

Kamehameha Schools is extending its reach by assisting state Department of Education charter schools with high populations of Hawaiian students

Supporting the Charter Schools

Out of the 180,000 students who are enrolled in public schools statewide, roughly 50,000 are of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian ancestry. As a group, these Hawaiian students' standardized test scores and graduation rates are the lowest in the state.

In recent years, some communities, educators, parents and private organizations have turned to charter schools – semi-autonomous public schools under contract with the state Board of Education – as an alternative to traditional public schools.

Currently, there are 27 charter schools in Hawai'i, with Kamehameha Schools providing funds and other services to 14 of them – 12 start-up charter schools and two conversion charter schools.

Although the state allocates school funding based on a per pupil amount (\$5,355 in 2003-04) to both traditional and charter schools, charter schools face additional challenges in securing sufficient financial, administrative and facilities support.

To assist these selected charter schools in fulfilling their mission of providing Hawaiian children a quality education, Kamehameha Schools is contributing a minimum of \$1 for every \$4 that the state allocates to each charter school pupil.

“Parents of children who have struggled in traditional schools, but thrive in a charter school environment, are just so grateful.”

– SHARLENE CHUN-LUM '68
COORDINATOR, HO'OLAKO LIKE



Ho'olako Like program helping start-up charter schools

All 12 of the start-up charter schools supported by Kamehameha are Hawaiian-focused, emphasizing Hawaiian culture, language, values, practices and traditions.

Five of them are Hawaiian immersion schools that conduct lessons solely in Hawaiian. In 2003-04, they enrolled nearly 900 students, 93 percent of them of Hawaiian ancestry.

Collectively, these schools comprise Ho'olako Like (to enrich together), a Kamehameha Schools initiative designed to expand services to more Hawaiians, help build capacity in communities to develop and maintain their own programs and support the perpetuation of 'Ike Hawai'i (all things Hawaiian).

“The three Kamehameha campuses can only serve a limited number of students,” said **Sharlene Chun-Lum '68**, who serves as coordinator of Ho'olako Like. “It makes sense for KS to assist charter schools in order to meet our strategic plan goals of reaching more Hawaiians and improving their well-being.”

To qualify for the Ho'olako Like program, a charter school must demonstrate certain factors: serve student populations with high percentages of Hawaiian ancestry; commit to perpetuating 'Ike Hawai'i; provide quality instruction; evaluate and assess student growth; and involve students' families in educational and community activities.

Each school sets benchmarks such as: meeting Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards; increasing students' standardized test scores;

increasing daily school attendance; improving rates of high school completion; and increasing the number of students pursuing post-high education and training.

In addition to per-pupil funds, KS also provides Ho'olako Like schools with other services such as assistance with curriculum, program evaluation, professional staff development, accreditation and consultation on other funding resources.

“We want charter schools to succeed, so we advocate on their behalf with the Department of Education and other organizations that have an interest in helping them,” Chun-Lum said. “We also offer them training in administrative functions to help strengthen their communication, leadership and fiscal skills.”

Ke Kula 'o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki involved with several partners

Ke Kula 'o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki Laboratory Public Charter School is housed in the former Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia Elementary School facilities in Kea'au on the island of Hawai'i on a lush, 10-acre parcel owned by 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc., one of Nāwahī's educational partners.

The grounds include a two-acre laboratory farm where older students raise pigs and crops like 'awa, kukui, banana, kalo, hala, wiliwili, and flowers.

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– KAUANOE KAMANĀ '69
DIRECTOR, KE KULA O NĀWAHĪ



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As a start-up school, Nāwahī is fortunate to have appropriate facilities. Many other Ho‘olako Like schools make do with temporary or cobbled together accommodations wherever they can find them because the state does not provide funds for school sites or buildings for start-ups.

Hawaiian protocol is observed in varying degrees at all Ho‘olako Like schools. At Nāwahī, the entire student body and staff turns out to welcome visitors with chant and *pule*.

A tour of the school revealed orderly classrooms, polite, eager pupils, friendly and patient staff and typical school activities: a timed physical education fitness run; *hula* practice; library research; a botany lesson using Hawaiian plants; and a course counseling session for students.

All conducted in the Hawaiian language.

“We focus on the revitalization of Hawaiian language and culture, and families interested in establishing Hawaiian as their primary language,” said **Kauanoe Kamanā '69**, Nāwahī’s director.

“Another of our partners is Ka Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani, the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. Its Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education program has provided us student teachers, and coordinated exchanges between our students and staff and other indigenous people from around the world.

“We are very thankful to have received support from Kamehameha Schools. It affords us some flexibility,” Kamanā added. “As a KS graduate, I think Pauahi would have wanted Kamehameha to reach beyond its own campuses.”

The KS funds enabled Nāwahī to hire summer and regular school teachers, purchase additional classroom supplies and provide tuition assistance to students.

Other support came in the form of Kamehameha staff member **Liana Iaea Honda '77**, a resource teacher in the Extension Education Division’s Literacy Enhancement department, who provided professional development and curriculum assistance to the school, and helped parents to understand the value of promoting literacy in their families.

Kanani DeSa, a librarian at Kamehameha Schools-Hawai‘i, provided library resources and consultation on planning and networking to help create a library collection.

Kanu o ka ‘Āina adapting to facilities challenges

Kanu o ka ‘Āina was the first start-up charter that Kamehameha assisted with funding, beginning in April 2003.

Its main campus is temporarily located at the Lalamilo Experimental Station in Waimea on the island of Hawai‘i. With 150 K-12 students and not enough classroom space to accommodate everyone, facilities are one of their biggest challenges.

As a result, much of their learning takes place outdoors at sites such as the Kawaihae Boat Harbor and Pu‘umoho, a Department of Hawaiian Home Lands property.

“Students taught through project-based learning utilizing the environment, the community and the latest in multimedia technology become as comfortable working at the computer as in the taro patch.”

– KŪ KAHAKALAU
DIRECTOR, KANU O KA 'ĀINA



Curriculum is project-driven – learning math, science and report-writing by studying nearby river, ocean and mountain ecosystems, and taking samples of plants, water and organisms to analyze in class.

Or, it could be creating a power point presentation on the rich history of communities like Kawaihae through document research and interviews with *kūpuna*.

“Students taught through project-based learning utilizing the environment, the community and the latest in multimedia technology become as comfortable working at the computer as in the taro patch,” said Kū Kahakalau, Kanu’s director.

In the 2003-04 school year, Kanu was able to purchase – with funds received from KS – a sophisticated reading program that utilizes music and computer activities.

The Waterford Reading Program results are very promising.

Student evaluations showed that 84 percent of kindergarten through grade two children were at grade-level reading, with 87 percent of students in grades three and four at grade level in reading and writing – significant improvements over the previous school years.

“The Waterford program is definitely effective, even with very low-performing students,” said Kahakalau.

Kanu has the distinction of having one of the highest rates – about 94 percent – of student attendance of all public schools statewide.

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Ho‘olako Like Start-up Schools

KA 'UMEKE KĀ'EO*

Grades: K-6, 123 students,** 94 percent Hawaiian

Director: **Alapaki Nahale-a '86**

Location: Hilo, Hawai'i

Contact information: Alapakinahale_a@notes.k12.hi.us

HĀLAU KŪ MĀNA

Grades: 6-12, 75 students, 97 percent Hawaiian

Director: **D. Keola Nakanishi '92**

Location: Mānoa, O'ahu

Contact information: www.kumana.org

KA WAIHONA 'O KA NA'AUAO

Grades: K-4, 133 students, 94 percent Hawaiian

Director: **Alvin Parker '71**

Location: Nānākuli, O'ahu

Contact information: Kawaihonapincipal@notes.k12.hi.us

HAKIPU'U LEARNING CENTER

Grades: 7-12, 65 students, 82 percent Hawaiian

Director: Charlene Hoe

Location: Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

Contact information: Hakipuuhlc@yahoo.com

KE KULA 'O NĀWAHĪOKALANI'ŌPU'U IKI LABORATORY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (PCS)*

Grades: K-6, 66 students, 97 percent Hawaiian

Director: **Kauanoë Kamanā '69**

Location: Kea'au, Hawai'i

Contact information: Mahealanitam@notes.k12.hi.us

KANU 'O KA 'ĀINA NEW CENTURY PCS

Grades: K-12, 143 students, 97 percent Hawaiian

Director: Dr. Kū Kahakalau

Location: Kamuela, Hawai'i

Contact information: www.kalo.org

KANUIKAPONO***

Grades: K-12, 30 students, 33 percent Hawaiian

Director: **Jenevieve Ku'uipo Torio '89**

Location: Anahola, Kaua'i

Contact information: lpo.torio@kanuikapono.org

HĀLAU LŌKAHI

Grades: K-12, 109 students, 96 percent Hawaiian

Director: **Laara Hardey Allbrett '70**

Location: Kalihi, O'ahu

Contact information: www.halaulokahi.org

KE KULA 'O SAMUEL M. KAMAKAU*

Grades: K-12, 78 students, 99 percent Hawaiian

Director: Makalapua Ka'awa

Location: Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

Contact information: Makalapuak@leoki.uhh.hawaii.edu

KE KULA NI'IHAU O KEKAHA LEARNING CENTER*

Grades: K-12, 28 students, 100 percent Hawaiian

Director: Haunani Seward

Location: Kekaha, Kaua'i

Contact information: haunani_seward@notes.k12.hi.us

KULA AUPUNI NI'IHAU A KAHELELANI ALOHA*

Grades: K-12, 38 students, 95 percent Hawaiian

Director: Hedy Sullivan

Location: Kekaha, Kaua'i

Contact information: hedy@ireland.com

KUA O KA LĀ (PCS)

Grades: 6-10, 48 students, 58 percent Hawaiian

Director: Susie Osborne

Location: Pāhoa, Hawai'i

Contact information: pualaa@ilhawaii.net

* Hawaiian immersion schools

** Number of students for the 2002-03 school year

*** Kanuikapono will join Ho'olako Like in 2004-05

“Academic standards are important, and we spend as much time on math, language, social studies and art forms as we do in the lo’i.”

– KEOLA NAKANISHI '92
DIRECTOR, HĀLAU KU MANA
(BELOW, MIDDLE)



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Similarly, parents turn out in the high 90 percents for *‘ohana* gatherings, which include parent conferences and other school functions, and many volunteer at the school or participate in fund-raising efforts. One parent logged 840 hours of service.

“Kanu’s approach is bi-cultural, bi-lingual, culturally driven and academically rigorous,” Kahakalau said. “We want to prepare our students to walk successfully in two worlds and be able to compete in a global society.”

Hālau Kū Māna moves into dream location

For the past three years Hālau Kū Māna (strive for the life force) operated out of two main locations in Mānoa, O’ahu.

The first was the Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa where students had access to its Hawaiian collections resource room and the Papa Lo’i Kanewai, a native plant refuge.

The secondary location was the Atherton YMCA on University Avenue which provided classroom, office and multi-purpose spaces.

Additional learning sites utilized regularly included He’eia fishpond – a Kamehameha Schools ‘Āina Ulu program site – Maunalaha Valley, Lyon Arboretum, Kualoa, where the sailing canoe *Kanehūnāmoku* was often housed, and the *Makali’i*, a voyaging canoe that allowed students to experience sailing and acquire navigational skills.

This summer, Hālau Kū Māna moved into its dream site, the old Paradise Park location in Mānoa, with the help of the property owner and the Hawai’i Cultural Preservation Council.

There, they will have much more space and there will be a short walk to Lyon Arboretum, where students go weekly to study botany and work on the restoration of a *lo’i* to raise *kalo* on the banks of ‘Aihualama Stream.

There’s much to do: remove debris such as rocks and ginger, clear paths, build steps into the slope leading to the river and rebuild the terrace walls. Then, dam the stream water above the *lo’i*, and divert the dam water to *‘auwai* (ditches) that flow into the taro patch.

Different *māla* (gardens) are also planned, where *pua* and other *hula* plants and Hawaiian medicinal herbs will be grown.

“We don’t want charter schools to just have a reputation for chanting, dancing *hula* and getting dirty in the *lo’i*,” said Hālau Kū Māna director **Keola Nakanishi '92**. “Academic standards are important, and we spend as much time on math, language, social studies and art forms as we do in the *lo’i*.”

Charter schools indeed serving Hawaiian students

On the 2004 Hawai’i State Assessment, students in Hawai’i charter schools scored higher than students in regular public schools, except for eighth-grade students. The tests were given statewide in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10.



On the Stanford Achievement Test, more charter school students registered “above average” than the statewide percentage in regular public schools at all grade levels.

Working with the charter schools for two years now, Chun-Lum has seen and heard of many promising results in these schools.

“Charter schools face huge challenges on a daily basis – from dealing with some students who transfer to their schools unable to read at all or who have histories at their former schools as habitual truants, to having to navigate a maze of regulations and requirements when seeking state, federal and private funding resources.

“Yet, they take such delight in every sign of positive progress in their students,” Chun-Lum said.

“One boy had been absent more than 100 days at his previous school. At the charter school he transferred to, he had a perfect attendance record. Another boy transferred to a charter school where he finally learned to read as a junior in high school.

“Parents of children who have struggled in traditional schools, but thrive in a charter school environment, are just so grateful.

“Some people have asked why Kamehameha Schools has chosen to support charter schools. My answer is Kamehameha is helping to build community leaders. Show me any other program that is more cost effective and gets better results. So, why not?”

Ho‘okāko‘o Corporation supporting conversion charter schools

Kamehameha Schools is also supporting charter schools through the Ho‘okāko‘o (to provide support for) Corporation, an independent, nonprofit organization established in 2002 to operate traditional public schools that have converted to charter schools.

Ho‘okāko‘o serves as the conversion charter schools’ local school board as well as the schools’ link with the state Department of Education, the Board of Education, labor unions and other supporting entities such as Kamehameha Schools.

As of September 2004, there are two conversion schools that KS is funding through Ho‘okāko‘o, which – similar to Ho‘olako Like – also distributes \$1 for every \$4 allocated by the state to their member charter schools.

The two schools are:

WAIMEA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grades: 6-8, 520 students,

38 percent Hawaiian

Director: Pat Rice

Location: Kamuela, Hawai‘i

pat_rice@notes.k12.hi.us

KUALAPU‘U ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grades: K-6, 370 students,

80 percent Hawaiian

Director: Lydia Trinidad

Location: Kualapu‘u, Moloka‘i

lydia_trinidad@notes.k12.hi.us