Kamehameha Schools Kapālama

The 600-acre Kamehameha Schools Kapālama on the island of O‘ahu is the oldest and largest of Kamehameha’s three kindergarten through grade 12 campuses. From its Kapālama hillside location, it overlooks the city of Honolulu from Diamond Head to Pearl Harbor. Currently, it enrolls 3,200 K-12 students, 450 of them boarders, and employs more than 600 teachers, administrators and support staff. Campus facilities encompass nearly 70 buildings including: a performing arts center, three learning centers, a chapel, heritage center, 12 dormitories, an Olympic-size swimming pool, four gymnasiums and a football/soccer/track stadium.

The school recently received a K-12 accreditation from the Hawai‘i Association of Independent Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

“I desire my trustees to provide first and chiefly a good education in the common English branches, and also instruction in morals and in such useful knowledge as may tend to make good and industrious men and women.”

This directive of Ke Ali‘i Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Kamehameha’s benefactor, coupled with her intent that Protestant Christianity would be taught and practiced in her schools, is the basis for a long-standing Christian tradition at Kamehameha. Christian education, devotions, chapel services and character education are significant components of the Kamehameha experience.

Students are encouraged to embrace the values Pauahi embodied, such as mālama (caring), kuleana (responsibility), naʻau pono (deep sense of justice) and kahiau (generosity from the heart). In order to develop empathy, social responsibility and servant leader qualities, all Kamehameha students perform meaningful and significant community service each year.

‘Ike Hawai‘i means knowing, experiencing, feeling and understanding things Hawaiian.

To strengthen ‘ike Hawai‘i at Kamehameha and within each student, the school integrates Hawaiian cultural knowledge, traditions, practices and skills into the curriculum and daily classroom activities at all grade levels.

Like Pauahi, students graduating from Kamehameha are expected to be competent and comfortable in both the Hawaiian and Western cultures, and capable of practicing and passing on their cultural heritage to future generations. Students are required as a condition of graduation to successfully complete courses in Hawaiian history and culture and are expected to be foundationally proficient in the Hawaiian language.

By the end of the 2014-15 school year, KS Kapālama will have implemented a 1-to-1 computing program, assigning each student, K-12, an Apple laptop or iPad with a customized package of software to support the integration of technology into the learning environment.
Kula Haʻahaʻa (the elementary school)

The Kapalama elementary school emphasizes the development of the whole child through academics, social skills, the arts, and cultural, spiritual and physical education. Instruction reflects the belief that students learn better when information and skills are experienced in a variety of ways: through language, music, mathematics and logic, spatial awareness, movement, social relationships and feelings.

Classrooms are self-contained with 20 to 24 children grouped in each, kindergarten through grade 6. There are computers in each classroom as well as computer labs for enhanced computer literacy, research and instruction. Specialty teachers of art, science, information technology, Hawaiian language and culture, music, band, guidance, Christian education, physical education and health enrich the instructional program.

The elementary school consists of eight buildings that accommodate about 752 students. It also has its own gymnasium with basketball and volleyball courts, as well as gymnastics equipment.

Kula Waena (the middle school)

The courses of study at the middle school are designed to provide students a systematic and developmentally appropriate way to learn, as well as to continue to practice basic skills that will prepare them for the college preparatory curriculum of Kapalama’s high school.

The middle school model advocates collaborative group activities to promote cohesiveness and bonding. There is a strong emphasis on teaming of seventh- and eighth-grade students and teachers. Teaming allows for cross-curriculum planning and coordination of field trips, testing schedules and major projects. The emphasis on an interdisciplinary curriculum and teaming also helps to create a “small school” feeling to assist students in transition from elementary to middle school.

The homeroom advisory program provides students with a “home base” where they meet with their advisors on school business and discuss topics of general student interest like student government and socials. Issues relating to adolescents are also addressed in an inclusive and nurturing environment. Homeroom advisors come to know their students and track their academic progress and adjustment to school and life.

The middle school was recently renovated and new buildings include two dormitory buildings, a large classroom building, administrative offices and a dining room. The classrooms are not traditional classrooms, as the middle school utilizes “classrooms without walls,” incorporating a new approach to having an open learning environment.
Kula Kiʻekiʻe
(the high school)

The college preparatory curriculum is designed to challenge students to think critically and to prepare them for college. It is also enhanced with character education and activities directed towards living a moral, rewarding and productive life. Christian values and Hawaiian culture are also integral to a Kamehameha education.

All seniors are required to apply to institutions of higher learning. For the past five years, 100 percent of graduating seniors have been accepted by one or more post-high institutions. On average, 80 percent of students reported that they planned to attend four-year colleges and 18 percent planned to attend two-year colleges or technical schools.

Students must complete prescribed courses in mathematics, science, English, a second language (Hawaiian, Japanese, etc.), health, physical education, speech, social studies, Hawaiian studies, and visual and performing arts. Electives from each of these disciplines are offered as well as electives in technology and business. Non-credit requirements include Christian education, keyboarding proficiency, guidance, school service, swimming and special events.

The honors program, comprised of 20 honors and 11 advanced placement courses in five academic areas, enables students of exceptional ability to develop a broad foundation for excellence in advanced education. Students in this program study at an accelerated pace and cover a broader spectrum of subject matter. Approximately one-fourth of the high school student body is enrolled in the honors program.

Involvement in co-curricular activities complements a student’s academic studies by offering experiences and opportunities that may not be available in the classroom. Kapalama high school students are encouraged to participate in student government and co-curricular activities, including Hawaiian chant and dance, theater, band, and orchestra. In addition, school-wide activities such as Song Contest and Founder’s Day perpetuate unique traditions and encourage school spirit. Kapalama offers an excellent athletics program. Student athletes can try out for more than 100 teams representing 35 competitive sports such as football, baseball, basketball, paddling, volleyball, track and field and swimming.

There are dozens of special interest clubs on campus, with something for every interest.

Choices range from canoe and environmental clubs to Hawaiian culture and drama clubs. In addition, Kamehameha sponsors honorary organizations such as the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta.

The high school’s Midkiff Learning Center has a fully-automated library in addition to a collection of 70,000 resource materials including many rare Hawaiian books. It also has computer facilities, a photographic studio, a student graphics production center and a television studio. The technology department features the most sophisticated Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) system available in a Hawai‘i high school. The performing arts complex includes a soundproof auditorium, mirrored dance studio and individual practice rooms as well as classroom facilities for all of the performing arts.

The main high school gymnasium offers students basketball, volleyball and racquetball courts, a dance studio, and weight training, wrestling and gymnastics rooms. A fully equipped fitness center also offers students and staff regular aerobic classes.

Alongside the Olympic-sized Kalaniopu‘u swimming pool is a brand new PE/athletics complex. The complex has locker rooms, equipment rooms, a weight room and administrative offices for both the PE and athletics departments. On the other side of that facility is the Kūnuiākea stadium, a multipurpose outdoor athletic complex that can seat 3,000 spectators.
The Boarding Program

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama serves as a home away from home for about 450 students in grades 7-12, primarily from the neighbor islands. The boarding program is designed to help students attain high academic performance, positive self-esteem, and personal and community responsibility.

The dormitories are the most important part of the boarding program. They are home for students and advisors, and centers for developing lifelong friendships. While boarding students have ample time for fun and relaxation, designated study and curfew hours set limits on student activities and help students focus on their academic studies.

Boarders may also participate in special sports programs, evening and weekend activities, and enrichment and recreational programs. On Sunday mornings, boarding students attend Bishop Memorial Church. Services are non-denominational Protestant and open to parents, family and friends.

In case of illness or medical emergency, the school’s Medical Services Department is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week while school is in session.

For more information about Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, visit our website at www.ksbe.edu or contact: Debbie Lindsey, Interim Po‘o Kula (Head of School), at delindsey@ksbe.edu or (808) 842-8231.

Kamehameha’s Educational System

Kamehameha Schools was founded in 1887 by the will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-granddaughter and last royal descendant of Kamehameha the Great. Her husband Charles Reed Bishop said, “Her heart was heavy when she saw the rapid diminution of the Hawaiian people going on decade after decade.” She hoped, he said, “through enlightenment, the adoption of regular habits and Christian ways of living, the natives would…increase again like the people of other races.”

Today, the schools’ mission is “to fulfill Pauahi’s desire to create educational opportunities in perpetuity to improve the capability and well-being of people of Hawaiian ancestry.”

In addition to the Kapālama campus, Kamehameha encompasses the 180-acre Maui campus with nearly 1,100 K-12 students; a 312-acre Hawai‘i campus enrolling more than 1,150 K-12 students; and 30 preschool sites serving over 1,500 children. An extension education program including Hawaiian studies, literacy enhancement and enrichment programs also serves thousands of people in Hawaiian communities statewide. Every year, about $18 million in college financial aid is awarded to Hawaiian high school graduates who demonstrate financial need.

The combined preschool through grade 12 student enrollment of nearly 7,000 makes Kamehameha the largest independent school in the United States. Preference is given to applicants of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law.

Kamehameha Schools is also the largest private landowner in the state of Hawai‘i. Income generated from its residential, commercial and resort leases, as well as diverse investments, fund the schools’ maintenance and educational services. It subsidizes a substantial portion of the cost to educate every student. Families of students pay a modest tuition to cover the remaining cost. Special financial aid is available to families who demonstrate additional need.

Since its founding in 1887, Kamehameha Schools has graduated more than 25,000 good and industrious young men and women—a worthy legacy of a visionary princess.

The schools’ mission is “to fulfill Pauahi’s desire to create educational opportunities in perpetuity to improve the capability and well-being of people of Hawaiian ancestry.”
Applying for Kamehameha Schools

Admission Entry Points, Process, Selection Criteria, Tuition Costs

Admission to all grade levels at all three Kamehameha Schools campuses – Kapālama, Hawaiʻi and Maui – is competitive, as each year more applicants apply than can be enrolled.

Admission to Kamehameha Schools Kapālama

- Elementary School: At the elementary school level, there are two primary admission points, kindergarten and grade 4.
- Middle School: Applications are only accepted for grade 7.
- High School: The primary admission point is grade 9. Applications for grades 10-12 are accepted, but space availability at these grade levels is not guaranteed, as they are considered “replacement” grades.

The Admission Process

- Preference for admission is given to applicants of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law. Student admission to the Kamehameha Schools system is centralized. The main Admissions Office is located at the Kapālama campus on Oʻahu, however, branch offices are located at the Maui and Hawaiʻi campuses.
- Prospective applicants for all campuses begin by submitting an application form by the September application deadline. All applicants who meet the deadline are scheduled to take a standardized test.
- Other documents, such as report cards and references, are also collected. In addition, applicants to grades 6-9 complete a personal interview and essay. Other requirements, specific only to certain grade levels, are included with the application materials and listed on the admissions webpage.

Selection Criteria

- Academic criteria, island/district and orphan/indigent quotas, and state residency are considered. Both the Maui and Hawaiʻi campuses serve students islandwide. The Kapālama campus serves Oʻahu and the following neighbor island districts: West Hawaiʻi, Häna/Keʻanae, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Kauaʻi and Niʻihau.

Tuition Costs

- Because Kamehameha Schools subsidizes a significant portion of the cost of educating its students, parents pay a nominal charge. Families must provide financial and tax information to qualify for financial assistance, which is awarded based on demonstrated financial need. Students who demonstrate eligibility may receive partial or full awards that may cover tuition, fees, meals, etc. Families are notified of awards prior to the start of school.
To apply for Kamehameha Schools Kapālama or for more information about the admissions process please visit our admissions website at: www.ksbe.edu/admissions

To reach us by phone, O‘ahu applicants may call 842-8800 and neighbor island applicants may call toll free, 1-800-842-4682 (IMUA) ext. 28800.