as vice principal at Pearl City High School and Like-like Elementary School.

  Mahoe replaces retired educator Catherine Payne, who had been appointed to the position on an interim basis before beginning her term as Chairwoman of the Board of Education this month.

• Sean Tajima: Interim Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area Superintendent. A former special education teacher, Tajima has been principal of Niu Valley Middle School since 2014. He previously served as principal at Pauoa and Makakilo elementary schools and as vice principal at Kapolei Middle School.

  He replaces newly appointed Interim Assistant Superintendent Armstrong.

• Linell Dilwith: Interim Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area Superintendent.

  Dilwith has been a principal with the Department for 10 years, six of which have been at Stevenson Middle. She has also served as principal at Lanakila Elementary, member of the Leadership Institute Design and Advisory committee, School Turnaround Specialist and Interim Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area Superintendent in 2017. She was recently honored as the 2018 Hawaii National Distinguished Principal.

HIDOE TEACHERS SELECTED FOR EINSTEIN FELLOWSHIP

Two Hawai’i DOE science teachers have been named awardees of the prestigious Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Program, an honor that comes with a one-year federal research appointment in Washington, D.C.

  Among the 14 educators nationwide who were granted fellowships for 2018-19 are:

• Hilo Intermediate science teacher Pascale Creek Pinner, who will serve at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Science. The office is the lead federal agency supporting fundamental scientific research for energy and the nation’s largest supporter of basic research in the physical sciences.

• Kalani High science teacher Bryan Silver, who will serve at the National Science Foundation’s Directorate for Engineering. The branch is charged with investing in engineering research and education critical to the nation’s future.

STUDENTS CONTRIBUTE TO DNA RESEARCH

Thirty Hawaii public high school students who opted to spend most of their summer break in school said they gained invaluable experience during a five-week research project focused on plant DNA.

  As part of Waipahu High’s Biotechnology Science Scholars Program, students from Waipahu, Campbell and Kapolei high schools essentially became an extension of New Jersey-based Rutgers University’s Waksman Institute of Microbiology for the summer.

  The students worked in laboratories at Waipahu High to contribute to ongoing graduate-level research Rutgers scientists are conducting on the duckweed plant. The freshwater plant is of interest to the scientific community for its potential use as a biofuel source and in bioremediation, or the use of living organisms to treat pollutants and toxins in the environment.

  Michael Sana, head of Waipahu’s Science Department, who led the summer program, likened the experiment to the DNA testing by online genealogy companies that are growing in popularity — but for plants.

  Kapolei upcoming senior Chloe Salacup said, “This kind of helped me put my mind into perspective and to see where I want to go in the medical field since there’s like a lot of different jobs. I think the outcome was really worth it despite kind of spending our summer here for five weeks,” she said. “It was a really special experience for me.”
Don’t Miss This!  EVENTS, DEADLINES & FUN STUFF

2018 ELI

SCHOOL DESIGN TOOLKIT

A series of resources were released at the Educational Leadership Institute this summer to help schools unpack their work around School Design, including an introductory video, graphics, and a detailed matrix describing implementation of design components. On the Staff Intranet: bit.ly/HIDOE-SD

3RD GRADE READING >>>

ATTENDANCE = GREATER SUCCESS

We track chronic absenteeism (missing 15 or more days per year) in our schools because it has enormous impact on student learning, including another metric we track — 3rd grade reading. The chart shows percentages of kids who are reading at grade level after 3rd grade based on grades K-1 attendance. Shows the value of #SchoolEveryDay! Our statewide metrics will be released in October. Learn more: bit.ly/DOEBOEstratplan

3RD GRADE READING >>>

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?

43% of kids with good attendance in K and 1st (missed 9 or fewer days both years)

43% of kids with at-risk attendance (missed more than 9 days both years)

4% of kids chronically absent in K or 1st (missed 26 or more days one year)

17% of kids chronically absent in K and 1st (missed 26 or more days both years)

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17th ANNUAL JVEF MEETING

The Joint Venture Education Forum, a partnership between Hawaii’s military community, public schools and other organizations, will highlight success stories of Hawaii’s military students and families at its annual gathering. “Exemplifying Educational Excellence in the 21st Century” is the theme. JVEF’s mission is to facilitate the educational concerns and unique needs of military children and their families, such as transitioning to the Islands.

SEP 5

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

Supt. Christina M. Kishimoto will give an address on the Promise and Power of Public Education to discuss how the strategies of School Design, Teacher Collaboration, and Student Voice combine to unleash the potential of our schools to innovate, engage, and ensure all students have access to an equitable, excellent education aligned to college, career and citizenship pathways. Mahalo to the Hawaii Community Foundation. Video of event to be available online.

Supt’s Corner  DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO

Letter to Parents and Guardians at the beginning of the new school year:

I hope your ‘ohana enjoyed the summer break and that your child is eager and ready for the 2018-19 school year.

The Hawai‘i State Department of Education remains fully committed to ensuring access across our public school system to a quality education that prepares all students for college, careers and community life.

One of our strategies to ensure this equity and access is School Design — the purposeful design of schools to ensure that every student is highly engaged in a rigorous, creative and innovative academic curriculum; their learning environment; and in powerful applied learning practices aligned to college and careers.

Our schools are creating, implementing or improving their student-centered designs in collaboration with their school communities, and are engaging student voice.

With this work underway, we want to be sure our students take advantage of every learning opportunity and enjoy their educational experience. This requires that students be in school — on time, every day.

Attendance has a huge impact on a student’s academic success. Students can fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.

Students who are chronically absent, those missing 15 or more days in a school year, miss out on meaningful academic growth.

I need you to be a partner with me in making education your child’s No. 1 priority.

We encourage families to build a habit and culture of attendance and engagement in learning, recognizing the importance of students being designers of their own future.

Have a great school year!

ONLINE

A copy of this letter can be found on the Hawaii DOE website: bit.ly/18BTSletter

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.