

COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | MARCH 2026

Serving Mililani Town, Waipī'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Michelle
KIDANI

**Senate Vice
President**

Vice Chair
Committee on
Education

Member
Committee on
Ways and Means

**Join our monthly
digital mailing list!**

To subscribe to our monthly digital newsletters, email senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov with your name, email, and mailing address.

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

As the legislative session continues, I would like to share highlights from the many meaningful events and engagements over the past month. It has been a productive and fast-moving session, and I am pleased to report that a number of my measures are advancing through the process. These bills reflect ongoing efforts to improve our public education system, honor members of our community, and ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. I remain committed to advocating for policies that serve our students, families, and broader community.

- **SB2613** - RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL LAND TRANSFER: Revises tax map key numbers and the conveyance process by which identified properties are conveyed to the Department of Education and clarifies that land dispositions of school buildings, facilities, and grounds made by the DOE shall not require approval from the Board of Land and Natural Resources when these dispositions are for periods exceeding one year.
- **SB2614** - RELATING TO EDUCATION: Authorizes the Department of Education to award a high school diploma to qualified persons who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the Armed Services of the United States or whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.
- **SB2615** - RELATING TO SCHOOL CAFETERIA MEAL COSTS: Requires the Department of Education to charge not less than one-quarter of the cost of preparing a school meal for each school meal.

I am pleased to share that all three of these bills have successfully passed through the Senate and are now in the House, where they will be heard in committee and considered for a full vote. As they continue to move through the legislative process, I remain committed to advocating for their success and ensuring they reflect the needs of our community. If you would like to stay up to date on hearings and learn more about these bills, please visit: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>.

Last month, the Hawai'i State Board of Education adopted a new statewide student cell phone policy to create clear and consistent expectations across public schools, with the Hawai'i Department of Education set to develop detailed implementation guidelines with the policy set to take effect in the 2026-2027 school year. Under the policy:

- Elementary schools: Cell phone use is not allowed during school hours.
- Middle and intermediate schools: Cell phone use is not allowed during school hours.
- High schools: Cell phone use is not allowed during instructional time. Schools may decide how phones can be used outside of class time, such as before and after school, during lunch, recess, and other breaks.

Mahalo,

Michelle



Address

Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 214



Phone

(808) 586-7100



Email

senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov



Website

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

SENATE Education Week



Senate President Kouichi and I with a student from Waimea High School, author of the book titled "Stories of Kupuna".



The 2026 Senate Education Week celebrates the students, educators, and school communities across Hawai'i who exemplify excellence and inspire achievement. I am honored to have co-chaired this year's Senate Education Week alongside Education Chair Senator Kim. This Week celebrates the students, educators, and school communities across Hawai'i who exemplify excellence and inspire achievement. This annual event honors outstanding students and dedicated education professionals whose leadership, creativity, and commitment are transforming our schools. Their collective efforts, supported by teachers, administrators, staff, families, and community partners, reflect the strength of Hawai'i's statewide public education system. Senate Education Week reminds us that supporting our keiki is a shared responsibility. Congratulations to this year's honorees, and mahalo to all who help ensure Hawai'i's students are prepared for college, career, and meaningful contributions to our islands!



Senators Ihara, Kim, Lamosao, and myself with the 2026 LifeSmarts Competition winners: Iolani School and Waipahu HS.



With DOE staff and students at this year's Student Showcase.



Students smile and shaka at our Student Showcase!



Members of the Senate with the winners of the 1st, 3rd and 4th place LifeSmarts Competition.



Members of the Senate with Lotus Yasuda, United States Senate Youth Program delegate.



Members of the Senate with Sgt. Becky Ackers, Lorelei Aiwohi, Jacquelyn McCandless, Dr. Julia Cramer, and Babā Yim.



With Marisa Toyooka, the 2026 Hawai'i School Counselor Association Counselor of the Year.



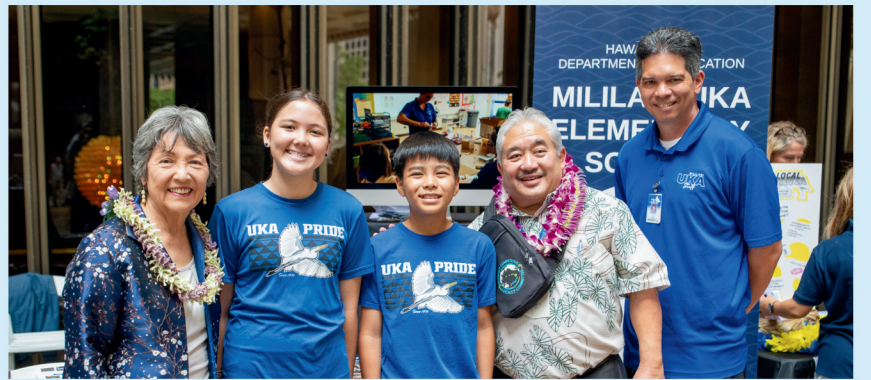
[L-R] Honorees: Hidi Boteilho, Marlyn Hutton, Taylee Miyamura, and Gavin Tsue



With students at the Student Showcase during Senate Education Week.



With Waipahu High School's LifeSmarts Competition winners, Principal Zachary Sheets and Senator Kim



With students from Mililani Uka Elementary School, Superintendent Hayashi and Principal Jacob Kardash.



[L-R] Senator Kim, Honorees: Anna Nguyen, Elise Hannigan, Meera Garud, Lotus Yasuda, and Claire Ann "Kalaunuola" Domingo



With Executive Director Ed Noh of Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission.

Waipahu High School's Marauder Cafe

An evening at Waipahu High School's student-run Marauder Café was a wonderful chance to experience how the Academy of Natural Resources and the culinary pathway in the Academy of Professional and Public Services come together to create a true farm-to-table learning environment. The students took charge of every part of the café, and their talent truly stood out. From the delicious food to the polished service, they carried themselves with confidence and pride, making the entire experience inspiring to watch. I am incredibly proud of their hard work and deeply appreciative of the educators who guide and support them along the way!



Thanking the students working at the Marauder Cafe for their hardwork!



[L-R]: Superintendent Hayashi, Principal Sheets, Me, Student Server, and Complex Area Superintendent Fajardo



Me with the amazing students in the Public Services' Pathway!

Groundbreaking of the DOE's High Core/Storefront program in Wahiawā

As someone who has long supported this program, I was grateful to join Senate President, Senator Dela Cruz, fellow State Legislators, and community supporters to break ground on the new permanent facility for the Hawai'i DOE High Core/Storefront program in Wahiawā. This long-awaited site will provide dedicated classrooms and vital support services for at-risk students in the Leilehua–Mililani–Waialua complex, strengthening a program that has offered alternative learning opportunities for nearly 60 years. A special mahalo to Colette Miyamoto-Kajiwara, whose nearly five decades of service have shaped High Core's mission and impact. Her compassion, leadership, and unwavering belief in young people have guided countless students toward stability and success. Colette truly embodies the spirit of High Core, and are deeply grateful for her dedication!



[L-R]: Me, Senator Dela Cruz, Storefront Director Colette Miyamoto-Kajiwara, and Senate President Kouchi



With fellow State Legislators, Community members, and DOE at the groundbreaking



Me with Storefront Director Colette Miyamoto-Kajiwara

In Memoriam: Former US House Rep. Colleen Hanabusa

It was an honor to offer remarks in remembrance of my colleague and friend, former U.S. Representative Colleen Hanabusa. Colleen was a proud daughter of Wai'anae and a defining force in Hawai'i public service, from becoming the first woman to lead the Hawai'i State Senate in 2007 to her years representing our state in Congress. Yet what many of us will remember most is the colleague and mentor she was: honest, steady, and unafraid to speak her truth. My deepest aloha goes to her husband, John Souza, her family, and all who loved her. Colleen's leadership, friendship, and lifelong dedication to Hawai'i will continue to resonate. A hui hou, my friend.



[L-R] Me, Chief Justice Ronald T.Y. Moon, Former U.S. Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, and Danny Kaleikini in 2016.



[L-R] Me, Former U.S. Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, and former U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka in 2017.