

# ‘Opio Newsletter

THE VOICE OF HAWAII'S PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS



## HAWAI‘I

SEPTEMBER 2019 EDITION

HAWAII STATE STUDENT COUNCIL | SCHOOL YEAR 2019-20

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## 'Opio Newsletter

*The Voice of Hawaii's Public School Students*

The 'Opio has been revamped as a newsletter initiative of the Hawaii State Student Council that strives to share important stories from students for students in our public schools. The goal of this new initiative is to empower student voice by providing them an avenue to share their voices through story sharing and student highlights. The Hawaii State Student Council will be using its network of student leaders to reach various students across the state.

## INTRODUCTION

### Alexandra Abinosa

Chairperson

Alexandra Abinosa was elected as the 2019-2020 Hawaii State Student Council chairperson. Abinosa has been a part of the council since 2016. She is a senior at Wallace Rider Farrington High School.



## Welcome to the newly redesigned 2019-2020 'Opio newsletter!

The Hawaii State Student Council is the official representation of Hawaii's over 180,000 public school students spanning across seven islands. From Kauai to Hawaii island, we are working to best represent the interests and priorities of Hawaii's youth. We are lucky to be learning and growing in a state committed to excellence in education.

This school year, we are proud to present a newly redesigned newsletter for Hawaii's public school students. The 2019-2020 'Opio newsletter has been revamped to gather important student stories and highlights, which we hope will continue to empower student voice.

Throughout the school year, our newsletters will be focused on highlighting each of HIDOE's five promises to Hawaii's students, as part of the 2030 DOE Strategic Plan. Those promises include: Hawaii, Equity, School Design, Empowerment, and Innovation. We hope to gather stories, experiences, and lessons from our vast network of student leaders and highlight them in each edition of our 'Opio newsletter.

Through the hard work of our council Communications committee, they have gathered important student stories and experiences from our council members. They are included in this month's 'Opio newsletter, which is focused on the Hawaii promise theme. We understand that our education in Hawaii is truly unique and inspiring. We hope that we succeed in sharing some highlights of exemplar school models in our Hawaii public schools.

We are excited for the work ahead for the benefit of all students. Our haumana have the opportunity to achieve great things because we are part of an educational experience like nowhere else. We hope you enjoy our new approach the 'Opio newsletter. We want you to know that your student voice is powerful - if you have anything you'd like to share with us, e-mail us at [information.hssc@gmail.com](mailto:information.hssc@gmail.com). Follow us on our social media accounts @HSSC\_Council on Twitter and Instagram. Mahalo for your continued support of your state student council.

**ALEXANDRA ABINOSA**  
CHAIRPERSON

## HAWAI'I STATE STUDENT COUNCIL

Tiffany Frias, State Advisor  
Alexandra Abinosa, Chairperson  
Jaylen Mae Arzaga, Vice Chairperson  
Breeze Chinen, Secretary  
Jessica Chang, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Carlo Daquiaoag, Historian  
Daniella White, BOE Student Representative

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## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Meet a member of the Hawaii State Student Council and how one of the promise themes in being implemented at their respective school.

MEET

### MIKAELA BRIONES

Wai'anae High School



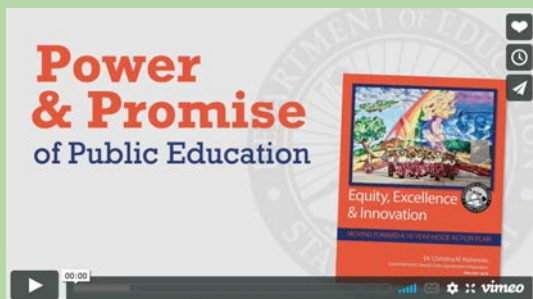
Hawaii is a culturally diverse place. There are many differences between the people and it shows. But the one thing many do have in common - the will for an education. Wai'anae High School students are no exception. But just as the world continues to advance, so does our school system and the way material is taught. The ultimate goal is to implement HĀ. HĀ essentially is the Hawaiian word for Breath. This in turn was turned into an acronym this includes a strengthened sense of: Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total well-being, and Hawai'i. "The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive outcomes framework to be used by those who are developing the academic achievement, character, physical and social emotional well-being of all our students to the fullest potential" (Hawaii Public Schools).

However, this is just the beginning! HĀ isn't in every classroom just yet. There are processes that the teachers and the Board of Education must go through to prevent a great shift in the students' education. Small steps toward a bigger tomorrow, schools are doing just that. As a student of Wai'anae High School, it's a change from what our students are used to, which would be our General Learner Outcomes (GLOs), but it's a subtle change. The actions that are being taken are subtle enough for the students to notice but not enough to raise any questions. The difference between the GLOs and HĀ is that HĀ doesn't only include education but also the social and belonging aspects for the students.

There are actions being taken through the determination of our teachers and staff of Hawai'i schools. Workshops have been held these past few years to really pull apart and dig deep into what HĀ is really about. I've only attended two of these this past year, but each one was truly enriching, it was called Influencing School Culture Workshop and Design Thinking Workshop. To thoroughly take action, those that conducted these workshops had its participants, who were high school students, like me, to come up with a project that truly implemented the use of any one of the values of HĀ. The project my school had chosen was improving total well-being. At the time, we were still working out the details. Moreso, this just exemplifies the purpose of HĀ, that one value can't work without the other and that's what makes it so well rounded.

Tying this back to Wai'anae High School, there is a Hawai'i promise theme that states, "Students will be educated within a public school system that is grounded in HĀ, powers a multilingual society, and honors Hawai'i's local and global contribution." (Hawaii Public Schools). Wai'anae High School reflects exactly this. Considering the vast diversity in our community, our students and teachers speak different languages when they can. We're slowly working our way up to fully ground ourselves in HĀ. But as a school, we take culture quite seriously. Implementing HĀ in the most subtle ways possible until a solid foundation can help our faculty and staff build towards being grounded in HĀ and fulfilling that promise. A few ways we were able to do so was by putting up the posters in most classrooms that shows what HĀ is and how it would be used, sending three students to Design Thinking Workshops along with two teachers and an admin, as well as in our pathways where the teachers take the time to let the student indulge in the work and the land (in the case of the Natural Resources pathway).

The Hawai'i promise theme will be fulfilled as we grow strong and steady, Wai'anae High School, along with all the schools in Hawai'i will soon be able to provide their students this fulfillment.



### PROMISE THEME: HAWAI'I

This edition will focus on the above promise theme: students will be educated in an education like nowhere else - grounded in the culture and values of our island community of Hawaii.

To learn more, visit [hawaiipublicschools.org](http://hawaiipublicschools.org).



We will be sharing stories of students, who are making a difference at their schools and in their communities. Stories relate to the promise theme being highlighted in each edition.

## COVER STORY



# A Day with Bronson Azama

BY CARLO DAQUIOAG | PAHOA HIGH | HISTORIAN

A former Hawaii DOE Assistant Superintendent once said, “When I walk into a Hawaii public school, I want to close my eyes and know that I am in a school in Hawai‘i... and not somewhere else.” Living in Hawai‘i we see its richness in diversity, history, and culture, yet our current education system is based off of a model from someplace else. We must embrace what is unique to Hawai‘i and build the leaders we will need. It has been our dream at Castle High School to shift the way we teach, what we teach, and how we view the world, and by using the Hā Framework, and student voice we have begun to do that.

In the Ho‘oulu ‘Ōpio Natural Resources Pathway at Castle High school, teachers and students alike

have made leaps into changing the environment of the classroom on numerous levels. Intertwining different subjects such as math, science, social studies, and language arts, through culture and place-based education. There has been a focus on not only bringing the community into the classroom, but the students into the community. Identifying environmental, social, and educational issues occurring in their community, as well as across the state. Allowing students the opportunity to not only discuss these issues, but connect with people working to solve them. Students then assist in solving these problems and come up with their own ideas to improve these initiatives. For example, a project that was done a few years ago was about taking larger global issues like Climate



*Bronson Azama is a senior at Castle High School. Bronson is Castle High’s Hawai‘i State Student Council Representative and the Hawai‘i State President for the National Future Farmers of America Organization.*

Change and narrowing it down to coral bleaching occurring in Kaneohe Bay. Students then interviewed an expert and learned how the invasive Gorilla Ogo was a contributing factor toward coral bleaching in the bay. As a result, these students created awareness by producing brochures for the fishpond to hand out to guests and also conducted a work day at Paepae 'O He'eia, a fishpond in the community, to assist in the removal efforts. This model of learning has resulted in making content not only relevant, but much more relatable for students allowing them to easily comprehend.

Not only are we allowed to make changes in our community, but we are able to bring change within our school as well through student voice. In our social studies class, Modern Hawaiian History, we are taught significant historical events in contemporary Hawaiian history and a little depth into ancient history. One such event that is contemporary is Lā Kū'oko'a, a Hawaiian Kingdom holiday that takes place on November 28th. After learning about this event, students asked the school administration if we could celebrate this Kingdom holiday, and the event was approved, so the first ever celebration at Castle High School in honor of Lā Kū'oko'a was held in 2017. It has grown from an event just within our class to an event the entire school and our community partners can partake in. Listening to student speeches, performing oli (chants), and raising the Hae Hawai'i (Hawaiian Flag) alone, allowed a safe space for students to not only express their beliefs, but to celebrate their heritage. Students have also organized a Makahiki for the Castle-Kahuku Complex 4th graders by working with the teachers, Kūpuna program, and community partners. This event exposed elementary students to programs they can get involved within their community and at Castle High School, while also giving both high school and elementary students a hands-on component to go with their learning. Holding events such as this, resulted in an improvement in student morale and a sense of pride within them. It has also built this sense of comradery, and excitement to do more and thus learn more, as well as allow interaction between different age groups; the younger ones looking up to the older ones and the older ones joyful as they see themselves in their younger counterparts.

Looking at our education system, it is essentially the foundation for change. We are seeing many issues across the world we live in, so what can we do to help prepare the next generation to solve these issues? We train them to take action, not only talk about issues, but to do something about it. Allow them to build up their confidence and feel empowerment through bringing change within their school, and their community. Taking them out of the traditional classroom and into their communities to see real world problems and groups working to solve them. Allowing them to feel a sense of belonging in their school and community, a sense of responsibility to take care of and better the place they call home, a sense of excellence through empowerment, a sense of total well-being, feeling comfortable in who they are and where they come from, and a deeper understanding and connection to Hawai'i. We in Ho'oulu 'Ōpio embrace our history, our culture, and carry our heritage, crafting a completely different lens on how we teach, and what we teach. Connecting classroom and community to build not just leaders, but changemakers; that is the classroom of Hawai'i. Learning how to do, to serve, and to observe. We must understand that not all classrooms have four walls and not all knowledge can be gained from contextualized learning. There is an 'Ōlelo No'eau, wise Hawaiian saying that goes with this understanding, it says, "A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi." *All knowledge is not learned in one school.*



Students contributing to the restoration of Waikalua Loko I'a learning to propagate and care for native fish at the fishpond.

## OUR VOICE MATTERS

### What makes your educational experience in Hawai'i unique?

BY JESSICA CHANG | AIEA HIGH

Here in Hawai'i, the iconic cultural mixing pot, I am surrounded by people of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. This allows me to not only learn about algebraic equations, rhetorical analysis, or atomic bonds, but living in Hawaii allows me to learn alongside of students with stories to share. Something unique is something one of a kind, and my educational experience here in Hawaii has been unlike any other.





ONLY IN HAWAI‘I

There are various student council events that only in Hawai‘i you can experience. We highlight an event that has continued to bring all students together - in unity.

# IT'S TIME FOR HOME COMING



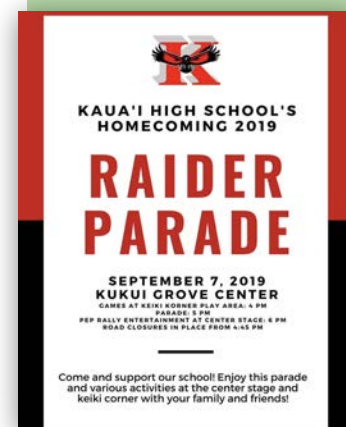
## Homecoming in Hawai‘i

BY CHRISTMEL UGALDE | LEILEHUA HIGH | CONTRIBUTOR



At Leilehua High School, their 2019 Homecoming theme was “Decades”, where each graduating class represented a different decade: Freshmen the 50s, Sophomores the 70s, Juniors the 90s, and the Seniors the 80s! During Homecoming Week, Leilehua had two dress up days where each graduating class accumulated points from; these two dress up days were Green & Gold Day (students wore green and gold to show their Mighty Mule pride) and Class Shirt/Class Color Day (students got to show off their awesome class shirts or simply wore their class colors to show their spirit!) On the Friday of Homecoming Week, Leilehua held their annual Homecoming Assembly. During this assembly, each graduating class showcased their amazing skits that followed each of their decades and showcased football in some way. The 2019 LHS Homecoming Court was also presented at the Homecoming Assembly, followed by a court dance. At the Homecoming Game, the Leilehua High School “Mighty Mules” marching band performed and created a beautiful entrance for the Homecoming Court. At this year’s LHS Homecoming game, both Junior Varsity and Varsity football teams won against Aiea High School.

Kauai High School’s 2019 Homecoming theme was “Choose Your Destiny (Heroes vs. Villains)”. During their lunch activities, Kauai High School had an obstacle course! They also had their school band and cheerleaders perform at this time. When they had their Homecoming Assembly, two days before the Game, Kauai High School had each Grade Class decorate their bleachers, create big banners, and had their Homecoming Court perform lip syncs. The day before the Homecoming game, they had Powderpuff play, Upperclassmen vs. Underclassmen. This year the upperclassmen won, congratulations! On the day of the homecoming game, they introduced their court on golf carts and had their band perform during halftime. The day after the homecoming game, they had a Homecoming Parade. Their Homecoming Court were in convertibles and had their sports teams and clubs create floats and to ride on during the parade. They also had a Family Pep Rally, where their Homecoming Court and band performed, and a talent show.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Here are some upcoming events for you to get involved in at your school and make a difference. We encourage you to take part in something that matters to you.

## Unity Day 2019

Wednesday, October 23, 2019 | [www.pacer.org/bullying](http://www.pacer.org/bullying)

Unity Day, started by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center in October 2011, is the signature event of National Bullying Prevention Month. This is a day when we can come together in one giant, ORANGE message of hope and support. The call to action is simple: wear and share the color orange. This vibrant statement becomes a conversation starter, showing support for students who have been bullied and for bullying prevention.



Make it **ORANGE** and make it end! What are your true colors when it comes to showing that you believe that all youth should be safe from bullying? Come together in one giant **ORANGE** message of hope and support, **WEAR AND SHARE ORANGE** to color our nation, and even the world, visibly showing that our society believes that no child should ever experience bullying.

## Secondary Student Conference 2020

Thursday, January 23 - Saturday, January 25, 2020  
Hawaii State Capitol

The 2020 Secondary Student Conference will held on January 23-25, 2020 at the Hawaii State Capitol. For more information and for registration, visit [www.hssc808.weebly.com](http://www.hssc808.weebly.com).

See your school SAC for registration info.



## OUR VOICE MATTERS

### What do you see at your school that makes you want to come everyday?

BY SASHA ARREOLA | MILILANI HIGH

Something I have always liked about Mililani is how passionate the students are and how they always strive to do their absolute best. I see how hard people work for the things they love and how they set goals to improve themselves. This kind of mindset is truly inspiring and creates a positive learning environment. Their ambition motivates me to become an even better leader for them.





**HSSC 2019-2020 Elections**  
The council elected members of its 2019-2020 Executive Board. Mahalo to all who offered to serve this year.



**Welcome to Daniella White!**  
The 2019-2020 BOE Student Member Daniella White from James Campbell High School was officially sworn-in on 8/15/19.



**#HSSCProud Video Features**  
Over the course of the school year, we will be highlighting members of HSSC on why they are proud to be part of the council.



# SNAPSHOTS THROUGH THE YEAR

It's time to share those memories throughout the school year! Tag us, direct message, or use the hashtag #HISuCo to share your photos and memories. You never know - you may end up on featured on the snapshots page!