
HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING THE 2024 HAWAI'I PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR, 2024 NATIONAL OUTSTANDING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, 2024 HAWAI'I ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR, 2024 MASAYUKI TOKIOKA EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AWARDEE, AND 2025 HAWAI'I SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR.

1 WHEREAS, JOSEPH PASSANTINO was recently named the 2024
2 Hawai'i Principal of the Year by the Hawai'i Association of
3 Secondary School Administrators and a finalist for the 2024
4 National Principal of the Year by the National Association of
5 Secondary School Principals; and

6
7 WHEREAS, a dedicated educator for 20 years, JOSEPH
8 PASSANTINO has served as the Principal of Ke'elikōlani Middle
9 School in Honolulu since 2020, contributing to significant
10 improvements in staff morale and student engagement,
11 particularly within the predominantly immigrant and low-income
12 student population; and

13
14 WHEREAS, under JOSEPH PASSANTINO's leadership, Ke'elikōlani
15 Middle School has seen dramatic academic improvement, including
16 a more than threefold increase in students' math scores over the
17 last two years and a 50 percent increase in English language
18 arts scores; and

19
20 WHEREAS, JOSEPH PASSANTINO's leadership has fostered a
21 positive and inclusive school culture where students feel a
22 sense of belonging and pride, and his efforts have also resulted
23 in a dramatic 35 to 44 point increase in staff satisfaction; and

24
25 WHEREAS, JOSEPH PASSANTINO is known for his caring,
26 passionate, and humble leadership, always prioritizing students
27 and their well-being while promoting innovative and creative



1 learning opportunities, such as his recent implementation of an
2 arcade to incentivize student attendance; and

3
4 WHEREAS, JENNIFER PIMENTEL was recently named the 2024
5 National Outstanding Assistant Principal by the National
6 Association of Elementary School Principals; and

7
8 WHEREAS, a dedicated educator with 22 years of experience
9 in the Hawai'i Department of Education, JENNIFER PIMENTEL has
10 served as an aide, a teacher for grades one through eight, and
11 currently as an Assistant Principal at Lāna'i High & Elementary
12 School; an alumna of Lāna'i High & Elementary School, she holds a
13 bachelor's degree in public relations and two master's degrees
14 in education from Hawai'i Pacific University and Chaminade
15 University; and

16
17 WHEREAS, deeply committed to building strong community
18 relationships, JENNIFER PIMENTEL has successfully strengthened
19 parent and community involvement at Lāna'i High & Elementary
20 School, leading to increased community input, volunteerism, and
21 a significant decrease in chronic student absenteeism; her
22 efforts to engage families in school planning and decision-
23 making have fostered a sense of belonging among students and
24 built stronger partnerships within the community, including in
25 areas such as school beautification, wellness programs, and
26 communication systems; and

27
28 WHEREAS, JENNIFER PIMENTEL was recently featured in an Ed
29 Talks Hawaii episode for Leadership Institute HI where she
30 shared details about her innovative teacher mentorship program;
31 and

32
33 WHEREAS, JENNIFER PIMENTEL has placed a strong focus on
34 teacher and staff development at Lāna'i High & Elementary School,
35 leading efforts to fully staff the campus for the first time in
36 20 years and implementing mentorship programs and ongoing
37 support for new and veteran teachers, all of which have resulted
38 in improvements in student achievement and better leadership
39 within the staff; these initiatives have included cultural and
40 curriculum-based mentorship for new teachers, as well as ongoing



1 professional development through collaborative learning
2 opportunities and data-driven support; and

3
4 WHEREAS, JEFFREY HORSTMAN was recently named the 2024
5 Hawai'i Assistant Principal of the Year by the Hawai'i
6 Association of Secondary School Administrators and a finalist
7 for the 2024 National Assistant Principal of the Year by the
8 National Association of Secondary School Principals; and

9
10 WHEREAS, JEFFREY HORSTMAN has worked with middle school
11 students for more than 15 years, serving as a school counselor
12 at Mililani Middle School where he supported student growth and
13 achievement for nine years; he also coached track and cross-
14 country and taught adult education classes at McKinley, Waipahu,
15 and Leilehua Community Schools for Adults; and

16
17 WHEREAS, JEFFREY HORSTMAN transitioned into the role of
18 Vice Principal at Mililani Middle School in 2019, where he has
19 continued to serve the Mililani community by uplifting students'
20 voices, recognizing outstanding students and faculty members,
21 creating complex-wide events, and supporting culturally
22 responsive opportunities for his students, including in Japan;
23 and

24
25 WHEREAS, JEFFREY HORSTMAN has been instrumental in leading
26 initiatives to support early transition for elementary school
27 students and securing funding for high-interest after-school
28 programs, while also empowering students to share their voices
29 through projects such as the school's quarterly newsletter,
30 "Blazer Bugle," and videos that highlight student perspectives;
31 and

32
33 WHEREAS, JEFFREY HORSTMAN's leadership has positively
34 impacted the Mililani Middle School community and he continues
35 to exemplify the values of collaboration, teamwork, and
36 dedication to student success, earning the recognition and
37 respect of his colleagues, students, and community members
38 alike; and

39
40 WHEREAS, TOMMY COX was recently named the 2024 Masayuki
41 Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Awardee; and



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

WHEREAS, a dedicated leader who has helped shape an environment where students, faculty, and staff flourish, TOMMY COX has been a pivotal force in education for 21 years, serving as a teacher, Vice Principal, and Principal for various schools in the Kapa'a community; and

WHEREAS, TOMMY COX began his career in education teaching elementary and middle school math for 11 years before transitioning into school administration, serving as Vice Principal at Kapa'a High School for over three years before becoming its Principal in 2019; after more than two decades of service on behalf of the Kapa'a community, he has contributed to and benefited from the tight-knit, supportive environment that has been created, giving students in the Kapa'a region the best tools and opportunities to succeed; and

WHEREAS, as President of both the Kaua'i Interscholastic Federation and the Hawai'i High School Athletic Association, and serving on the National Federation of State High School Associations Board of Directors, TOMMY COX has shown unwavering leadership in advancing extracurricular opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, TOMMY COX has devoted his entire career to supporting the students, parents, faculty, and staff throughout Kapa'a's educational system, demonstrating leadership not just in guiding others, but also in lifting them up during times of need; being recognized with the Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award serves as a testament to the collective efforts of the entire Kapa'a school community, underscoring the power of collaboration and the profound impact of shared dedication to educational excellence; and

WHEREAS, established in 1962, the Hawai'i School Counselor Association, a chapter of the American School Counselor Association, is dedicated to serving Hawai'i school counselors through support, networking, and professional development opportunities and provides resources to help counselors assist



1 their students through academic, social, and career challenges;
2 and

3
4 WHEREAS, a dedicated School Counselor at Chiefess
5 Kamakahahei Middle School in Līhu‘e, NOELANI BUTCHER has been
6 named the 2025 Hawai‘i School Counselor of the Year by the
7 American School Counselor Association, recognizing her
8 outstanding advocacy for students' academic, social-emotional,
9 and college and career development; and

10
11 WHEREAS, NOELANI BUTCHER holds a bachelor's degree in
12 general education and a master's degree in special education
13 from the University of North Texas, as well as a master's degree
14 in psychology-school counseling from Texas A&M University; she
15 also earned her national board certification from the American
16 School Counselor Association in 2014; and

17
18 WHEREAS, NOELANI BUTCHER's passion for helping students
19 reach their full potential and successfully navigate the
20 personal growth and relationship-building challenges that they
21 face during middle school has led her to create impactful
22 programs such as the Needs Closet, which provides food, hygiene
23 items, and school supplies to meet students' needs, and "Da
24 Gameroom," a safe and inclusive space where students can
25 socialize during recess, fostering a sense of belonging and
26 community on campus; and

27
28 WHEREAS, renowned for her significant contributions to the
29 well-being and success of her school community, NOELANI BUTCHER
30 remains committed to supporting her students holistically,
31 helping to ensure that each student is prepared to learn and
32 thrive academically and socially; now, therefore,

33
34 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
35 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i, Regular Session
36 of 2025, that this body hereby congratulates JOSEPH PASSANTINO
37 for being named the 2024 Hawai‘i Principal of the Year, JENNIFER
38 PIMENTEL for being named the 2024 National Outstanding Assistant
39 Principal, JEFFREY HORSTMAN for being named the 2024 Hawai‘i
40 Assistant Principal of the Year, TOMMY COX for receiving the



1 2024 Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award, and
2 NOELANI BUTCHER for being named the 2025 Hawai'i School Counselor
3 of the Year and extends to them its warmest aloha and best
4 wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.
5
6
7

OFFERED BY:



MAR 19 2025

