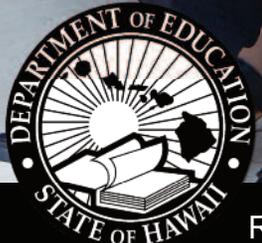




# HAWAII'S Race



Race to the Top Executive Summary: 2010-2014



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Hawaii State Department of  
Education extends a heartfelt mahalo*

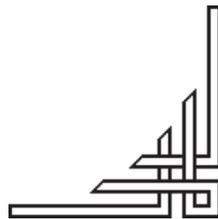
*to*

*Our State, Complex Area and*

*school staff members,*

*and our students, parents, and*

*community partners.*



# Hawaii's Race

## HAWAII'S DATA

### High-Needs Enrollment

- Economically Disadvantaged Students
- Students with Disabilities
- English Language Learners

51% 54% 53%

11% 11% 10%  
9% 8% 9%

2012 2013 2014

### HSA Proficiency

67% 71% 72%  
Reading Proficiency

55% 60% 60%  
Math Proficiency

### Chronic Absenteeism

22% 20% 21%

### Number of Suspensions

13,169 13,071 12,136

2011 2012 2013

In the past four years, Hawaii's public school system has undergone historic transformation — from the dark days of Furlough Fridays to today's unprecedented growth in student achievement.

Hawaii's come-from-behind win in the highly competitive federal Race to the Top (RTTT) program defied the greatest odds. The state overcame setbacks and forged community partnerships to develop and put in place a bold education reform plan.

### A "HIGH-RISK" RACE:

Change did not come easy. In December 2011, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) placed Hawaii's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status, due to "unsatisfactory performance during the first 14 months of the grant."

### FROM WORST TO FIRST

Faced with potential failure, Hawaii educators and state office staff rallied together and doubled down on reforms to prove detractors wrong. In the two years following the "high-risk" announcement change began to take shape. In February 2013, the USDOE announced the state was off "high-risk" status for its work on standards, assessments and data system development and use.

Thanks to the extraordinary work of educators and leaders from Pahoehoe on Hawaii Island to Waimea Canyon on Kauai, the Department has made tremendous progress rolling out high quality standards and assessments, improving data collection and use, advancing educator effectiveness, supporting our lowest-performing schools, and realigning offices toward our strategic goals.

Then, just days before the start of the 2013-14 school year, the DOE reached a major

RTTT milestone.

In a letter to Gov. Neil Abercrombie dated July 29, 2013, the USDOE wrote, "...the Department has determined that the evidence provided is sufficient to meet the expectation of clear and compelling evidence of substantial progress, and will remove high-risk status for Hawaii's Race to the Top grant in all remaining categories."

Hawaii's efforts through three years were finally validated, and the state now had a green light to finish the race.

"Hawaii is clearly making gains in its reform efforts, as evidenced in the implementation of the Common Core Standards and the progress of its students," said Council of Chief State School Officers Executive Director Chris Minnich. "I applaud Superintendent Matayoshi, Department of Education staff, and educators around the state for their collaboration and determination to improve education for Hawaii students."

### STAYING THE COURSE

Not only is Hawaii the first state to complete the work on time, the state is also leading the nation for gains in student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). It is no doubt a result of the tremendous efforts of educators throughout the islands.

The RTTT grant laid the foundation for Hawaii to keep building on its progress. We know there is no finish line in education, and we will stay the course to provide better opportunities in school and in life for generations to come.

*Our students. Our future. Our promise.*

### HAWAII'S PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Hawaii refocused RTTT implementation on five key areas:

- College- and Career-Ready expectations for all kids with rigorous standards and tests tied to a statewide curriculum.
- Improving access to and use of data to target supports for struggling students, schools, and state offices.



- Supporting great teachers and leaders.
- Building a shared vision for getting the job done by aligning organizational functions to support sustainable reforms.
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

### ZONING IN ON TRANSFORMATION

A compelling chapter of Hawaii's transformation story is the work of the 18 schools that collectively became known as the "Zones of School Innovation" (ZSI). The two ZSI complex areas — Kau-Keaau-Pahoehoe and Nanakuli-Waianae — traditionally struggled the most with student achievement and faced the largest challenges associated with poverty, diverse student demographics and rural settings.

In just four years, ZSI schools made great strides in student achievement, improving

school culture, and strengthening school-community partnerships. Each complex area focused on implementing key priority strategies customized to their schools and communities, including:

- Rigorous learning expectations for all students (Hawaii Common Core);
- Using data to improve instruction and target supports to struggling students (Formative Instruction/Data Teams/Academic Review Teams/Comprehensive Student Supports);
- Supporting new teachers with veteran mentors (Induction and Mentoring); and
- Supporting educators with structured feedback and opportunities for professional growth (Educator Effectiveness System).

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, the Department committed \$6 million over three years for early childhood education subsidies. This commitment allows for more than 200 additional Hawaii children in low-income areas to receive subsidies to attend a high-quality preschool.

In February 2012, ZSI schools began extending learning time and providing

additional professional development days for teachers.

#### SPOTLIGHT: KAU-KEAAU-PAHOA

The Kau-Keaau-Pahoa (KKP) Complex Area covers 65 miles from Hilo to Naalehu, where eight in 10 students come from economically disadvantaged homes. Nearly half are native Hawaiian — a student group that consistently ranks below non-disadvantaged, non-Hawaiian children in reading and math proficiency.

With those challenges in mind, KKP began by focusing on improving the effectiveness of their teachers and school leaders, supported by data — finding ways to extend learning time, and providing access to early childhood education. Schools partnered with the community to assign cultural mentors for new teachers. This helped new teachers understand the culture of the students and better connect with them.

The Complex Area worked as a unit to implement the Hawaii Common Core standards and pilot the Department's Educator

*“It helps them to really see, ‘What are we doing in the classroom? How are we doing it best? What might I want to improve?’ A mentor provides that by meeting with the new teachers on a weekly basis.”*

CAROLINE FREUDIG,  
I&M COORDINATOR, KAUAI

Effectiveness System (EES). A partnership with School Synergy helped shift the culture in schools to one that is rich with data-based, collaborative conversations about improvement.

The results speak for themselves: 80% of teachers in KKP meet the definition of “highly qualified” — up from 50% in 2008.

#### GROWING GREAT TEACHERS AND GREAT LEADERS

Supporting new teachers through Induction and Mentoring is a key to organizational success. In 2013, the Hilo-Waiakea Complex received 10 new teachers, bringing the total to 55 beginning teachers and 49 academic mentors. To ensure the quality of the Department's program, classroom-based academic mentors are assigned to only one beginning teacher and take part in mentor forums and trainings to enhance their coaching and mentoring skills. Topics addressed in mentor forums and trainings thus far include mentor language, coaching skills and observational tools. In

KAU HIGH & PAHALA ELEMENTARY





Between 2012-2014, every teacher and principal in the state received professional development on the new standards, resources on instructional strategies to support student learning, and access to curricular resources: units, lessons, and new textbooks.

The Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE) reinforced the focus on college- and career-readiness with adoption of the new Career- and College-Ready (CCR) Diploma in 2011. The new diploma requirements - beginning with the Class of 2016 - align with the admissions expectations for the University of Hawaii system.

In the original RTTT application, Hawaii committed to implementing new CCR diploma requirements beginning with the Class of 2018. Not wanting to wait on ensuring students were graduating with the courses needed for college- and career-readiness, the BOE and DOE are implementing the new policy two years ahead of schedule, beginning with the Class of 2016.

## SPOTLIGHT: KAILUA-KALAHEO

At the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex Area, the Hawaii Common Core has created a new wave of excitement and engagement among students, teachers and parents. Students are spending more time explaining their thinking and process. Math and literacy skills are integrated across content areas. Students in art classes are expanding their vocabulary and speaking/listening skills with presentations on painters and paintings. In Physical Education, students may use math and literacy skills to explain football plays and analyze their fitness progress throughout the school year. Across all content areas, students are reading and analyzing more complex texts. All of this helps develop the communication and collaboration skills that students will need to be successful in the workplace.

“We don’t have a time where we just do math, or we just do reading, or we just do writing... I think it will be fun. I think it will

partnership with Kamehameha School's Kauhale Kipaipai division, beginning teachers in their first year of teaching have also taken workshops on state/Complex initiatives, classroom management, effective research-based instructional strategies, learner styles, technology resources and much more.

The Kahua program with Kamehameha Schools is also helping ground new teachers in culture via community mentors. Kauai’s Induction and Mentoring program coordinator Caroline Freudig said the combination of addressing both in-the-classroom supports as well as place-based education has been effective.

“It helps them to really see, ‘What are we doing in the classroom? How are we doing it best? What might I want to improve?’” said Freudig. “And a mentor provides that by meeting with the new teachers on a weekly basis. And then through Kahua, we have community members who support the new teachers with, ‘Knowing where they’re teaching, the place they’re in, where those kids are from, what those kids are like.’”

First-year teacher Whitney Rowe said of the 2013-14 school year, “It was really busy, really fun. I’m glad I had a big support group and a mentor through Kahua. It went really well.”

“I think the biggest thing was having that mentor in my classroom, that support, especially with the EES and the SLOs (Student Learning Objectives),” said first-year teacher Lia Nishikura. “Having those special days to work with them and Caroline...it was the best thing for me.”

## COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS

Hawaii leads the nation in adopting rigorous learning expectations and aligned tests for all students (Hawaii Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessments). The Hawaii Common Core was introduced in school year 2012-13 to select grades before going statewide in 2013-14. On its heels are the Smarter Balanced Assessments in school year 2014-2015.



be problem-based and project-based learning and that it will be much more relevant for the kids,” said Kailua-Kalaheo Complex Area Superintendent Suzanne Mulcahy.

## USING DATA, TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION, SUPPORTS

Thanks to years of ongoing system improvements, the Department now has the capacity to use historical data for all students. This access to relevant and timely student data helps inform decisions on governance, management, resource allocation, student supports, and instructional practices. For example:

- Educators now have access to real-time data on absenteeism, behavioral issues, and course grades to quickly identify the students who may be at risk of falling behind. Armed with this information, educators can work to support students before they are off-track.
- Every school now has a structure and process for teacher-to-teacher collaboration based on student data.

The use of data is an increasingly significant part of what we do. The Department recently recognized four

educators as “data champions” for last school year.

On Hawaii Island, Trintje Hironaga has guided KKP’s efforts to become a data-driven complex with the development of the KKP Data Suite, which provides data and tools to schools and complex area staff to guide and monitor school improvement efforts.

Improving standards and achievement for all students requires strong supports. To that end, the Comprehensive Student Support System provides clear guidance and support to schools as they implement a model of tiered student interventions. Under this model, teachers have access to student data through an early warning system that identifies at-risk students across an array of developmental and behavioral challenges, and identifies points where teachers and school leaders can intervene and assign more intensive supports.

## ELEVATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Teachers have the greatest impact on student success in the classroom, while principals have a significant impact on teachers’ ability to deliver instruction effectively.

The state has made great progress in establishing key elements of a new teacher effectiveness system. Work began with a pilot in the ZSIs and expanded statewide in 2013-2014.

Quality standards-based instruction provided by highly trained and qualified teachers is vital to enhancing student performance. This led to the development of the EES to set clear expectations for effective teaching, provide quality feedback and support to improve teacher effectiveness with students, and inform professional development.

Following a two-year pilot, the EES went statewide in 2013-14. Feedback from teachers, principals, and others resulted in changes for 2014-15 to simplify and streamline the effort and differentiate the system among teachers, non-classroom teachers and beginning teachers.

Despite some hesitation over the EES’ implementation and overall purpose, an overwhelming majority of the state’s more than 11,000 teachers were rated “effective” and “highly effective” educators, according to the EES results from school year 2013-14 released during the summer of 2014. The 2013-14 school year represented the first year of statewide implementation with no negative consequences for tenured teachers.

## A SHARED VISION

For the first time, the BOE and DOE have a joint Strategic Plan — laying out the goals, strategies, and targets for the public school system. This enabled the alignment of state, Complex Area and school planning and monitoring. As a result, the Department is now a cohesive system at all levels focused on shared goals for students. From the Strategic Plan to the school’s academic plans, administrators and teachers are tracking and elevating students to ensure all graduate college and career ready.

The Department positioned itself for success by completing a strategic reorganization to align with key RTTT initiatives and engaging the community.



Changes include the establishment of the Office of the Deputy Superintendent and Office of the “Senior” Assistant Superintendent to align departmental offices and accelerate reforms.

Partnerships with businesses and the community were critical to support reform efforts. In Hawaii, a state impacted by its geographic isolation and challenged by its archipelago profile, tight-knit, close communities are the norm. To achieve transformational and sustainable change in education, the Department is committed to continue broadening community support for a shared understanding and vision for student success.

The DOE also improved communication both internally and externally. In July 2013, the Department launched its new website and soon after established a robust Intranet website for staff that increased efficiency and the exchange of information.





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