

TO: KHS Parents & Ohana, Guardians, Friends (02/06/2026)

KALANI High School

Where the Winds of Knowledge Carry You to a Brighter Future

WEEKLY E-BULLETIN

IMPORTANT DATES...

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1) Monday, February 9 | Institute Day – no students |
| 2) Sunday, February 15 | Freshmen/Sophomore Banquet @ Ala Moana Hotel 5:00pm – 9:00pm |
| 3) Monday, February 16 | Holiday – Presidents’ Day |
| 4) Friday, March 13 | End of 3 rd Quarter |
| 5) Sunday, March 15 | Junior Prom – Koolau Ballroom |
| 6) Thursday, March 26 | Holiday – Kuhio Day |
| 7) Friday, March 27 | Falcons on Fire |
| 8) Friday, April 3 | Holiday – Good Friday |
| 9) Friday, April 3 | Kalani Complex Elementary Track Meet @ Kalani |
| 10) Friday, April 17 | Falcon Fair |
| 11) Friday, May 8 | Senior Last Day |
| 12) Wednesday, May 13 | Senior Awards Night @ Moanalua High School Auditorium |
| 13) Wednesday, May 20 | Graduation at the Stan Sheriff Center - confirmed |
| 14) Monday, May 25 | Holiday – Memorial Day |
| 15) Thursday, May 28 | Last Day for Students – End of 2 nd Semester |
| 16) Friday, May 29 | Last Day for Teachers |

March 16 – 20 : Spring Break

Email address ----- mitchell.otani@k12.hi.us

Vision: Character. Compassion. Community.

Mission : We at Kalani High School create opportunities to discover our passions, purpose, and personal pursuits. A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more.

Ne'epapa: Stronger Together

Kindness 101 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MPVjyv2vDM>

Attendance Reminders

To report an absence:

Call the Office by 8:30 AM on the day of the absence OR

Provide written notification (by parent/guardian, doctor, or dentist) to the school for excused absences prior to the absence or within two days upon return

Request for Early Release:

Provide written notification to the office one day before scheduled release

Parent/guardian requesting immediate release must come to the office for a Student Pass

Student must pick up Student Pass on the day of scheduled early release

Upon return, the Student Pass should be taken to the teacher of each missed class to sign and return to office once completed.

Written Notification of absences/early release should include:

Date note was written

Child’s legal first and last name, and grade as listed on school records

Date, Time, & Reason of tardy/absence/early release

Parent/guardian signature and contact information

Review [Kalani HS Attendance Guidelines](#) for further information.

Congratulations

DECA

Congratulations to all of the 47 Kalani DECA Chapter members who took part in this year's DECA Career Development Conference. This year marks the highest number of winners Kalani has had in the ten years that Mrs. Potterton has been advisor, and reflects the dedication, growth, and support surrounding our students.

The following students placed as finalists in their category (top 6 in the state):

Individual Event Finalists

Accounting Applications - Reese Sekiya, Bradlee Simmons
Apparel and Accessories Marketing - Reece Fujitani
Food Marketing - Stephanie Yeung
Hotel & Lodging Management - Erin Wong
Personal Financial Literacy - Rylan Gubatan
Principles Event: Business Management - Michelle Kabasawa
Principles Event: Entrepreneurship - Yuna Takimoto
Principles of Marketing - Phoebe Feng
Retail Merchandising - Lilyanne Florendo

Team Event Finalists

Business Law and Ethics - Annika Li/Keagan Ocampo
Buying and Merchandising - Kate Jones/Brandalyn Tran
Financial Services Team Decision Making - Logan Chang/Jisung Kang
Hospitality Services - Elijah Chung/Luke Waters
Marketing Management Team Decision Making - Ryder Goto/Morgan Lenoir
Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making - David Summers/Ty Terada, Aiden Nakamura/Justin Wong

Written Event Finalists

Community Awareness Project - Rex Ho, Katie Ta
Start-up Business Plan - Kylie Amine, Madeline Eakin, Kira Ichiyama

A written exam is taken by all DECA members. The following students placed top 3 in the state:

Written Exam

Accounting Applications: *Third Place* - Bradlee Simmons
Apparel and Accessories Marketing: *Second Place* - Reece Fujitani
Business Law and Ethics: *First Place* - Annika Li
Buying and Merchandising: *First Place* - Brandalyn Tran, *Third Place* - Kate Jones
Hotel & Lodging Management: *First Place* - Erin Wong Human Resources Management: *Third Place* - Mia Doma
Marketing Management Team Decision Making: *Second Place* - Ryder Goto, *Third Place* - Morgan Lenoir
Principles Event: Business Management: *Second Place* - Michelle Kabasawa
Retail Merchandising: *Second Place* - Lilyanne Florendo
Travel and Tourism Team Decisions Making: *Second Place* - David Summers

The following students placed top 3 in the state for their role-plays:

Role-plays

Accounting Applications: Bradlee Simmons, Role-Play #1: *First Place*
Apparel and Accessories Marketing: Reece Fujitani, Role-Play #1: *First Place*, Role-Play #2 - *First Place*
Business Law and Ethics: Annika Li/Keagan Ocampo, Role-Play: *First Place*
Buying and Merchandising: Kate Jones/Brandalyn Tran, Role-Play: *First Place*
Financial Services Team Decision Making: Logan Chang/Jisung Kang, Role-Play: *First Place*
Hospitality Services - Elijah Chung/Luke Waters, Role-Play: *Third Place*
Hotel & Lodging Management: Erin Wong, Role-Play #1: *Third Place*
Marketing Management Team Decision Making: Ryder Goto/Morgan Lenoir, Role-Play: *First Place*
Principles Event: Business Management: Michelle Kabasawa, Role-Play - *Second Place*
Principles Event: Entrepreneurship: Yuna Takimoto, Role-Play - *Second Place*
Retail Merchandising: Lilyanne Florendo, Role-Play #1 - *First Place*
Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making - David Summers/Ty Terada - Role-Play: *First Place*; Aiden Nakamura/Justin Wong - Role-Play - *Second Place*

***The following students are DECA Glass recipients (top 3 in the state overall).
They are eligible for this year's International Career Development Conference.***

Trophy Winners

Accounting Applications: *Third Place* - Bradlee Simmons
Apparel and Accessories Marketing: *First Place* - Reece Fujitani
Business Law and Ethics: *First Place* - Annika Li/Keagan Ocampo
Buying and Merchandising: *First Place* - Kate Jones/Brandalyn Tran
Community Awareness Project: *First Place* - Katie Ta, *Third Place* - Rex Ho
Financial Services Team Decision Making: *Second Place* - Logan Chang/Jisung Kang
Hotel & Lodging Management: *Third Place* - Erin Wong
Marketing Management Team Decision Making: *First Place* - Ryder Goto/David Lenoir
Principles Event: Business Management: *Second Place* - Michelle Kabasawa
Principles Event: Entrepreneurship: *Second Place* - Yuna Takimoto
Retail Merchandising: *Third Place* - Lilyanne Florendo
Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making - *First Place* - David Summers/Ty Terada, *Second Place* - Aiden Nakamura/Justin Wong

Additional Announcements:

Erin Wong received a \$500 check from one of the workshops led by Joni B. Redick-Yundt, the Founder and CEO of FAMES Hawaii

Kalani DECA Officers elected to Hawaii DECA State Leadership for 2026–2027:

- VP of Hospitality: Annika Li - VP of Career Development: Rex Ho

Congratulations

2026 High School Select Band

Kainoa Alcain, Trumpet Hope Bayudan, Flute Junyu Blas, Clarinet Rylan Chan, Tenor Sax
Kai Herzog, Trumpet Yuto Kawaguchi, Clarinet Jett Katano, Clarinet Jeannie Kim, Clarinet
Lani Kim, Alto Sax Olivia Kobayashi, Bass Clarinet Kaden Kojima, Trumpet Brandon Lai, Alto Sax
Jayden Lamayo, French Horn Ethan Lewis, Euphonium Samuel McNeil, French Horn
Kobe Miyamasu, French Horn Tanner Nagata, Clarinet Ellie Obara, Clarinet James Oulayrack-Oshiro, Trombone
Erin Suehisa, Clarinet Brandalyn Tran, Oboe Jessica Wiemer, Flute Nagito Yasuda, Alto Sax

2026 High School Honor Band

Jake Hwang, Bassoon Slayter Kamimura, Tuba Desmond Sutton, Flute Peyton-Reese Sylva, Tuba

Congratulations

63rd Annual Hawaii Regional Scholastic Art Awards

7 Gold Keys 10 Silver Key Awards 25 Honorable Mention Awards

Gold Key winners will have their work on display at Capitol Modern starting February 4th.

The awards ceremony for Gold Key winners will be held on February 28th (1-3:30pm)
at the Capitol Modern Museum downtown.

Gold Key Awards

Atona Chan (grade 12) - 2 Gold Keys Awards (one for the Portfolio category) and 3 Silver Key Awards
Cindy Lin Alexandra Knight Adelyn Shelverton Olivia Liu Cael Sneed

Silver Key Awards

Sadie Leong Zimeng (Annie) Li Riona Miyazawa Chelsea O'Brien Russet Sounthala Ellie Tsumoto

Honorable Mention

Atona Chan Shiho Chan Anna Demarco Aidan Giliberti-Ippel Emily Hashimoto Sarah Ing
Michelle Kabasawa Sae-Eun Kim Alexandra Knight Sadie Leong Zimeng Li
Jayden Liang Olivia Liu Mahina Lopez Yueqi Luo Riona Miyazawa Kiran Ngo
Chelsea O'Brien Rose Pak Taylor Shimamura Ty Terada Ellie Tsumoto Bokyeong Yang

Congratulations

American Vision Nominee : ***Atona Chan***

Congratulations to Atona Chan for her Gold Key artwork being included as an American Visions Nominee for the 63rd Annual Hawaii Regional Scholastic Art Awards. Atona won a total of 4 Gold Keys, and 3 Silver Keys overall.

There are only 5 nominees for this award given out of all the gold key works selected in the state of Hawaii, and one of these artists has a chance to win the American Visions Medal on the national level. Sarah Ing won it last year as a junior.

Congratulations

Reese Sekiya and Rodrigo Del Carpio

Reese Sekiya and Rodrigo Del Carpio (Juniors) are Dean's List Finalists for FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC).

They are the only two from the state of Hawaii selected as Dean's List Finalists.

They will be invited to attend FIRST World Championship in Houston April 29 to May 3.

In an effort to recognize the leadership and dedication of *FIRST*'s most outstanding secondary school students, the Kamen family sponsors awards for selected 10th or 11th grade* students known as the *FIRST* Robotics Competition and the *FIRST* Tech Challenge *FIRST* Dean's List Award. Since its introduction in 2010, the *FIRST* Dean's List Award has attracted the attention of prestigious colleges and universities who desire to recruit *FIRST* Dean's List students. Each

Finalist is a great example of student leaders who have led their Teams and communities to increased awareness for *FIRST* and its mission. These students have also achieved personal technical expertise and accomplishment. It is the intention of *FIRST* that these individuals will continue on as great leaders, student alumni, and advocates of *FIRST*. *FIRST* Dean's List Winners – 10 students are selected from the *FIRST* Dean's List Finalists at the *FIRST* Championship.

Congratulations

Kalani 7.0 LifeSmarts Team

Congratulations to the Kalani's 7.0 LifeSmarts team. They had one of the highest scores in this year's online competition which placed them as one of the top 4 teams in the state. LifeSmarts is a consumer education program designed to teach students in grades 6-12 about personal finance, health and safety, the environment, technology, and consumer rights and responsibilities. The Hawai'i LifeSmarts program is locally sponsored by the DCCA's Business Registration Division and Insurance Division, in partnership with HCUL, and is run by the National Consumers League.

Team members : Brandalyn Tran, Nicole Du, Michelle Kabasawa, Zachary Li and Cristian Matache.

Sister School Partnerships – International Travel

Busan Computer Science High School – Korea

Koyo Senior High School – Hiroshima

Obihiro Hakuyo High School – Hokkaido

Iwakuni High School – Yamaguchi

Japan Super Science Fair – Ritsumeikan High School - Kyoto

Osaka Gakuin University / High School

Bihoku High School – Nagoya

Osaka Gakuin University Summer Bridge Program

Chengdu Debate Competition Jeju International Youth Forum

Qinhuangdao Cultural Exchange

Koyo High School - Hiroshima

Welcome Back

We would like to welcome home our delegation that went on a cultural exchange to Hiroshima, Japan.

Koyo Senior High School – Hiroshima is a sister-school to Kalani High School.



Miyajima



Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome



Miyajima

STUDENT SECTION

Project Grad 2026:

Kalani Falcons Project Grad is an all-volunteer effort that is committed to providing our graduating seniors a memorable overnight graduation celebration that is 100% drug and alcohol free. If you have not registered your SENIOR for Kalani Project Graduation 2026, please register now before the registration prices go up. If you are interested in being a part of the 2026 planning committee, please email, kalanipg26@gmail.com for more information on how to get involved. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x_Rxik3nKJY77Fkg38zbJ6IzzJ9FuxW8/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101974132834342025504&rtpof=true&sd=true

Summer School

Dates : June 3 – July 8

8:00am – 1:00pm

1st semester : June 3 – June 19 [Holiday : June 11] 2nd Semester : June 22 – July 8 [Holiday : July 3]

Courses to be offered :

Modern History of Hawaii / Participation in Democracy U. S. History World History
Physical Education Health

Remedial courses : TBD

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

SUMMER INTERNSHIP/OTHER EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Mrs. Lisa Hayashi College and Career Counselor lisa.hayashi@k12.hi.us 808-305-0556
SCHEDULE A MEETING (Students only) Visit our Kalani HS College & Career Site

Check our website for more information – <https://sites.google.com/k12.hi.us/kalanicounselorscorner/college-and-career>

Congratulations

Questbridge

Yijia Wang - Matched with Stanford University

Congratulations

Jeannie Kim

Boston College Nursing Program

Kalani Explore Major Expo

Kalani High School hosted its first Explore Major Expo for students in grades 9–12. University of Hawaii, Mānoa shared insights on majors, high school preparation, expectations, and opportunities. Students attended 30-minute advisory sessions to explore interests, alongside music, athletics, and outreach programs. The event encouraged curiosity, planning, and informed decision-making for their post-high school planning.

Thank you for all your help and support with Monday's Explore a Major Expo! It went really well and we received a lot of positive feedback from both UH and the students! We hope to be able to continue this next year in some sort of way.

Upcoming events:

Interested in Playing College Sports?

Join our Informational session on Tuesday, 2/3 during advisory in the library.

Learn about NCAA eligibility requirements and helpful tips you need to know to better prepare yourself throughout high school. Sign up by filling out this [google form](#).

Serve & Protect Explore Careers in Service during advisory in the library on February 27th.

This is for military branches and our emergency services. Once that gets planned out in detail. Look for info email.

Ongoing events:

Many colleges visit Kalani High School to share more information about their school. Please visit our ongoing calendar of visits. These visits are open to Kalani students only. <https://sites.google.com/k12.hi.us/kalanicounselorscorner/college-and-career/college-visits-presentations-meetings-slides?authuser=0>

College Admission Counselor Visits

During these meetings, you will meet the college admission counselor for Hawaii applicants, learn more about the school, programs and majors offered, the application procedures and requirements, and have a chance to ask questions. Students need to sign up using their SCOIR account. Open to Kalani students grades 9-11.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iz2tLh8e6InR8oa5Za8tLL0Z0q0G6xBqWR15wQnXCM/edit?usp=sharing>

FAFSA Financial Aid Webinars

Sign up for virtual webinars occurring every Wednesday through Hawaii P-20 to learn more about financial aid.

Open to all students and families. <https://collegeiswithinreachhawaii.com/Upcoming-Events/>

College Visits

Pick up an activity pass from the College and Career Center in the Library
Ask your teacher for approval (sign up for NO more than 3 visits for the same class period)

****Students who have off campus during a college visit do not need a pass to attend****

ATHLETICS

Congratulations

OIA JV Paddling Champions : Boys – Girls – Mixed : 1st Place in all 3 divisions

OIA Eastern Division Champions

Girls Varsity Basketball

Boys Varsity Swimming and Diving

Boys Varsity Soccer

Boys Junior Varsity Soccer : Boys Junior Varsity Boys Soccer lose 2-1 in OIA Championship Match

WINTER SPORTS

Girls Basketball – Eastern Division Champions OIA – 2nd Place HHSAA – top 8

Boys Soccer – Eastern Division Champions OIA – 2nd Place HHSAA – top 4

Swimming – Boys Junior Varsity East 1st Place Girls Junior Varsity East 1st Place

Boys Varsity East 1st Place

Girls Varsity East 3rd Place

02/13 HHSAA Trials

02/14 HHSAA Finals and Diving

OIA Varsity Swimming and Diving Championship

Boys Varsity – 2nd Place

1st Place : Jayden Tran – 100 Free

2nd Place: Wyatt Kawagishi _ Diving Jayden Tran – 200 Free

Boys 200 Free Relay: Kai Wolfe, Nicholas Xu, Hugo Lum, Jayden

Boys 400 Free Relay: Kai Wolfe, Nicholas Xu, Hugo Lum, Jayden Tran

3rd Place: Christian Malalis – Diving Ryan Matsumoto – 500 Free

4th Place : Remington Whitmore – Diving Hugo Lum – 200IM

5th Place : Hugo Lum – 100 Free Nicholas Xu – 100 Back

OIA Varsity Swimming and Diving Champions

Girls Varsity – 3rd Place

3rd Place : Hannah Sanders : 100 Breast

4th Place : Hannah Sanders - 200IM Sumie Yamada – 100 Fly

5th Place : Sumie Yamada – 100 Breast

Girls Medley Relay – Hannah Sanders, Lillian Terry, Choko Uchida, Ylang Valencia

Wrestling

OIA Dual Champions

02/07 OIA Eastern Division Championship @ Moanalua

02/13 OIA Championship @ Leilehua

02/14 OIA Championship @ Leilehua

02/27 HHSAA Championship @ NBC

02/28 HHSAA Championship @ NBC

Paddling

OIA JV Paddling Champions : Boys – Girls – Mixed : 1st Place in all 3 divisions

OIA Varsity

Girls - 4th Place

Boys - 3rd Place

Mixed - 3rd Place

All three teams qualified for HHSAA Tournament

02/07 HHSAA Championship @ Keehi Lagoon

Season Completed

Girls Soccer – East 4th Place – OIA 5th Place

HHSAA – Kalani 1 – Kamehameha Maui 4

Boys Basketball – Division II 4th Place after regular season

OIA Play-offs : Kalani 57 – Roosevelt 58

JV Baseball

JV Tennis – Eastern Division 2nd Place

OIA Semi-Finals vs. Mililani Kalani 2 – Mililani 3

SPORTS OFFERINGS 2025-26

SPRING

Spring Sports Registration deadline is January 30th, 6:00 pm

JV = junior varsity, V = Varsity, B = Boys, G = Girls

BASEBALL (V)

B/G GOLF (V)

B/G JUDO (JV/V)

G SOFTBALL (V)

B/G TENNIS (V)

B VOLLEYBALL (JV/V)

G WATER POLO (V)

G FLAG FOOTBALL (V)

Department of Education requirements for athletic participation:

- Current Department of Education Athletic Physical
- Department of Education Consent and Assumption of Risk form per sport. (1 sport per form)
- Concussion Management Student Consent
- Need a physical? We encourage you to take your child to their regular doctor. Those who want a physical quicker please contact your nearby Urgent Care facility to inquire about walk-in physical appointments. (Fee may be charged). Don't forget to download and take the physical form with you.

Kalani High School requirements for athletic participation:

- Completion and submission of Athletic Registration (New to Kalani? Create a new account and remember your password. Returnees log in with their password. Sign up and try out for a team)
- Once selected to a team, student-athlete will pay the \$80.00 ASET Fee

Athletic Supply, Equipment & Transportation (ASET) \$80.00

Once your child has been selected to a team, parents will receive an email asking you to log into your child's account to pay the \$80.00 ASET fee. The amount of money allocated by the DOE for Athletic Transportation is much less than is needed considering the current cost of buses. This fee (pays for buses and other transportation costs) is charged once per school year regardless of the number of teams your child gets selected for.

The **ASET Fee** is charged once per school year for the first sport a student plays.

- If your child played a fall sport this year, you won't need to make any additional payment.
- Payment is made **online through GoFans** once your child is selected for a team.
- We no longer accept in-person payments.
- A small transaction fee applies.

Alumni

<https://hawaiipublicschools.org/2026-alumni-spotlight-kathryn-ko-kalani-high/>

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2026/02/02/sports/curtis-murayama-jabsom-grad-ko-hurdled-obstacles-to-become-rare-gem-in-medical-field/>



CURTIS MURAYAMA / CMURAYAMA@STARADVERTISER.COM

Kathryn Ko stood by her Ko Iki mini-museum outside the John A. Burns School of Medicine. This exhibit “Carrying Capacity” was by Gaye Chan, former chair of Art and dean at the University of Hawaii. Chan took discarded baling straps and weaved them into baskets.

Sometimes in life, the timing is just not right. But oftentimes, things work out regardless. Such was the case for early 1970s Kalani track standout and state high jump champion Kathryn Ko, who was a burgeoning female athlete before the existence of Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972.

Oh, but look what the world gained.

Ko became the John A. Burns School of Medicine’s first female neurosurgeon in 1983 — JABSOM produced its second female neurosurgeon in 2023 and its first Native Hawaiian female neurosurgeon in Andie Conching in 2025 — and her career path skyrocketed from there. She went on to become a renowned ambidextrous, life-saving neurosurgeon in New York and later an artist who puts on gallery exhibits.

I mentioned in my previous column on Kalani’s golden age of athletes (published on Dec. 15) that, after enjoying lengthy conversations, I would tell more of their stories.

Here's hers:

Ko was an athlete at Kalani — she still considers herself one while still keeping active — and competed in the 100, 220, 440, relays and high jump and also ran cross country. She was a member of the 1972 Hawaii Junior Olympics contingent that traveled to compete in the nationals in Spokane, Wash.

Part of that group became legendary Wahine volleyball stars in outside hitter Waynette Mitchell (Radford 1973, state records in shot put and discus) and outside hitter Cheryl Grimm (Kaiser 1976, state champ in 100, 220 and 440, with her 220 time a state record at the time). Mitchell and Grimm were outside hitters and helped the University of Hawaii win its first national volleyball title in Carbondale, Ill., in 1979.

“She was a good athlete, very friendly, nice. But she was a competitor,” Mitchell, a teacher at Radford for the past 40 years, recalled of Ko in a recent telephone interview. (They actually had a conversation a few days ago.) “I’m not surprised that she’s very successful. Whatever she did, she did it wholeheartedly. And she was smarter than you know what. “If I had to have an operation, I would go to her. Hopefully, she won’t charge me a whole lot.”

“She was always good to me,” said Grimm, a retired HPD sergeant, in a phone interview from her home in Las Vegas. “Her and Waynette always tucked me under their wing and took good care of me because I was so young. ... I was the baby (She had just finished eighth grade.)” But Grimm, who said she “could touch the rim” despite being a 5-foot-5 hitter, said Ko was “very different, carefree ... it kind of blew my mind when I found out she became a neurosurgeon.”

It’s more mind-blowing to see what Ko had to overcome to become one. She endured racial bias, gender discrimination and lots of bullying. After missing her senior year at Kalani after tearing ligaments in her left foot, Ko attended the University of Hawaii and got her undergraduate degree in zoology. She studied “animal medicine, but I migrated to the human side.”

She ascended through 16 years of the educational process, including residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York and a fellowship at Washington, to become a rarity — a female neurosurgeon who taught herself to become ambidextrous and later became an artist with a master’s in fine arts with the ability to perform both disciplines proficiently with either hand.

She probably needed both hands to fend off the jabs thrown her way early on. “I was in the operation room, and the head surgeon said, what is Ko? ‘Well, I’m Korean, German, Irish’ and he goes, ‘I’m sorry to hear that.’ “That was his answer! All the nurses looked down at the floor and everybody felt bad.

“That pretty much conceptualizes the difficulty going through, not only as a women in that era, where you had to put up with a lot of comments, but also, they didn’t know what Ko was. When I explained it to them. Being bi-racial in the early ’80s, people didn’t understand it.”

Ko didn’t face just the mental challenges but physical obstacles as well, being a 5-foot-7 female in a world dominated by larger males. And despite her athletic background she said, “You can never match the upper body strength of a man, no matter how much you work out.” So Ko had to navigate through the physical “mechanical things” as well as the mental battle.

“Surgery is a physical thing. Besides being able to think on the operating field, surgery is physical. And the tools were made for men. Made for men’s size hands,” she said. “So you have to figure out how that tool can work for you within the sphere of your physical abilities. “(Besides) the mechanical things, the other things, the comments, the this, the that. Sometimes they put you down in public. They can be very aggressive, they undermine you. I choose not to focus on that. I choose to push everybody forward, including the guys that were mean. And there were a handful.”

She even faced some blow-back during an interview process, where a male professor tried to put limits on her athletic lifestyle. Ko recalled during the interview telling the professor that she was “very active. ‘I’m a runner.’ His immediate response was “‘Oh, you won’t run anymore.’”

Ko said to herself, “Listen, buddy, (and so) I ran. He should have said, go for everything you can possibly do ... be a neurosurgeon, go be an artist, be a mother ... that thinking (back then) was never there.”

These challenges led her to eventually writing a book titled “The Survival Bible for Women in Medicine.” The synopsis reads: “This is the first practical women’s guide on how to succeed in medical residency. Herself a practicing neurosurgeon who survived 6 years of residency, 2 years of fellowship, and over 1,000 nights on call, author Kathryn Ko explains in detail how women can finish residency in top form while remaining truly feminine and not missing out on life.”

Ko also found another outlet in art, which she admitted might have “saved” her life. At about the 15-year mark of her career and now established, Ko — who says she was initially “terrible” at art — got her master’s in fine arts. (Her artwork can be found on Instagram at @doc_ambidexter.) She says there’s not much difference between a pencil and a scalpel.

“The transition between being a neurosurgeon and being an artist is not as difficult as one would imagine — you’re channeling something through your hand that could make a big impact,” Ko said. “One thing about being an artist (is) that you can cartoon ... you can highlight some behaviors that bothered you in the past in a way that is expressed in humor,” she said. “Humor is a very good tool for showing what happened to you in a nice light. So I choose to use humor to highlight some of the behaviors that I hope women or anybody on the outskirts doesn’t have to go through today.”

What was even more difficult to master, she said, was teaching herself to become ambidextrous, which came out of necessity. A late sleeper, Ko had difficulty staying awake during lectures in UH med school. Back then, students had to take notes in class. There were no cellphone recording devices, and lectures weren’t recorded and put online simply because the world wide web didn’t exist back then.

“My mother was left-handed, but I’m (naturally) right-handed. So I observed her through life,” Ko said. “I’m a night owl, and medical school starts at 7-8 in the morning. It was difficult for me to sit through the lectures. ... Because I would be sleeping at 3 in the morning, not because I was partying. That’s my circadian rhythm. I would go to class, but I would have a hard time staying awake for the lectures.” So one day, in order to maintain her laser focus during lectures, Ko decided to switch to taking notes with her left hand. “By the time I was getting residency, mid- residency, end of residency, I was very proficient with the left hand,” she said. “So actually the handwriting is both hands now. And surgery was amazing.”

[“One thing about the operating room, though, is that the tools are made for right-handers, so you become aware of how difficult it is to be a left-handed person in a right-handed world. Ko said becoming a self-taught ambidexter was “the hardest thing I ever did and the best thing I ever did. Harder than becoming a neurosurgeon. ... because it activated the other side of my brain.”](#)

Ko, who also can converse with patients in Spanish, continues to live in New York and work in her medical field, “working for the NYPD and on the medical board.” Neurosurgery, she said, has brought her much satisfaction. “It’s one of the fields where you get paid to do good,” she said in a podcast. “If you really like science and really like medicine and you have a hankering for service, you cannot beat the feeling you get from making a difference in someone’s life. “It’s something that rises above money. It rises above almost everything.”

She returns to Hawaii annually to “escape” the New York winters. Ko also maintained her connection with the JABSOM by founding the Ko Iki Mini-Museum, a small display outside the Kakaako campus that is a participatory art project for students to display their talents beyond medicine. She also sponsors the school’s holiday card design contest.

“If you want to have a rich life — not financially, but a rich life — it’s really good to dabble in a lot of different areas as you’re growing up,” Ko said. “Don’t close yourself to one career path unless that’s all you want to do. If you’re passionate about something else ... it could be cooking, film-making, dress-making, sewing ... it actually brings more to your career than you could have imagined.”

For Ko, 70, overcoming the many obstacles remains one of her biggest satisfactions. “My biggest celebration is I came through it while remaining kind, remaining dignified, with high ethics and not being angry about it. ... I hope people will say that I maintained my kindness throughout my career. And one of the few places you can get it is in Hawaii.”

Annual Notice of Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Statement

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion. This requirement extends to all of the Department's programs and activities, including employment and admissions as applicable. If you have difficulty understanding English, you have the right to receive language assistance at no cost to you. Please contact your school's principal for more information. For the Department high schools that offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs of Study in arts and communications, business, health services, industrial and engineering technology, natural resources, and public and human services, there are no admission criteria. Department high schools will take steps to assure that the lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in CTE programs and will provide equal access to designated youth groups. The Department does not tolerate acts of harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion is encouraged to report such harassment. Students and parents may report allegations of discrimination or harassment to the school's administrator or to the Department's Civil Rights Compliance Branch at the address listed below. The Department is committed to conducting prompt investigations. Support, including counseling and educational resources, will be available to students who are harassed as well as to students found to have engaged in acts of harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion. Students found to have engaged in harassment may be disciplined up to and including suspension if circumstances warrant. Students, parents, and Department staff should work together to prevent harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion. The Department will not tolerate retaliation for reporting discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion, and will take steps to protect those who wish to report the discrimination or harassment. Please direct inquiries regarding Department nondiscrimination policies to:

Civil Rights Compliance Branch
Hawaii State Department of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
(808) 586-3322 or relay
CRCB@k12.hi.us

Beth Schimmelfinnig, Director
Rhonda Wong, Compliance
Aaron Oandasan, Title VI
Toby Yamashiro, Title VII
Nicole Isa-Iijima, Title IX
Krysti Sukita, ADA/504

Inquiries concerning discrimination and/or harassment may also be referred to the Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education.

Continuous Notice

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HSDOE) and its schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion in its programs and activities. Please direct inquiries regarding Department nondiscrimination policies as follows:

Civil Rights Compliance Branch
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AHERA

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) which mandated the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule, 40 CFR Part 763. It requires all primary and secondary school buildings to be inspected by AHERA accredited inspectors and to identify all asbestos-containing building materials. The rule

further requires the development of a management plan by an AHERA accredited management planner that is based on the findings of the inspection. The management plan outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers in our school. In February 2001, Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 11-502 was adopted by the Hawaii State Legislature. These rules essentially mirror the requirements of the AHERA regulations. In both cases, the rule requires our school to notify parents, teachers, and employees of the presence and status of asbestos containing material in our school buildings.

The initial inspection of our school was conducted in 1958 and identifies some asbestos-containing materials. Since that time, we continue to conduct periodic surveillance and triennial re-inspections to ensure that the asbestos-containing materials remain in good condition and do not pose a hazard to our students and staff. An asbestos management plan was drafted based on our initial inspection and submitted to the Hawaii State Department of Health. It outlines in detail the methods we will use to maintain the material in a safe manner. The management plan is updated regularly as asbestos is removed or conditions change. A copy of the management plan is on file in the administrative office and is available for your review during our regular school hours. Should you have any questions, please call the school at 808-305-0500.

Archived

US News 2025 Best High Schools

Kalani High School is ranked first within Hawaii (non-charter public schools).

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/hawaii>

Congratulations

Kalani High School Named to Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll

College Board announced that Kalani High School has been named to the 2025 Advanced Placement (AP) Program School Honor Roll, earning Silver distinction. The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools whose AP programs are delivering results for students while broadening participation. Schools can earn this distinction annually based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness. Kalani High School is the only school in the State to receive a Silver Distinction – no Hawaii school received a Gold Distinction.

Kalani High School had 57% of seniors who took at least one AP Exam during high school, 48% of seniors scoring a 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam and 14% of seniors who took 5 or more AP Exams.

AP Courses Offered : 17 Sections Taught : 29 Number of teachers Teaching AP : 14 671 students

National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalist

Ivan Tse

On September 10, 2025, officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced the names of the more than 16,000 Semifinalists in the 71st annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically talented high school seniors have the opportunity to continue in the competition for some 6,930 National Merit Scholarships worth \$26 million that will be offered next spring. In October 2024, Ivan took the PSAT/National Merit Qualifying Test and met the requirements to enter the 2026 NM Scholarship Program. He is one of 10 Hawaii public school students recognized.

National Merit Scholarship Program Commended Student

Bryce Hara Jayden Tran

On September 11, 2025, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation released the names of approximately 34,000 Commended Students based on a national selection score of 210. These students are also being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. *“Those being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success. These students are vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation, and we hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities.*

Model UN Conference

Punahou Competition

Best Delegate Winners: Ivan Tse Morgan Lenoir Ryder Goto

Outstanding Delegate Winners: Mirah Levine

Verbal Accommodation Winners: Leala Florendo David Summers Bryce Hara

David Lenoir

All-American Model United Nations Travel Team

Congratulations

Atona Chan

Congratulations to Atona Chan for being accepted by the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design.

Center for Tomorrow’s Leaders

Class of 2026 Fellows

Mia Nishiguchi

Congratulations

The Honolulu District Science and Engineering Fair Team concluded their reviews of all projects and informed Kalani High School that the following 10 projects will be competing in HonSEF 2026:

1. 3D Printed Biodegradable Skin Scaffolds Using Cross-linked Polymers to Predict Cell Regeneration
2. Aloha Red: *Hylocereus Costaricensis* and *Hibiscus Rosa-Sinensis* as Natural Colorant Alternatives to Red 40
3. A Toxic Tide: The Impact of Common Sunscreen Chemicals on Hawaiian *Ulva Fasciata*
4. Creating a Medical Device to Facilitate Greater Upper Mobility
5. Examining effectiveness of natural detector molecules in place of synthetic detector molecules
6. Examining the Effects of Sunscreens on *E. mathaei* and *T. gratilla* Embryos and Larvae

7. Exploring the Use of Hybrid Post-Quantum Key Exchange in TLS 1.3
8. Fused Deposition Modeling of Activated Carbon Fiber-Reinforced PLA Filters for Low-Cost Microplastic Removal
9. Infusing Wound Dressings with Plant Pigment to Monitor pH Levels
10. Study of EDTA Acid to Break Down Albumin Aggregates for Alzheimer's Disease Research

2025-2026 MTNA Performance Competitions

Hawai'i State Division

Junior Performance (strings) : Hawai'i State Winner: Evangeline Tjoeng

Junior Performance (woodwinds) : Alternate: Desmond Sutton

Senior Performance (Woodwinds) : Alternate: Zhi Yi Chen, student of Aileen Kawakami

Honua Scholars Laulima Symposium

1st Place : Sarah Lee, Ella Lam & Kalea Santos: Honua Pitch Competition : Medical Innovation: Rescuespen

2nd Place : Isebelle Lam & Summer Hall: Honua Pitch Competition and Honua Proposal Competition:
Medical Innovation: Targeted Knee Thermotherapy Device

Jeju International Youth Forum

The students participated in discussions involving a variety of topics to improve their respective countries.

Students proposed solutions to real-life problems.

Chaperone : Ms. Kaneko

Students : Tamar McMillan-Zilberman + Mirah Levine + Qian Chen + Jeannie Kim

Japan Super Science Fair

The fair aims to cultivate scientific thinking, promote learning across different subjects and cultures, and create friendships through curiosity and discovery.

Chaperones : Ms. Hamasaki and Mr. Okawa

Students : Rodrigo Del Carpio Sydnie Melemai Ivan Tse Sara Lau Miki Okata

Chengdu Debate Challenge

Chaperone : Scott Melemai Bryce Hara and Anson Li captured 4th place.

Kalani High School Model UN Team

Model United Nations Conference at Vancouver, British Columbia

H-USS - Historical Senate

Mirah Levine - Outstanding Delegate Bryce Hara - Honorable Delegate

HCC Historical Crisis Committee

Ivan Tse - Outstanding Delegate Ryder Goto - Best Research

UNSC- United Nation Security Council

David "Morgan" LeNoir – Best in Committee

Results from January 17 MUN conference at Mililani.

Kalani had delegates in two committees and we got best delegate for both of them : Anson Li and Ty Terada.

Kalani also received the best researcher : Bryce Hara and Verbal Commendation for Lino Tseng and Ivan Tse.

Morgan LeNoir went to Columbia University MUN in New York.

Received Best Delegate in his committee on French Wars on Religion.

DECA

Kalani High School returned from representing Kalani at DECA's national leadership conference in Arlington, VA.

Students : Rex Ho Annika Li Brandalyn Tran

Advisor : Mrs. Lisa Potterton

Hawaii News Now Feature

Halia Kaaua

OGU Sister School Partnership

Kalani High Staff and students returned from visiting Osaka Gakuin High School

Chaperones : Lisa Hayashi Rei Akasaki Dan Hamada

Students : Kira Ann Ichiyama Madeline Eakin Jayhee Hasty Kylie Amine

Isaac Kim Shota Nakamura Daigo Tokunaga Jett Kume Ace Kume

Sports

Congratulations

Fall Sports

HHSAA Champion – Christina Kidd

HHSAA Runner-up : Girls Bowling

OIA Champions

Girls Junior Varsity Crosscountry

OIA Runner-up : Girls Air Riflery Boys Air Riflery Girls Bowling

OIA Eastern Division Champions

Girls Soft-Tennis Girls Air Riflery Girls Bowling Girls Junior Varsity Crosscountry

Soft-Tennis All Stars

1st Team All-Stars : Lexi Duldulao Sydney Lin Conner Lin Tyka Ching

2nd Team All-Stars : Isabella Lee Haley Smith Jasmine Uyesono Breydi Nuibe

Player of Year: Lexi Duldulao

Crosscountry All Stars

1st Team All-Stars : Seita Takinishi Rui Imai Ashlyn Wang

2nd Team All-Stars : Oscar Richardson Jisung Kang Hayden Bishop

2nd Team All-Stars : Tricia Tengan Ella Kimura Jerney Martin Anela Ohelo

Volleyball All Stars

2nd Team All-Stars ; Rohm Takamoto

Honorable Mention : Hana Engelhardt Shayla Harris Kyrly Kiyabu Mira Lum Marie Muir

Samantha Niide Suzue Shower Ariana Taylor

Dr. Michael Ida

Computer Science Honor Society Teachers Award

CSTA Hawaii is pleased to recognize Dr. Michael (one of three teachers) at the annual Computer Science PD Summit.

Congratulations for his willingness to go above and beyond for your students.

Alumni in the News

Jill Takasaki Canfield (Class of 1984), Hawai'i Literacy executive director

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/11/07/editorial/name-in-the-news/5-questions-jill-takasaki-canfield-hawaii-literacy-executive-director/>

Kalani grads from the early-'70s proving to be the school's golden age

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/12/15/sports/hawaii-prep-world/curtis-murayama-kalani-grads-from-the-early-70s-proving-to-be-the-schools-golden-age/>

Overcoming racial and Hawaii bias in MLB should mean more than World Series victory for Lenn Sakata

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2026/01/05/sports/curtis-murayama-overcoming-racial-and-hawaii-bias-in-mlb-should-mean-more-than-world-series-victory-for-lenn-sakata/>