

Advocacy Working Group

The purpose of the Nā Lau Lama Advocacy Working Group is to improve the educational outcomes for “Keola”—every Hawaiian student in the State of Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE)—for now and in the future, through advocacy for culture-based education at all levels of policymaking throughout our state. We desire to increase access, equity, and quality of education for all Hawaiian youth by developing the capacity of communities to improve their advocacy efforts in four specific honua, or basic strategies:

1. Building relationships with key advocacy and policymaking partners.
2. Informing community stakeholders by gathering, managing, and disseminating data about advocacy processes, current issues, and critical needs.
3. Supporting and enabling advocacy for Hawaiian culture-based education in all policymaking venues.
4. Continuously building advocacy capacity among key stakeholders and community advocates.

Metaphorically, these honua can be viewed as the land, the earth that will bear the fruits of success if enough people take part in the labor and if they are given the right tools for the task. The tools of advocacy are the ihe (spear) and the ‘ō‘ō (digging stick); users of these tools are those who self-select for each advocacy task. Among these advocates are the current members of Nā Lau Lama working groups and all stakeholders, both in and beyond the Hawaiian education community, who wish to join in our efforts. In the hands of these individuals and groups, the ihe can be understood as the tool used to spear deeply into the land, to determine what lies hidden and to discover each community’s resources. The ‘ō‘ō can then be used to soften the land for planting, to ready each educational locale or venue for change through positive collaboration with all the stakeholders in that community or venue. Advocacy itself, then, must include all the methods and support we can devise and is among the most essential seeds we can plant to achieve overall educational system development and growth.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

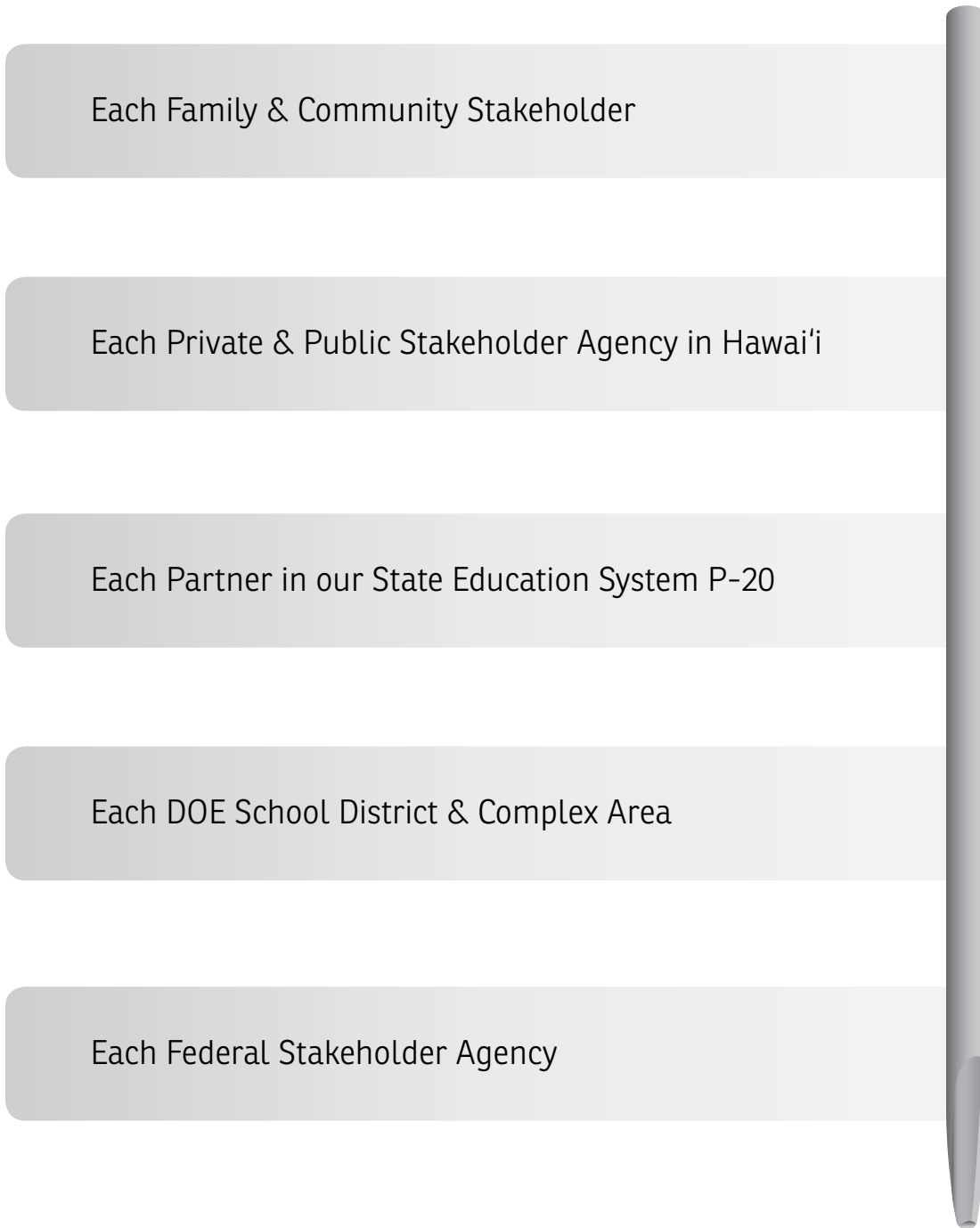
Our working group is composed of individuals who shared their time and their talents to inform our discussions and develop the recommendations contained in this report. The members of the group include volunteers from the Harry K. L. Castle Foundation, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, Ka Lei Papahi O Kakuhihewa, the Kamehameha Schools, Mālama ‘Āina, the Native Hawaiian Education Council, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Pacific America Foundation, and the University of Hawai‘i. All of our group’s volunteer members are united in their commitment to help all stakeholders who, like themselves, have a strong desire to work toward improving educational outcomes for Hawaiian students, and all students, in our public education system.

From the outset, our working group members recognized that our purpose was not to determine which specific issues should be the focus of Nā Lau Lama advocacy, nor to stand as the group solely responsible for advocating for the rights of “Keola,” that is, for Hawaiian students in general, so that they might have an education that embraces Hawaiian values and culture. Instead, we recognize that there are many different places throughout our state’s educational policymaking process where decisions are made that ultimately affect issues of access, quality, and equitable funding, and that different kinds of advocacy are needed from time to time in each of these sites. Moreover, differing opinions among advocates as to the priorities and strategies best suited to achieve those ends must be heard, so that a unification of voices can be achieved as appropriate, without stifling differing opinions as to means or ends.

Therefore, Nā Lau Lama and the Hawaiian educational community’s messages and actions toward systemic improvements in our state’s education system, and the manner in which these improvements should be planned and for which they can be advocated, must reflect the recommendations of all Nā Lau Lama working groups and their supporters. Given these precautionary considerations, the following is the Advocacy Working Group’s purpose statement:

To advocate for policies and necessary funding to accomplish systemic change within the Hawai‘i State Government and Department of Education for Native Hawaiian children, and to assure the accurate collection, dissemination, and use of data to further this purpose.

FIGURE 1 Creating Meaningful Support Advocacy as an 'Ō'ō (Digging Tool)



Build relationships with key partners

Share all data with all stakeholders

Support advocacy in all venues

Continuously build capacity among all stakeholders

FIGURE 2 Matrix for Advocacy

Stakeholders	Primary Support Needs	Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Goals
Each public school (regular and charter)	Educators, families, and other key stakeholders need access to vital advocacy information and support to enable positive changes.	Make optional AI training available to all.	Create a positive climate of collaboration with DOE.
Each school district		Place a Hawaiian representative on all SCCs.	
Each DOE complex area		Hold regular meetings to further advocacy efforts for all stakeholders.	Create a user-friendly system of advocacy for all stakeholders.
State education partners P-20	Key stakeholders in education system P-20 need assistance to improve collaboration and outcomes.	Invite stakeholders from all levels of the system to attend cross-collaborative meetings and/or to provide input.	Elect BOE and BOR members to represent Hawaiian issues.
State DOE system			Create data collection system and analyze data related to Hawaiian education and achievements.
UH education system			Provide tuition waivers for Hawaiian students in state public higher education.
Board of Education			Create transparency in personnel and fiscal resource allocations.
Legislators	Key stakeholder agencies need assistance to improve collaboration and outcomes.	Create a list of stakeholders who are interested in collaborating and supporting each other and Hawaiian culture-based education.	Create an informed, collaborative network of education advocates committed to Hawaiian culture-based education.
Hawai'i agencies			
Public Private			
Federal agencies	Valid, reliable data and clear messages of Hawaiian educational successes and needs must reach federal level.	Listen to all points of view on crucial issues and unite Hawaiian voices when asking for federal funds.	Ensure stability in federal funds for Native Hawaiian education.
Congress			
U.S. DOE			
Local stakeholders	Individuals (from students to kūpuna), families, community groups, and businesses need information and support to self-advocate.	Invite local stakeholders to events that foster awareness and empower grassroots involvement in advocacy.	Support healthy families who contribute positively to community and each other.
Individuals			
Families			Support healthy contributing citizens who achieve educational success.
Communities			

Notes: AI=Appreciative Inquiry; BOE=State Board of Education; BOR=University of Hawai'i (UH) Board of Regents; DOE=State Department of Education; SCC=School Community Council.

ADVOCACY NEEDS AND PROMISING PRACTICES FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The four honua presented above, which we believe can be implemented to increase access, equity, and the quality of education for Hawaiian youth, are explored in detail here and presented below in a visual graphic (Figure 1) as well as via a matrix (Figure 2).

Building Relationships With Key Partners

The first honua of relationship building requires the identification of key stakeholders who are able to understand and advocate for the Hawaiian perspective, as well as those who have decision-making power in the most important areas of education. Relationship building with key individuals and institutions is always a necessary first step before any advocacy can occur, because each system is unique and requires an understanding of its people, its internal processes, and its essential moving parts. This may require that advocates engage in research to understand where current or future pressure points may exist and how a given system formulates, implements, funds, evaluates, and reports its policy decisions. Relationship building is not adversarial in nature and is intended to build a bridge with others for increased mutual gain for all. It is a Hawaiian process and, at its core, embedded with aloha.

An example of relationship building that can occur, in the short term, could begin with the Board of Education (BOE) through immediate regular monitoring of public meetings, and through advocates directly contacting BOE members to request that items be placed on the agenda that address specific Hawaiian education challenges and solutions. In the long term, we recommend that the Hawaiian education community advocate for a new position on the BOE to specifically represent Hawaiians' educational issues and concerns. Similarly, we recommend that a seat on the University of Hawai'i's Board of Regents be dedicated to representing Hawaiian interests. Further, advocates and collaborating partners may want to consider a mechanism for collecting and disseminating accurate information about these institutions, and to formulate a strategy to establish and move a Native Hawaiian agenda within each of these institutions.

Informing Community Stakeholders

The second honua is gathering, managing, and disseminating information so the community has access to the data they need to understand where and how to target their advocacy efforts and financial resources. In navigating toward any destination, data and reference points are critical to understanding the starting

point, the desired destination, and progress to be made along the journey. The proven technologies of Hawaiian wayfinding in ocean navigation teach us that, without reference points and sensitive ways of tracking our position, we are consigned to drift far off course. Similarly, the Hawaiian community needs its directional compass to be constructed from existing data to lead our journey toward the collection of missing data and research and, ultimately, to better decision making in support of Hawaiian culture-based education.

Many throughout the Hawaiian community have repeatedly emphasized to Advocacy Working Group members the need for an organized, accurate, timely, inexpensive, and easily accessible information system to disseminate Hawaiian education data and information to advocates. In the short term, existing data must be shared to effectively help us “way-find” the best questions to ask to guide our journey:

- Which communities have the highest preschool enrollment rates, and which need more advocacy and resources to increase enrollment? Research has proved that participation in preschool improves children’s academic outcomes throughout their lives.
- What percentage of children are not currently reading at grade level? How many of them are Hawaiian? In which schools, complexes, and communities are they located? How can we ensure that financial resources are targeted there and how can we monitor the progress of these students? The statewide P–20 Initiative has recently acquired a \$10 million grant to help all public school students read at grade level by Grade 3.

Similarly, missing data must be sought to answer additional important questions:

- Which public schools have the most Hawaiian students going on to complete college or graduate school? Which courses did they take in middle school and high school, and how did that impact their success in higher education?
- What best practices exist in teaching Native Hawaiian learners? Where are those practices currently being used and what impact do they have in improving achievement?

These sample questions highlight the range of data needed to effectively distribute resources, identify and disseminate best practices, and advocate for the best solutions to address problems. Data collection and research efforts currently underway that can form a solid foundation for a centralized “data and information warehouse” include the following:

- The Kamehameha Schools 2006 Charter School Study: This study shows progress in reading and math achievement of Hawaiian students in Hawaiian culture-focused public charter schools as compared with Hawaiian students in regular DOE public schools.
- The Kamehameha Schools Successful Schools for Hawaiians Study: This study, a partnership between the DOE, Kamehameha Schools, and researchers from Western Michigan University, identifies DOE schools with the greatest track record of helping Hawaiian students to succeed and documents the “best practices” at these schools.
- HI-PASS and the American Diploma Project: This data project, in which the Harold K. L. Castle Foundation funded the Hawaii P–20 Council and GEAR UP to complete HI-PASS, is modeled after a successful California system that creates individual student identifiers for every public school student and tracks the students’ progress through the community college and public state university system. Entrance rates and completion rates will be correlated with student course-taking records in middle school and high school.
- Just for the Kids: This project uses private funding to help the DOE provide information to a national public accountability nonprofit organization that organizes student achievement data by school and district. This system allows users to see trends at each DOE K–12 school, including progress over time in math and reading achievement, and results can be disaggregated for Hawaiian students.
- *Ka Huaka’i*: This Kamehameha Schools’ Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment provides data on Hawaiian history, population, education, educational well-being, academic trends, and well-being of Hawaiian school age children, as well as data about reading and math achievement gaps and distribution of Hawaiian students.

The Advocacy Working Group suggests both short- and long-term strategies to address our needs for collecting and disseminating these and other types of information. In the short term, data collection and sharing can begin with modifications and community education about how to use the data from the completed and ongoing projects mentioned above. In addition, longstanding efforts from organizations such as INPEACE, Good Beginnings Alliance, and ALU LIKE, Inc., as well as newer initiatives such as those by the Hawai'i P-20 Council, have created significant partnerships and networks to share information. We recommend that these existing pathways be leveraged to disseminate new information in addition to currently existing data.

In the long term, we recommend the creation of a single, easily accessible Web site to allow advocates to receive a summarized form of the most pertinent data and information about Hawaiian DOE students, best practices and model programs for Hawaiian students, and up-to-date information about legislative, administrative, and other policy issues.

Supporting and Enabling Advocacy in All Venues

The third honua is supporting and enabling advocacy for Hawaiian culture-based education in all policymaking venues. It is our working group's understanding that improving educational outcomes of Hawaiian DOE students will require advocacy at all levels of the existing system. The primary contact with the DOE by Hawaiian students, families, and communities is generally through their connections to teachers, staff, and administration. However, the manner in which classes, schools, programs, and institutions operate is determined as much by federal and state mandates, which are implemented by individuals and organizations both inside and outside the system.

On the legislative front, we know there is currently no effective means to track legislative proposals and to share information among advocates and decision makers in a timely fashion. To begin to create change and provide the basis for more effective information sharing, the Nā Lau Lama Advocacy Working Group held its first "sharing session" at the legislature on January 10, 2007. In the short term, this first meeting allowed Hawaiian advocates to meet one another, share contact information, and identify shared concerns that could be addressed during the 2007 legislative session. The purpose of this initial session was to begin to build a network of advocates, united by a common sense of vision and the commitment to improve the educational outcomes of Hawaiian students in public education.

In the long term, we recommend that the community develop a Web site and staff to track bills and testimony and to maintain other key information. This would enable a stronger, more unified voice for Hawaiian concerns in legislative action. Ideally, funding for this would be shared among key stakeholders to encourage cooperation and shared responsibility and to ensure information is unbiased.

Continuously Building Capacity Among Key Stakeholders and Advocates

The fourth honua, capacity building, is necessary because advocacy cannot be effective without establishing and sustaining the information sharing and person-to-person networks through which advocacy activities are most often successfully accomplished. One method by which the Hawaiian community's capacity to effectively advocate can be strengthened is by training community members *how* to advocate at different levels and in different venues. For example, we encourage individuals to volunteer serving on a DOE School Community Council (SCC) in their neighborhood. SCC members represent parents, students, the community, and DOE teachers, support staff, and administration. Council members review and approve their school's academic and financial plan as well as evaluate their principal. Any community stakeholder, parent, or student can volunteer to serve. Under Act 51, we recommend that all SCCs have at least one member who specifically represents the Hawaiian perspective on educational issues. Imagine what a powerful message would be sent if each SCC included a representative with a Hawaiian perspective!

Another example of building capacity is found in our working group's efforts, during several 2007 conferences, to share information about the legislative actions of Ka Lei Papahi O Kakuhihewa, a kūpuna group lobbying for more accountability and equitable pay for kūpuna in DOE schools. The lessons learned by the kūpuna of Ka Lei Papahi O Kakuhihewa, for example, were featured at our first legislative training session and were very well received by session participants.

In the long term, the creation of a Web site and the hiring of staff to organize and track information about all the different advocacy and policymaking venues would also be beneficial to empowering the advocacy efforts of the Hawaiian community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

E ‘imi kākou ma ka mea e ho‘okahi ai ka mana‘o ‘ana.
Let us seek to unite our thoughts into one.

As the ‘ōlelo no‘eau above suggests, the mission of the Advocacy Working Group is to teach people to advocate for themselves (as in the earlier-mentioned metaphor, by knowing how and when to use the ihe and the ‘ō‘ō) and to advocate for others who share similar goals for Hawai‘i’s children. We believe this can best be achieved through the core Hawaiian values outlined below.

Everyone Must Work to Support One Another **(“Kākou vs. Mākou” Thinking)**

An example of “kākou versus mākou” thinking is found in Nā Lau Lama’s use of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003) to respect all stakeholders and guide efforts in a manner that avoids unnecessary criticism, wasted time, and the relationship dismantling that occur because of it. All Nā Lau Lama working groups embraced Appreciative Inquiry to focus everyone’s actions and intentions on the goal—to support one another to improve education for “Keola.”

Everyone Has Kuleana (Responsibility) to Advocate

We see advocates for Hawaiian education as including a range of stakeholders, community members, and kūpuna. Some schools and programs also are teaching advocacy to our youth. The Pacific America Foundation’s Hānai I Ka Ipu Project, for example, brings high school students to the legislature and helps them learn how and why to advocate for Hawaiian issues. In addition, some public charter schools, like Hālau Kū Māna, require all students to testify at the legislature on at least one bill related to their education and charter; other students in the state advocate for change in their communities through public service announcement (PSA) projects at their schools. Additionally, we believe that if more teachers are taught about advocacy and its importance to educational policymaking, more students would have richer opportunities to take part in reshaping education in Hawai‘i.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The specific short-term needs and recommended action steps for immediate implementation we have identified can be found in Figure 2, the advocacy matrix, and are presented here in narrative form.

Short-Term Actions for Advocacy (Goals for 2007–2008)

1. **Build relationships with key partners:** Monitor all Hawai‘i State BOE meetings and write members to request that they add Hawaiian issues to their agenda; obtain and share BOE and University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents information with stakeholders.
2. **Inform community stakeholders by gathering, managing, and disseminating data:** Share existing data at community workshops to assist interested stakeholders to base their decision making on available data; identify research needs to collect missing data.
3. **Support and enable advocacy for Hawaiian culture-based education in all policymaking venues:** Continue legislative sharing sessions each spring and fall to allow stakeholders to network, support, and inform one another.
4. **Continuously build capacity among key stakeholders and advocates:** Provide advocacy training sessions to encourage community members to take active part as School Community Council members.

Long-Term Actions for Advocacy (Goals for 2009–2014)

1. **Build relationships with key partners:** Create Hawai‘i State BOE and University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents positions for members who will specifically represent Hawaiian perspectives on education.
2. **Inform community stakeholders by gathering, managing, and disseminating data:** Share up-to-date information on Hawaiian education practices, issues, and policies with all advocates and interested community members through a Web site and staff; share funding for both Web site and staff among Nā Lau Lama partners and stakeholder organizations.

3. **Identify information gaps and conduct and disseminate further research:** Measure and track advocacy successes (i.e., via Appreciative Inquiry training, etc.); evaluate current data and information-gathering processes; and provide funding for further research and dissemination of future data collected.
4. **Support and enable advocacy in all policymaking venues:** Create a Web site, monitored by seasonal part-time legislative “maka” (eyes) who can share updates with interested stakeholders; formalize gathering and sharing of information about legislative issues on a yearly basis before the legislature meets so that advocacy efforts for issues needing advance organization and planning can be prepared in time to be truly effective; create transparency and collaborative funding partnerships so that money flowing to Hawaiians and for culture-based education is equitably distributed (ask: Where does the money go? Do Hawaiians have sufficient and strong voices in the making of these decisions?); develop guidelines for expenditure of DOE funds by principals to ensure that money earmarked for Hawaiian students and programs goes to the intended recipients; and develop similar guidelines for University of Hawai‘i funds for teacher training, to ensure adequate funding for indigenous teacher training.
5. **Continuously build capacity among key stakeholders and advocates:** Provide multiple venues for advocacy training at all advocacy levels and venues and to further support advocacy efforts via the recommended Web site (above).

REFERENCE

- Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney D. K., & Stavros J. M. (2003). *Appreciative Inquiry handbook: The first in a series of AI workbooks for leaders of change*. Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers.

Working with students from kindergarten to high school and beyond, College Connections Hawai'i (CCH) is committed to increasing access, equity, and quality of education for Native Hawaiian youth. Guided by the core belief that college is possible for everyone, CCH launched the Native Hawaiian Scholars Program to prepare Hawaiian students to attend and graduate from four-year colleges. This project seeks to combine educational services and research to increase knowledge about college—preparation, attendance and completion—for students and their families. Funded by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Lumina Foundation and the US Department of Education, CCH strives to meet the targeted needs of each of the communities it serves.

On Maui, CCH is implementing a culturally centered, values-based approach to address the unique needs of students in the isolated, rural community of Hāna. In its third year, there are 49 students (7 in college, 42 in high school) in the program. Only a small percentage of Hāna's student population, of which 70% identify being Native Hawaiian, opt to attend college. Since many of the students in this project are the first ones in their families to attend college, CCH actively works to decrease barriers to a college education by assisting students with the college application and financial aid process. Underlying their approach to working with students and their families, CCH seeks to help participants realize that education is a Native Hawaiian cultural practice and although the institution of college may be western, learning, understanding, and working hard are valued cultural practices.

Collaborating with other agencies that support Native Hawaiians and programs within Hawai'i Department of Education has been critical to the success of the program. Monthly family gatherings combined with other community activities set up in a "talk story" format have increased attendance and willingness by families to share their concerns. This has resulted in more family participation and has increased the capacity of communities to improve their own advocacy.