

BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ)

July 2016

What kind of vision, beyond academic achievement, does the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) have for their public school graduates? On their journey toward answering this question, the Board of Education (BOE), HIDOE, and an array of community partners happened across answers to questions they didn't initially expect. In the end, these leaders in the education community arrived at BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ), laying out six fundamental outcomes to strengthen connections across the *entire public school system and the communities in which they exist*, including students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and community members: a strengthened sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total wellbeing, and Hawai‘i. REL Pacific is currently supporting HIDOE in this effort; the article below describes the formation of BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o and the progress that has been made thus far in its implementation.

Arriving at HĀ

A long and winding road led to the creation of BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ). It began with an audit of all BOE policies by the newly appointed BOE to determine which policies were still relevant, which required amending, and which could be removed

altogether. In 2014, three policies were put before the board for amendment as a package: BOE Policy 2104: Hawaiian Education Programs, BOE Policy 2105: Ka Papahana Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion), and BOE Policy 4000: Focus on Students.

Proposed amendments to [BOE Policy 2104](#) emphasized the importance of Hawaiian education for *all* students in the public school system as a foundation for college, career, and community readiness, and established the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) within HIDOE's Office of the Superintendent. Among other stipulations, the amendment to [BOE Policy 2105](#) requires all Hawaiian Language Immersion Program (Ka Papahana Kaiapuni) teachers be dual qualified to teach in both English and Hawaiian languages, and reinforces the two primary stipulations in the BOE Policy 2104 amendment. [BOE Policy 4000](#), which had last been amended in 1999, originally outlined four general learner outcomes (GLOs) (HIDOE recognizes six GLOs on their website). Those six GLOs are: self-directed learner; community contributor; complex thinker; quality producer; effective communicator; and effective and ethical user of technology. The new amendment to BOE Policy 4000 was intended to produce updated values-based GLOs that reflected the unique cultural context of Hawai‘i.

The amendments to the BOE Policies 2104 and 2105 passed, while amendments to BOE Policy 4000 were unanimously deferred to the student achievement committee, then chaired by Cheryl Ka‘uhane Lupenui. To ensure the community had a strong—and well-informed—voice in the creation of these

GLOs, Mrs. Lupenui formed the BOE Policy 4000 Advisory Work Group, charged with reviewing the current standards and curricula to advise on the recreation of the new Hawai'i-specific GLOs. Committee members included Dawn Kau'ilani Sang (Kau'i Sang), who would later become the director of the Office of Hawaiian Education; director of Ke Kula Niihau O Kekaha, Haunani Seward; executive director of the Pacific American Foundation, Herb Lee; assistant professor at Brigham Young University Hawaii, Kamo'a'e Walk; chief financial officer at Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana, Katie Benioni; director of Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Keiki Kawai'ae'a; Castle-Kahuku complex area superintendent at the time, Lea Albert; then principal of Halau Ku Mana, Mahina Paishon Duarte; DOE project lead, Malama Honua Worldwide Voyage at Hawaii State Department of Education, Marlene Zeug, who would later become the Director of the newly established Office of Community Engagement; public policy advocate at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Monica Morris; and director of teacher education professional development (Kauhale Kipaipai) at Kamehameha Schools, Walter Kahumoku III.

Right from the start, the group was encouraged by then-HIDOE Deputy Superintendent Ronn Nozoe to form the new GLOs with Hawai'i at the center of their thinking, rather than translating the old GLOs into something more Hawaiian. According to Mrs. Lupenui, this guidance opened up the door for the work group to create something authentic and true to Hawai'i. The group

tirelessly researched and analyzed programs and rubrics designed to educate students from a holistic perspective, supporting the strengthening of their cultural competence and character development alongside their academic advancement. They identified the most relevant frameworks to guide their unique process from local, national, and global perspectives. Thirteen key learner outcome models stood out:

1. The existing HIDOE GLOs;
2. Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future (Brendtro, 2009);
3. Nā Honua Maui Ola (University of Hawai'i at Hilo);
4. Nā Lei Na'auao Hawaiian Focused Charter Schools Success Indicators;
5. Kamehameha Schools Working Exit Outcomes Framework;
6. Native Hawaiian Education Council Common Indicators Matrix;
7. Indigenous Cultural Well-being Continuum (Demmert, 2008);
8. Dine Cultural Content Standards;
9. Jackson County Schools General Learner Outcomes;
10. The Alaska Cultural Standards for Students;
11. Partnership for 21st Century Skills 21st Century Student Outcomes;

12. Hawai‘i P-20 Definition of College, Career, and Community Readiness in Hawai‘i; and
13. The University of Portland—International Languages & Cultures Learning Outcomes.

The advisory working group started by exploring what they wanted to see in graduates of the public education system with the initial statements being constructed in the Hawaiian language. They then took the question to their respective communities and gathered feedback from across the state. Over the course of several months, during in-person and virtual meetings, as well as discussions with community members and varied education partners, the six outcomes of BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ) began to take shape. The framework was named Nā Hopena A‘o, as *nā* indicates a plural, *hopena* means outcome, and *a‘o* means both learning and teaching in the Hawaiian language.



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While interpreting the framework’s interdependent parts from Hawaiian into English, Mrs. Lupenui realized, when ordered just right, the six English words formed the acronym “BREATH:” belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total wellbeing, and Hawai‘i. This was incredibly significant as “HĀ” in Hawaiian also means breath. The framework designers felt that this was an unforeseen validation and knew that they were on the right path.

HĀ as System-Wide Policy

When the day came to review the amendments to BOE Policy 4000, the Board made an unprecedented decision: they decided to keep BOE Policy 4000 (the current HIDOE GLOs), and instead reframe Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ) as a new ends policy, a policy that describes an end result, **BOE Policy E-3**. This new policy makes HĀ foundational not only to students, but to the *entire HIDOE system*, including teachers, staff,

As the facilitator and scribe of the process, Mrs. Lupenui says, “The development of HĀ has been a truly community-based effort that gives deeper meaning and purpose to our public education system and connects us back to this special place, Hawai‘i.”

and administration. The policy provides “a framework for the Department [HIDOE] to develop in its employees and students the skills, behaviors and dispositions that are reminiscent of Hawai‘i’s unique context and to honor the qualities and values of the indigenous language and culture of Hawai‘i”.¹ The new policy was assigned to the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE), directed by Kau‘i Sang, for pilot planning and implementation; OHE’s next immediate step was to take HĀ to stakeholders in HIDOE and the community for review. Through this process, it was clear that HĀ would also provide a bridge for families and community members to engage with the system.

What is HĀ?

“In June 2015, the policy was approved by the Hawai‘i BOE as follows:

Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A’o (HĀ)

Nā Hopena A’o (“HĀ”) is a framework of outcomes that reflects the Department of Education’s core values and beliefs in action throughout the public educational system of Hawaii. The Department of Education works together as a system that includes everyone in the broader community to develop the competencies that strengthen a sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total-well-being and Hawaii (“BREATH”) in ourselves, students and others. With a foundation in Hawaiian values, language, culture and history, HĀ reflects the uniqueness of Hawaii and is meaningful in all places of learning. HĀ supports a holistic

learning process with universal appeal and application to guide learners and leaders in the entire school community.

The following guiding principles should lead all efforts to use HĀ as a comprehensive outcomes framework:

- All six outcomes are interdependent and should not be used separately
- Support systems and appropriate resources should be in place for successful and thoughtful implementation
- Planning and preparation should be inclusive, collective and in a timeframe that is sensitive to the needs of schools and their communities
- Current examples of HĀ in practice can be drawn on as sources for expertise
- All members of the school community share in the leadership of HĀ

Rationale: 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.”¹

Response from the field

At the start of 2016, Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi sent out an email communication to all HIDOE employees: “Being mindful of

¹ Hawaii State Department of Education (2016). *Nā Hopena A’o (HĀ)*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/NaHopenaAo>.

HA as we begin a new year.” Superintendent Matayoshi described each of the six aspects of HĀ—belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total wellbeing, and Hawai‘i—noting the importance of “Hawaiian values, language, culture, and history in supporting education efforts across the system,” as well as the importance of character development in parallel with academic learning. Recognizing the last two recipients of Hawai‘i’s teacher of the year awards—[Stephanie Mew](#) and [Catherine Caine](#), who had both cultivated respect and student achievement through character development and mindfulness—the Superintendent called upon all staff to serve as examples of HĀ for students and one another.

According to Jessica Worchel, the Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ) special projects manager within OHE, the response to HĀ from community, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff so far has been overwhelmingly positive, although not without the typical concerns that accompany system-wide change efforts. The team at OHE are currently involved in an iterative process of focused organizational learning, fielding questions, presenting on the framework, and developing supporting materials for the field to support the development of a system-wide implementation plan. Education stakeholders are looking to OHE to outline what’s expected, level-by-level; to describe how HĀ might be connected to other HĀ initiatives; and to provide resources and support for implementation. Many HĀ staff have inquired, *What does HĀ actually look like in practice? How does that look different from*

what currently exists? How does this relate to the GLOs?

These are just some of the questions OHE is currently exploring, with HĀDOE staff, community representatives, other education stakeholders, and REL Pacific, as the design of the pilot takes shape. On March 23, 2016, the Center for Innovation in Education and Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) announced that HĀDOE would be one of 12 to receive an [Assessment for Learning Project grant](#). The grants support educators to fundamentally rethink the core roles that assessment can play to support student attainment of deeper learning. HĀDOE will use this opportunity to identify key conditions and indicators for success along an educational pathway that supports community, college and career readiness. At the completion of this two-year grant, HĀDOE will have a valid and culturally responsive assessment framework grounded in HĀ. This will be one of many frameworks.

Learning from the field

Upon hearing about HĀ, a number of HĀDOE staff have gone immediately back to their classrooms, schools, complex areas, and offices, and have taken action to spread awareness about the groundbreaking policy. These “early adopters” have been invaluable in understanding not only where HĀ already exists, but how OHE might progress in the pilot implementation and the eventual scaling-up process.

One James Campbell High School (Campbell) teacher, Ethan Onipa‘a Porter, gathered a group of fellow educators at the school to

discuss HĀ and how they might further integrate the principles into their classrooms. The group intends to meet quarterly in the next school year to support one another in the process of iterative implementation. Mr. Porter also designed a reflection exercise for use in the classroom based on the six principles of HĀ. When asked about the value of HĀ for students and the community, Mr. Porter commented, “To me, HĀ is really about two things: social justice and economics. This has to be about social justice; we are helping our community come together. We also need to differentiate our students as potential employees and business leaders, give them the ability to attack problems from a different angle than the rest of the world. This outlook can help them solve the world's problems.” Campbell already offers place-based professional development for teachers as well as place-based field trips for students; these activities have the potential to strengthen participants’ sense of Hawai‘i.

On the opposite side of the island of Oahu, on the lush northeast coast, Principal Uilani Kaitoku of Hauula Elementary requested OHE to come to their school and present on HĀ during a teacher professional development session structured around place-based learning. At the event, *keupuna* (elders) from the area talked about the history of Hau‘ula and the families that lived there to intentionally build a sense of belonging. Upon hearing the introductory presentation, staff had many questions for OHE regarding the purpose and nature of this new policy; as word about the new policy spreads, it is clear that a strong interest in holistic character development as well as culture- and place-

based education already existed throughout Hauula Elementary, and in many other schools across the state.

For state office directors and mid-level managers, HIDOE will now offer the State Office Leadership Academy (SOLA), a one-year cohort-based professional development program. The program will launch in August 2016 with a pilot cohort of 16 participants. Among the many intended outcomes of the program, SOLA will support state-level leaders at HIDOE to understand HĀ and to build their capacity to increase awareness and integration of the principles in their respective work spaces. The design of the SOLA program followed a “HĀ process” in that many potential participants were interviewed to contribute to the program design; these interviews, along with research-based best practices, advice from leadership development experts, and feedback from internal and external stakeholders, were vital to ensuring the program will be engaging, relevant, and valuable for HIDOE leadership in general, and in their integration of HĀ system-wide.

For educational officers of HIDOE interested in learning more about HĀ and how they can integrate the principles into their office communities, OHE is offering the Pre-ELI Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike (In Doing, One Learns): Exploring a HĀ Approach to Leadership. The first Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike was held last summer at Papahana Kuaola and Paepae o He‘eia and had such a positive reception that OHE is turning it into a series and this will be the third offering. This program gives educational officers in HIDOE an opportunity to participate in a hands-on,



Participants during the first of the Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike days listen to a Ho'oulu 'Āina staff member. Photo credit: Hawaii State Department of Education

culture- and place-based professional development experience giving education officers a chance to develop relationships; learn more about Native Hawaiian values, leadership approaches, and places of significance; discover where the HĀ framework connects to current HĪDOE initiatives; and determine how HĀ could be applied school- or office-wide.

At the complex area level, Complex Area Superintendent Bill Arakaki of Kapaa-Kauai-Waimea on Kaua'i is exploring how HĀ can be integrated across all of the 20 schools he oversees. Mr. Arakaki is already working with

Mayor Carvalho on his [Kaua'i Nui Kuapapa](#) education initiative, which aims to disseminate traditional knowledge and ways of life, specifically related to the *moku* and *abupua'a* land management systems established on the island in the 1400s. This initiative is a part of the mayor's Holo Holo 2020 Vision, which sets out to engage private and public organizations, residents, and visitors to make better decisions about cultural and environmental sustainability, economic health, and the wellbeing of all—"from keiki to kupuna" (child to elder).

HĀ Beyond HIDOE

One early adopter organization outside HIDOE, Kupu Hawaii, has officially embraced the six HĀ outcomes for their environmental education program, [E2U](#). According to Pa‘ahana Kincaid, the program’s manager, “We feel that [HĀ] focuses on the whole person’s learning and instills values that we respect and strive to embody in our daily lives... As we move forward we hope to have all of our leaders design curriculum that is integrated with Na Hopena A‘o.” The program engages the community and students in hands-on activities to encourage service and work in the fields of environmental stewardship.

Echoing Mr. Porter’s allusion to HĀ as a means to support students’ workforce preparation, the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i, Don Young, said in a public letter of support for BOE Policy E-3 Nā Hopena A‘o, “...these characteristics address the very essence of what employers tell us they are looking for in employees.” Dean Young goes on to say that the College of Education will be using the HĀ principles to bring “clarity to the College with a sense of purpose, sense of place, and provide a unified focus on the desired outcomes of both our K-12 and post-secondary institutions.”

REL Pacific’s role

OHE initially approached REL Pacific in 2015 to consult on the pilot implementation of the HĀ outcomes across several schools—and one district—in the state. Additionally, as OHE was awarded the [Assessment for Learning Project](#) (ALP) grant in March 2016, REL Pacific has been collaborating with OHE on culturally responsive measurement and assessment. OHE’s winning project, “Culturally Responsive Assessment of HĀ Outcomes,” answers a call from ALP to rethink assessments and how they are being adapted to accommodate new forms of personalized learning. To read more about the grant award, please visit the [HIDOE website](#).

Since January 2016, REL Pacific has been serving as a thought partner with OHE, engaging in a productive collaboration to support the development and implementation of this complex, system-wide school improvement effort. REL Pacific has worked to support organizational learning by providing conceptual and technical guidance on an ongoing basis, through in-person meetings, reviews of materials, and participation in events. This process has included constantly asking what is being learned as the efforts unfold, documenting thinking around the HĀ effort, and introducing, as appropriate, core issues, frameworks, and tools that can support research and development. These subjects have included situated cognition, communities of practice, latent variables, factor analysis, assessment design, and Design Based Implementation Research and Improvement Science concepts.

“Culture is an important factor in many aspects of education, including assessments. Hawaii is unique in so many ways, from our language to our culture, it is only fair that we create an evaluation that takes this into consideration and accurately measures our students’ abilities.” Kau’i Sang, director of the Office of Hawaiian Education



Image courtesy of Hawaii State Department of Education

REL Pacific has also provided and discussed the following materials relevant to the concepts found in HĀ with OHE, such as:

- Farrington, C. A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T. S., Johnson, D. W., & Beechum, N. O. (2012). *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners: The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance—A Critical Literature Review*. Consortium on Chicago School Research. 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. Retrieved from <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive%20Report.pdf>
- Duckworth, A. L., & Yeager, D. S. (2015). Measurement matters assessing personal qualities other than cognitive ability for educational purposes. *Educational Researcher*, 44(4), 237-251. Retrieved from <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/44/4/237.full.pdf+html>
- Harlacher, J. (2016). An educator’s guide to questionnaire development. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2016108.pdf
- Kirkhart, K. E. (2010). Eyes on the prize: Multicultural validity and evaluation theory. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 31(3), 400-413.

- Samuels, M., & Ryan, K. (2011). Grounding evaluations in culture. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 32(2), 183-198.
- Oyserman, D. (2015). Identity-Based Motivation. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*. Retrieved from <http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/seminars/Winter2016/oyserman2015ibm.pdf>
- REL Central (2013, November 4). *Teaching Non-Cognitive Skills in the Common Core State Standards*. Retrieved from: <https://www.relcentral.org/news-and-events/webinar-teaching-non-cognitive-skills-in-the-common-core-state-standards/>
- REL Midwest (2013, February 22). *Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance of Adolescents*. Retrieved from <http://www.relmidwest.org/events/noncognitive-factors-shaping-school-performance-adolescents>
- REL Northwest (2016, March 15). *We Belong in School: Interventions to Promote Social Belonging for Educational Equity and Student Success*. Retrieved from <http://relnw.educationnorthwest.org/events/we-belong-school-interventions-promote-social-belonging-educational-equity-and-student>
- REL Pacific (2016, April 14). *Interactive Webinar on Multicultural Validity and Evaluation Theory*. Conducted live, video pending.
- REL West (2016). *Addressing the Effects of Trauma in Schools*. Retrieved from <https://relwest.wested.org/events/329>

*The Board decided what was presented as BOE Policy 4000 should not replace the GLOs, and instead be reframed as a new ends policy, **BOE Policy E-3**, making HĀ foundational not only to students, but to the entire HIDOE system, including teachers, staff, and administration.*

The pilot planning and ALP development are continuing with considerable momentum. A HĀ Summit is scheduled for November 2016, where HIDOE stakeholders will have an opportunity to learn more about HĀ from both OHE and early adopters across system levels. In the fall of 2016, OHE plans to begin on-site observations at pilot sites. If you would like more information on BOE Policy E-3: Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ), please visit the HIDOE webpage, which also includes a contact form: <http://bit.ly/NaHopenaAo>.