
HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING THE 2024 HAWAII STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND THE
2024 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR FOR SCHOOL COMPLEX AREAS IN THE
HONOLULU DISTRICT, LEEWARD DISTRICT, AND WINDWARD DISTRICT.

1 WHEREAS, JACKIE FREITAS was recently named the 2024 Hawai'i
2 State Teacher of the Year; and

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4 WHEREAS, the Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year Award is
5 presented annually to a classroom teacher selected from more
6 than 13,000 Hawai'i State Department of Education educators; and

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8 WHEREAS, JACKIE FREITAS earned her bachelor's degree in
9 elementary education from the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu
10 and acquired an alternative certification for career and
11 technical education from Leeward Community College; and

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13 WHEREAS, JACKIE FREITAS has been a natural resources
14 teacher at her alma mater, Leilehua High School, for her entire
15 13-year career; she is also enrolled as a candidate for National
16 Board Certification in natural resources; and

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18 WHEREAS, Leilehua High School's Natural Resources Program
19 runs one of the State's largest high school agricultural farms,
20 and under JACKIE FREITAS' leadership, the school developed an
21 animal husbandry program, which offers students hands-on
22 learning experiences in large and small animal systems; she has
23 also integrated a variety of agricultural technology equipment,
24 such as smart farms, farm bots, and vertical towers, into the
25 curriculum; and

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27 WHEREAS, JACKIE FREITAS enjoys engaging students in outdoor
28 activities and providing project-based experiences that
29 contribute to the well-being and enhancement of the Hawaiian
30 community through environmental activism; and



1 WHEREAS, JACKIE FREITAS is a passionate educator committed
2 to leading by example, who understands the importance of
3 preparing students with real-world skills that extend beyond the
4 classroom; and

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6 WHEREAS, LAURIE CHANG was recently named the Honolulu
7 District Kaimukī-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area 2024 Teacher of
8 the Year; and

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10 WHEREAS, LAURIE CHANG has demonstrated a deep passion for
11 teaching and learning while inspiring the students of Ali‘iolani
12 Elementary School to strive for excellence; and

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14 WHEREAS, LAURIE CHANG received a Bachelor of Science in
15 fashion design, Professional Diploma in elementary education,
16 and certification in special education from the University of
17 Hawai‘i at Mānoa; and

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19 WHEREAS, an educator since 1994, LAURIE CHANG started her
20 educational career in general education and was a resource
21 teacher for the gifted; she later found a passion for students
22 with disabilities and providing support to their families and
23 caregivers; and

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25 WHEREAS, LAURIE CHANG has developed tact and earned respect
26 through her leadership and involvement in the school's
27 improvement process by serving as the curriculum coordinator and
28 pursuing additional professional and personal growth
29 opportunities within her community; she coordinates the school's
30 technology program, accreditation process, library collection,
31 and Title 1 program and is a mentor to beginning teachers; and

32
33 WHEREAS, LAURIE CHANG is committed to the success and
34 personal growth of her students, with a focus on supporting
35 students beyond the COVID-19 pandemic; she is determined to
36 prioritize initiatives that allow for student success,
37 contributing to academic and social development; and

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39 WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES was recently named the Honolulu
40 District Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani Complex Area 2024 Teacher of
41 the Year; and



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WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES brings a wealth of knowledge and range of experiences to the field of education as he was an English Department teacher and chair, a secondary math teacher, and a strategic planner; and

WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES taught at Farrington High School for nearly eight years before becoming an Educational Specialist for the Hawai'i State Department of Education Na Kumu Alaka'i Teacher Leader Academy; in this role, he is committed to uplifting fellow teachers and supports them in becoming leaders and agents of change by strengthening and refining their disposition, knowledge, and skills; and

WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES has been recognized for his involvement with the State's Seal of Biliteracy designation, which celebrates the multilingualism of students; his work also led to an award-winning publication featuring students' multilingual poetry which was entitled, *VOICE: Poetry by the Youth of Kalihi*; and

WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES displays a consistent commitment to the personal and professional development of Filipino students through his work with the Filipino Curriculum Project, which honors and encourages the incorporation of Filipino American history, culture, and identity into school studies; and

WHEREAS, NORMAN RAY SALES is held in high regard by his school community as the epitome of a selfless servant leader due to his extraordinary teaching career and well-deserved merits; and

WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA has recently been named the Leeward District Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area 2024 Teacher of the Year; and

WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA has dedicated over 25 years of his career to teaching across the State of Hawai'i at schools such as Roosevelt High School, Niu Valley Middle School, and Kapolei Middle School; and



1 WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA teaches industrial engineering
2 and technology at 'Ewa Makai Middle School and encourages his
3 students to strive for excellence in creativity and innovation,
4 especially within his engineering design and modeling wood lab;
5 and

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7 WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA has spent his career mastering
8 his specialization in industrial engineering and technology and
9 thus demonstrates a consistent passion for teaching and learning
10 within these fields; and

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12 WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA utilizes hands-on approaches to
13 inspire his students to involve creativity in their problem
14 solving endeavors related to industrial engineering and
15 technology; and

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17 WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA shares this recognition with his
18 mentors and colleagues who have supported his professional
19 development that has led to student success inside and outside
20 the classroom; and

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22 WHEREAS, ARIEL VILLANUEVA's work is a testament to the care
23 and aloha he feels for the students at 'Ewa Makai Middle School;
24 and

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26 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO was recently named the Leeward
27 District Nānākuli-Wai'anae Complex Area 2024 Teacher of the Year;
28 and

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30 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO, an educator for nearly ten years,
31 has demonstrated a deep passion for teaching and learning
32 specifically in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering,
33 and Mathematics (STEM); and

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35 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO supports student led STEM
36 initiatives by seeking additional funding sources, including the
37 Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association STEM
38 Grants, Ed Ryglewics Innovation Grant Award, Cynthia Pacheco
39 Coding Grant, Hawai'i Bowl Foundation Grant, and Teach for
40 America's Extra Yard for Teachers Innovation Grant; and
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1 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO's passion for STEM education extends
2 beyond the classroom to involve enrichment programs, such as the
3 Hui 'Enehana program (Seahorse Tech Club), which was recognized
4 as the 2024 State Winner in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow
5 competition; and

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7 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO has additionally been awarded
8 numerous professional accolades, including the Hawai'i Education
9 Association Ronald K. Toma Scholarship for Professional
10 Development and the National Board for Professional Teaching
11 Standards Middle Childhood Generalist Teaching Certificate; and

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13 WHEREAS, DONNA SORIANO has served as a source of
14 inspiration for her students of Wai'anae Elementary School to
15 strive for excellence; her commitment to providing students with
16 a wealth of opportunities is a testament to the impact teachers
17 can make inside and outside the classroom in their efforts to
18 nurture young minds and foster a love for STEM; and

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20 WHEREAS, GREGORY KENT was recently named the Windward
21 District Kailua-Kalāheo Complex Area 2024 Teacher of the Year;
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24 WHEREAS, GREGORY KENT obtained a bachelor's degree in
25 education with a specialization in elementary education and a
26 master's degree in educational technology from the University of
27 Hawai'i at Mānoa; and

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29 WHEREAS, for over 21 years, GREGORY KENT has displayed an
30 unwavering passion for and devotion to teaching and learning and
31 has been known to consistently inspire his students to strive
32 for excellence; and

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34 WHEREAS, GREGORY KENT is passionate about innovation, which
35 is reflected in his role as the Technology Coordinator at Kailua
36 Elementary School and manager of "Kailua EleMakery", a
37 makerspace that houses tools, electronics, 3D printers, lasers,
38 and other building materials; and

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1 WHEREAS, GREGORY KENT also coached the FIRST LEGO League
 2 Robotics Team for 15 years and mentored the Ko'olaupoko FIRST
 3 Robotics Competition community team for two years as a LEGO
 4 Education Ambassador; and

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 6 WHEREAS, GREGORY KENT is inspired by his colleagues to take
 7 risks in order to encourage and foster the personal and academic
 8 growth of his students; he dedicates his success to the
 9 unwavering support and inspiration he has received from the
 10 Kailua Elementary School staff and students; now, therefore,

11
 12 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 13 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular
 14 Session of 2024, that this body hereby congratulates JACKIE
 15 FREITAS, LAURIE CHANG, NORMAN RAY SALES, ARIEL VILLANUEVA, DONNA
 16 SORIANO, and GREGORY KENT for their outstanding accomplishments
 17 and much-deserved recognition as 2024 Teachers of the Year and
 18 extends to them its warmest aloha and best wishes for continued
 19 success in all future endeavors.

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OFFERED BY: _____



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