



Governor's E-Newsletter

December 20-26, 2003



Aloha and Welcome from the Governor's Office in Hawai`i!

It is with pleasure that we send you this e-newsletter.

Aloha and Happy Holidays from the Governor's Office in Hawai`i!

Major Headlines

Governor Lingle and Lt. Governor Aiona Send Holiday Greetings

Governor's Education Reform Plan Receives Positive Reviews

2004 Budget Focuses on Education, Health Care, Economy, Environment and Public Safety

Governor Addresses Graduates of Youth Challenge Academy

State Secures Over \$18 million in Federal Funds for Hilo Veterans Home

Governor Lights Chanukah Menorah

Governor Lingle and Lt. Governor Aiona Send Holiday Greetings



Happy Holidays from Governor Lingle and Lt. Governor Aiona!

[Read their holiday message in .pdf format.](#)

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Citizens Achieving Reform in Education

Governor's Education Reform Plan Receives Positive Reviews

Governor Lingle's top 2004 legislative initiative for improving the academic achievement of Hawai'i's public school students continues to receive extensive media coverage and positive public responses. This included major stories in the Honolulu Advertiser, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Pacific Business News, as well as newspapers on the neighbor islands, along with numerous letters to the editor. Much of the intensive media interest was generated after CARE (Citizens Achieving Reform in Education) released its final report to the public, through the Governor on December 15, 2003. Governor Lingle formed this independent 25-member advisory group to gather advice from leading education

researchers and from residents throughout the islands about how best to improve student achievement. The report concludes that the structure of Hawai`i's public education system is fundamentally flawed by a diffusion of responsibility among different executive agencies, leading to paralyzing complexities and delays in many daily operations. Recommendations from CARE include:

- Clarifying the roles of executive agencies and establishing accountability for student achievement.
- Sending more money directly to classrooms by replacing the existing Board of Education and Department of Education with a decentralized system of governance which will require fewer administrators.
- Creating local school boards, elected by popular vote in each district to provide support and oversight to the local schools in their community.
- Empowering principals to function as true leaders, much like CEOs in other organizations. Principals would have much greater decision-making authority and concurrently be held accountable for student success.
- Providing open and fair state funding for schools by establishing an Education Standards Board that would distribute funds and provide oversight across the system.
- Supporting public charter schools by giving them fair and adequate funding for facilities and operations.
- Enabling students to attend the public school of their choice, if space is available. Children living in the school neighborhood would receive first preference. Click www.care.hawaii.gov for more information on CARE.

"Proposals to allow Hawai`i's public schools to control millions of dollars under a new student spending formula and empower principals to make critical decisions for student achievement have gained wide support." - Legal, legislative battles will target school system, Pacific Business News, December 22, 2003. [Read the entire article.](#)

"Setting up local school boards requires a state constitutional amendment that must be ratified by the voting public. Legislators should give the public a chance to vote on Lingle's plan. Keeping it off next fall's ballot will simply mean the lawmakers think voters are incapable of thinking for themselves." - Voters should decide reform, The Maui News - editorial, December 18, 2003. [Read the entire editorial.](#)

"It's time to put this perennial question to rest. Place the issue on the ballot and let it be decided so we can move forward as directed by the true majority of the people." - Laura H. Thielen, Board of Education member and CARE committee member, Put local school boards question to a vote, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, December 22, 2003.

"The biggest problem in public education is that many decisions aren't being made by the right people. Many decisions affecting student performance are made by bureaucrats in the upper administrative levels of the Department of Education who are not sensitive to the particular conditions faced by schools. Instead, these decisions should be made at the school level. The CARE committee recommends giving principals the authority to make these decisions."
- John Kawamoto, Let's move forward with decentralization, Honolulu Advertiser,

December 22, 2003.

"When I think of all the wasted lives and money that I observed with the current educational structure, I know Linda Lingle is right to want each district to be responsible and accountable for itself." - Concetta DiLeo, Hawai`i's public schools failing special education students, Honolulu Advertiser, December 21, 2003.

Interested in supporting the Governor's education reform initiatives, write her today at governor.lingle@hawaii.gov.

2004 Budget Focuses on Education, Health Care, Economy, Environment and Public Safety

Governor Lingle submitted this week to the State Legislature a Supplemental Budget which asked for an additional \$539.3 million in capital improvement projects. These funds focus on the Governor's high-priority areas of education, health care, the economy, the environment and public safety. "One of the constants we heard from residents during the 'Talk Stories' was the need to repair and upkeep our existing public facilities and core infrastructure, many of which have been neglected over the years and fallen into disrepair," Governor Lingle said. Read more in the [Honolulu Advertiser](#), [Honolulu Star-Bulletin](#) and the [Pacific Business News](#).



Governor Lingle presents students of the Hawai`i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy with their certificates of completion. Photo courtesy of Rodel Eleccion.

Governor Addresses Graduates of Youth Challenge Academy

The 116 graduating students of the Hawai`i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy got an early holiday present this past weekend when they received their high school diplomas and certificates of completion. Governor Lingle delivered the keynote address at the graduation ceremony for the 19th Class - the largest in Academy history. The Academy, operated by the Hawai`i National Guard since 1994, provides 16- to 18-year-old "at-risk" youth a second chance to obtain their high school diplomas and become productive citizens. There are 29 Youth Challenge Academies in 25 states and territories. A few years ago, Hawai`i's Youth Challenge was selected as the best in the nation.



Governor Lingle announced a federal grant of nearly \$18.4 million for construction of a long-term care home in Hilo for military veterans as Lt. Governor Aiona, David Burge, director of Spark M. Matsunaga Veterans Administration Medical and Regional Office Center, and Tom Driskill of Hawai`i Health Systems Corporation look on.

State Secures Over \$18 million in Federal Funds for Hilo Veterans Home

Hawai`i has received \$18,395,000 in matching funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for construction of a 95-bed long-term care home and adult day care center on the Hilo Medical Center (HMC) campus. The federal grant, which complements \$10 million in state funding approved in August by Governor Lingle, was awarded to the Hawai`i Health Systems Corporation. In making the announcement, Governor Lingle called the facility "a high priority" for East Hawai`i. "This is an important and long-overdue initiative for our veterans, and will benefit the entire community, both in Hilo and statewide," the Governor said. The veterans home, scheduled for completion in 2006, will create approximately 100 jobs in Hilo. Read more in the [Honolulu Star-Bulletin](#).

Governor Lights Chanukah Menorah



Israel Chudaitov assisted Governor Lingle with the Menorah lighting ceremony in observance of Chanukah.

Quote of the Week: "While the state spends a considerable amount of resources on education, our students continue to rank at or near the bottom in every measure of student achievement. This condition is not acceptable, and I intend to move forward on improving and reforming Hawai`i's education system," Governor Lingle said this week when asked about why education is her top priority.

Key Upcoming Events

December 29 Blessing and dedication of new offices of Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) at the U.S. Post Office Custom House and Court House, downtown Honolulu, King and Richards Streets, 10:30-11:30 a.m. The building was recently named after King David Kalakaua.

January 1 **Happy New Year!**