

An articulated Philosophy of Education is the first step in the Kamehameha Schools Instructional Planning Project

In November of 2002, trustees approved and adopted an official Kamehameha Schools Philosophy of Education statement. The statement, which provides an approach to implement Kamehameha's Strategic Plan, details eight "core beliefs," backed by guiding principles, which are intended to drive all Kamehameha educational programs on a system-wide basis.

Detailing an educational philosophy is the first goal of the Kamehameha Schools Instructional Planning Project. The project also entails identifying educational standards for all academic areas at each grade level, revising curriculum and assessing how learners are tested.

I Mua magazine, with the help of senior Kamehameha education officials, has compiled a list of questions and answers to help everyone better understand the implications of the philosophy and the planning project.

Q: Why does Kamehameha Schools need a Philosophy of Education – what's the purpose of having such a statement?

A: Kamehameha Schools involves a complex educational institution with a broad range of academic areas, three campuses, 32 early childhood education programs and numerous extension education programs. The Philosophy of Education applies to all KS learners from early childhood education through adult education and provides a firm foundation on which to build strong educational services.

The philosophy speaks to the broad perspectives of the educational program, the basic beliefs that Kamehameha has about what the institution should be doing. The philosophy provides an understanding and knowledge of what Kamehameha Schools stands for educationally.

Q: Did Kamehameha Schools have a Philosophy of Education in years past?

A: It would be incorrect to say that Kamehameha Schools operated in the past without a set of beliefs. There has always been an unwritten philosophy among KS leadership which has guided programs. This Philosophy of Education statement represents the first attempt to have a philosophy statement expressed in writing and

clearly articulated. The goal is to have an articulated educational plan complement and support Kamehameha teachers and programs.

Q: What implications does the philosophy have for Kamehameha teachers and parents?

A: For faculty, the philosophy provides a broad framework for the work they do – a set of core beliefs or understandings that will drive the educational program.

For parents, the philosophy speaks to the fact that parents are key members of the team of people who work to provide youngsters with education. There are obligations and responsibilities for parents, and this philosophy highlights the role that parents must play in their children’s education.

Q: Why does the philosophy use the term learners rather than students?

A: For most people in an educational setting, the term student implies kids sitting at desks in classrooms in a K-12 program. Kamehameha Schools operates preschools, is increasing its outreach efforts and is looking at education as a lifelong endeavor. There are many people who are served by Kamehameha’s programs who do not fit the traditional image of a student. A learner is a more all-encompassing term.

Q: What was the process Kamehameha went through to achieve this Philosophy of Education?

A: More than 220 faculty members commented on drafts or submitted ideas. Teachers were asked to respond to two questions: What is your most important belief about “learning” that will help accomplish the goal of developing “good and industrious” men and women? And, secondly, to briefly state their personal philosophy of education.

A 30-member committee made up of a cross

section of Kamehameha Schools staff reviewed this data and also looked at educational literature (38 journal articles and books were cited) to assure that whatever ideas were included were aligned with best-practice thinking.

Q: Now that the philosophy has been completed, what’s the next step?

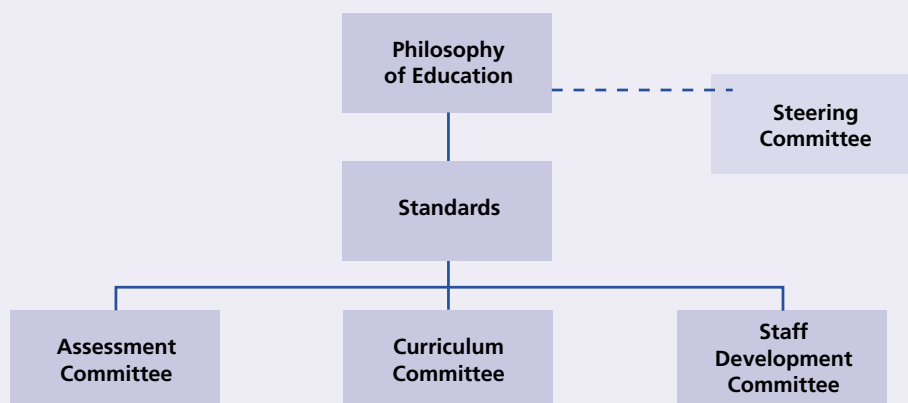
A: A group of Kamehameha Schools faculty members is currently looking at developing educational standards that are based on the Philosophy of Education. An educational standard simply talks about what Kamehameha wants its students to know and be able to do, and does it by academic area and grade level. Those standards will be consistent with and support the Philosophy of Education. Kamehameha hopes to have content standards in place by the end of the school year, while the development of performance standards and learning benchmarks will require work over the next few years.

Q: Once the standards are set, how does assessment come into play?

A: The KSIPP Assessment Committee has been working on a draft of an overall assessment plan that includes three components. The first is “system-level monitoring and evaluation” which will most likely be addressed via standardized tests and other “external” indicators of student achievement of the standards. The emphasis of the committee, however, has been on the second and third components: “Teachers as Assessment Agents” and “Student Portfolios.” These components focus on ensuring that teachers receive the types of immediate and useful information they need to guide daily instruction and on the critical importance of involving students in assessment of their own growth.

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KS Instructional Plan



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Q: How will the Philosophy of Education be expressed in the curriculum?

A: On a broad scale, the philosophy will influence how curriculum is delivered to learners. However, elements of the philosophy will directly influence the development of standards and thus, directly influence the curriculum.

For example, one belief statement speaks of the importance of 'Ike Hawai'i. That has important implications for the development of standards and curriculum. Another belief statement acknowledges that learners create meaning by building on prior knowledge, using their learning in relevant ways and contributing to the global community. That will affect the development of a diverse and integrated curriculum.

It should be emphasized that Kamehameha campuses already have existing curricula. After the standards are developed, curriculum will be reviewed at the campus level and strengthened if need be.

Q: How does staff development fit into the instructional planning project?

A: One of the Philosophy of Education belief statements acknowledges that quality of instruction is enhanced by collaboration, professional development and the application of research-based practices. Thus, staff development will continue to be important for Kamehameha Schools, especially as the standards and the approaches to assessment are being rolled out.

Kamehameha already has staff development occurring within the schools, divisions and campuses which will continue. The staff development being discussed as part of the instructional planning project is looking at a process for making decisions on a system-wide level across campuses and divisions.

Q: What's the most important thing the Kamehameha Schools 'ohana should know about this Philosophy of Education?

A: This philosophy is what teaching and learning is all about at Kamehameha Schools. It's what Kamehameha stands for, and is at the core of what the institution does. For campus programs, Kamehameha Schools wants its parents to know that the administration and faculty are doing everything necessary to move their youngsters forward.

The statement articulates beliefs in a way that people who are served by Kamehameha programs can understand. It's a way for students and parents to see what Kamehameha Schools is all about, and to hold Kamehameha Schools accountable as well.

*'O ke kahua ma mua,
ma hope ke kūkulu.*

*The foundation comes first and then the building.
Learn all you can, then practice.*

– Mary Kawena Pūku'i
*'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs
and Poetical Sayings #2459*

The belief statements of the Philosophy of Education are inspired by the example of Ke Ali'i Pauahi and are based on sound educational principles. In a fashion similar to what the 'ōlelo no'eau suggests, the philosophy provides the foundation upon which Kamehameha Schools builds its educational practices as we implement the Strategic Plan.

Schools Philosophy of Education

We believe that Kamehameha Schools as a Hawaiian institution and its learners' have a responsibility to practice and perpetuate 'Ike Hawai'i as a source of strength and resilience for the future.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools will:

- foster pride in the Hawaiian culture, language, history and traditions that serves as its foundation.
- integrate 'Ike Hawai'i into its educational programs and services.
- provide the necessary learning opportunities, resources and training to deepen the understanding of 'Ike Hawai'i.
- strengthen the relationship and the responsibility of its learners to the *'āina*, its resources and traditions.

We believe that every learner possesses a unique combination of talents, abilities, interests and needs and that each is able to achieve higher levels of excellence.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools will:

- acknowledge the uniqueness of each learner.
- assist each learner in achieving core understandings and skills.
- offer enrichment opportunities to encourage each learner to develop individual talents and interests.
- strive to be available and affordable to encourage broad participation of the learning community.

We believe that the earliest years of a child's life are the most critical to development and set the stage for future learning.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools will assist by providing early childhood educational services that support families² as the primary educators of their children.

We believe that positive and nurturing relationships are an essential foundation of learning.

Therefore,

- all members of the Kamehameha community that includes learners, staff, families and alumni are role models and will demonstrate attitudes and behaviors consistent with Hawaiian and Christian values.
- all will develop and support positive connections and interactions with learners.

We believe that all learners create meaning by building on prior knowledge, actively using their learning in personally relevant ways and contributing positively to the global community.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools programs will:

- support the learning process through a diverse and integrated curriculum and a range of services that are enhanced by the use of relevant technologies, real-life connections, and authentic experiences.
- encourage learners to use their learning in service to their *'ohana*, the community and the world.

We believe that the quality of instruction is enhanced by collaboration, professional development and the application of research based practices.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools will:

- provide time and resources for professional development and collaboration.
- support and engage in research and evaluation activities to improve the quality and effectiveness of education.
- extend professional development opportunities to its learning communities.

Each member of the learning community will commit to ongoing professional development and collaboration to optimize learner success.

We believe that education is enhanced by involvement of the learner and all members of the learner's community.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools programs will:

- provide opportunities for learners to share in and assume greater responsibility for their own development.
- promote the active involvement of families.
- encourage open communication and seek input from those impacted.

We believe that the effectiveness of our institution in meeting its mission is enhanced by collaboration and partnerships.

Therefore, Kamehameha Schools will:

- recognize and encourage the good works of other programs and institutions.
- contribute to building a network of services to meet the lifelong educational needs of Hawaiians.

1 Learner in the context of this Philosophy of Education refers to people of all ages participating in the full range of Kamehameha programs.

2 Family in the context of this Philosophy of Education refers to the learner's primary support system.