



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in the MidWeek **CENTRAL VOICE** section on Wednesday, August 9, 2017.

New school year underway

It's back to school this week for virtually all of Hawaii's public school students, heading for their campuses where dedicated teachers have already been preparing their classrooms and lesson plans for a week. A new school year is always a time of anticipation and excitement – at least it is in our family households where grandchildren look forward to new teachers, new schoolmates and new learning experiences.

This school year marks new beginnings in other ways. The Department of Education welcomes a new Superintendent of Education – **Dr. Christina Kishimoto** – who officially started her tenure on August 1st.

I welcome opportunities to meet the new Superintendent to share my enthusiasm for the ways Hawaii, our schools and our students are unique in many respects.

Dr. Kishimoto and DOE administrators will be making the transition to new guidelines developed by the Board of Education's Strategic Plan, along with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that seeks to give states more autonomy in meeting educational goals.



Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent Hawaii Department of Education

Another National Hispanic Caucus scholar!

I was so pleased to hear that **Noah Rodrigues**, top graduate in the **Mililani High School Class of 2017**, has been selected as one of only eleven students of Hispanic ethnicity from the entire U.S. to receive a John S. Martinez scholarship to help with his first two years of study at UH Manoa. Noah distinguished himself in science studies and plans to major in engineering at UH. He's also been recognized in History Day competitions at MHS, serves as a volunteer mentor to the robotics team at Mililani Middle School, sings in the MHS Select Choir, and is member of the worship team for Sunday morning services at Mililani Missionary Church.

I'm especially honored to note that this highly competitive national scholarship, that selects awardees only from districts whose elected official is of Hispanic descent, has been presented to students in my Senate District 18 in three of the last four years. What a wonderful reaffirmation this is for dedicated students, their committed teachers and supportive families.

Mahalo and congratulations, everyone!

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Be prepared!

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HEMA, formerly State Civil Defense) has revised its recommended guidelines for island residents to make sure we're prepared for disasters. With the season's first few tropical storms developing in the Central Pacific and the National Weather Service predicting an active storm season through the end of November, HEMA now says it's a good idea to have a two-week supply of food, water and other necessities on hand.

Along with my Mililani colleague, **Senator Donovan Dela Cruz,** I sponsored a disaster preparedness town hall meeting last month at Mililani High School to share important tips with the audience. Mahalo to Dennis Hwang, hazard mitigation specialist from the UH Sea Grant program, Toby Clairmont of HEMA, and Susan Ihle of State Farm for being our presenters. You can update your emergency plan and check out the list of suggested supplies at the HEMA website: <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/> .

This is a great resource for information about how you can keep you and your ohana safe during a natural disaster.

