

## INNOVATION TO CREATE STUDENT INVESTMENT IN THEIR EDUCATION

June 1, 2010

This has been an awesome year for the James Campbell High School (JCHS) Sabers. Tyson Tynanes-Perez successfully defended his state wrestling title. Chabrielle Gushi took the OIA Girls wrestling title. The boys wrestling team placed first in the OIA. Rudy Cabalar, Jr. is the new state golf champion. The robotics team scored first place titles at the Maui Invitational, Hawaii Region FIRST, West Oahu, Leeward Coast, and Northridge tournaments, as well as three Judges' Awards for best robot, and other awards. The media team got top honors in Brown Bags to Stardom and E Ola Pono competitions, and other honors in many of its other contests. The Naval Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps has received the distinguished unit title for eleven consecutive years. Three students won Pacific Asian Affairs Council travel scholarships to Vietnam.

I am proud to represent a school where students invest in their own education and are motivated to excel, not just show up and get by. JCHS is up for a National School Change Award, a recognition it well deserves. Located in one of the poorest areas in Hawaii, in older days, students thought little beyond getting married and getting a job, and went to school because it was required and dropped out as soon as they wore out their parents. No more. Now JCHS is a school brimming with achievements.

Educational reform has long been a campaign issue. Governor Lingle ran on a never-materialized promise that she would replace the DOE bureaucracy, with its 80% administration/20% teacher ratio, and put in local school districts instead. The year-long Friday Furloughs that affected 170,000 public school students put changing the current system at the forefront. One idea is to make principals the "CEOs of their schools" both to increase motivation and accountability for improving school performance.

James Campbell's turn-around is a stellar example of the tremendous influence of a principal and the vitality of the teachers who work with her. Principal, Dr. Gail Awakuni, is JCHS' driving force. Her one band, one sound philosophy is that the collaborative, dedicated effort of her teachers, counselors, and staff all function together so that students benefit from their time at JCHS.

James Campbell High School leads the State of Hawaii in redesign, finding innovative ways to open horizons and help the entire range of its students to find their avocation, be it the military, college, or work force. In its quest for teaching methods that actively involve students in their own learning, JCHS became the first and only public school to implement AVID, NOVA.NET online learning, inclusion, Permethan Boards, Achieve 3000, Read 180, Cognitive Tutor, I-Grading of progress over time, and

Response to Intervention (RTI). All students are given opportunities for service learning, projects, internships, Senior Projects, and running start programs with the Chaminade University and University of Hawaii system. In 2007, JCHS became the first public school in Hawaii to be given approval for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), a distinction held by only 2000 schools around the world.

JCHS's open enrollment policy allows motivated students of all GPAs to challenge themselves in subjects they are interested in, via AP, AVID or IBDP. As a result, students excel in subjects they had not previously considered. Ten years ago there were only two AP courses; now there are 22. JCHS has high enrollment in science, AP, and rigorous honors courses, and the AVID and IBD programs. A majority of students take science all four years. Last year, 1 out of 6 students (16%) took Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

Principal Gail Awakuni's dynamic leadership and the beyond-the-call-of-duty team efforts of her teachers and staff to reach out to the youth of Ewa have completely changed James Campbell High School. The proof of this change is all around. Ten years ago, 50% of freshmen dropped out of high school in their first year. Today, 95% finish freshman year, and of those, 97% stay in school through senior year, one of the highest rates in Hawaii. One-third of the student body is on the Honor Roll; 99% of seniors graduate; 74% of students go to college. Last year, students received \$10.5 million in college scholarships, including the highly competitive Gates, Quest Bridge, Horatio Alger, and Dell scholarships. In 2004, JCHS was one of 30 schools across the U.S. selected as a Gates Foundation Pathways to College Access School for sending students from underserved populations to college.

A multitude of Saber awards, honors, championships, and titles span a diverse range, for both students and faculty. For its turnaround, James Campbell High School was named a 2004 National Association of Secondary School Principals "Break-Through School" for 2004. JCHS has shared the effort behind its success in changing the school culture at national conferences such as AVID and the National Association of College Admissions.

For several years now, JCHS has met its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) several years in a row in all but one category. Last year, JCHS was one of only three high schools and the only Title I high school in Hawaii to do so. As the largest high school in the Hawaii with the second largest special education population, its special education scores are the state's highest, as a result of its successful co-teaching, inclusion program.

JCHS's achievements prove that the key to improving our schools is to create an environment and provide opportunities so students know they can achieve more than they expected of themselves. "There is life past Renton Road," the saying goes at the

Saber campus, and their success shows that our schools can be places where students invest in their future.

The Varsity and Junior Varsity girls soccer team took the state championships for 2007, with the Varsity girls team going on to third place in the U.S. championship. Lowen Tynanez-Perez placed first in the 2007 state wrestling championship and later took third place in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Cliff Keen World High School Wrestling championship. The Varsity Girls Basketball won the 2008 state championship.

Marites Barangan was honored as a Miliken "Teacher of Promise" for 2008. , Wendell Tashiro was named the "2008-2009 State of Hawaii Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year" for his 3-D computer Auto Cad program. Counselors Eleyne Fia (2007-2008) and Rick Yamashiro (2008-09) were both named the "State of Hawaii Counselor of the Year".

In 2008, JCHS won first place in the state Pacific Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) WorldQuest Competition, no small feat in a contest of 65 other teams from private and public schools statewide. The victory earned the team a bid in the national competition. Each year, at least one Saber is awarded a Pacific Asian Affairs Council travel scholarship, which has taken students to Beijing, Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam. In 2003, James Campbell became the first Leeward Oahu school to place first in the state Math Bowl competition, and remains the only Leeward school with this accomplishment.