

Ka Lau

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Elementary Teachers Get a Boost from PBL Training

Last month, the elementary teachers and Director Garcia attended a Deeper Learning conference in San Diego. “I came back so enthusiastic and revived,” said fourth-grade teacher Megan Patten. “I feel like my teacher battery has been re-charged.”

The training was held at High Tech High, which tried full-on project-only learning a few years ago, and found that test scores dropped. They pulled back a bit, and now they’ve found a good balance between project-based learning and more traditional foundational learning. Director Garcia affirmed that in his vision, project-based learning won’t replace core instruction, but rather give students a way to apply the core knowledge that they are receiving.

Students from High Tech High actually ran several of the conference sessions, and conference attendees got to tour the school. Mrs. Patten said that seeing the High Tech High programs was an affirmation, because “yeah, we are doing a lot of those things here already,” but she also observed and learned new ways to use projects to help students become more invested in their learning.

First-grade teacher Crystal Ivey said she learned so many fun and engaging activities for her students, she can’t wait to get started. Among other things, the teachers learned about “maker spaces.” The elementary teachers plan to work together to create a maker space, which is an area outside the classroom filled with all kinds of “stuff.” Students will then team up to use materials in the maker space to show their understanding of concepts they’ve learned in the classroom. The space gives kids multiple ways of demonstrating and applying what they’ve learned, and gives teachers an alternative way to assess student progress.

Director Garcia says that this recent training was a phase II of a plan to implement project-based learning throughout the school. Phase I was sending the middle school teachers to a similar training last year, and phase III will include sending the high school teachers to O’ahu for training this June. This year, middle-schoolers worked on a variety of projects within each classroom to reinforce what they were learning. Next year, says Director Garcia, there may be a common theme connecting different projects in separate subject-areas. “The ultimate goal,” he said, “is for each level schoolwide to have a common theme and multiple entry points.”



LCPCS elementary teachers and Director Garcia in San Diego, relaxing after an exciting day at the Deeper Learning Conference. Director Garcia says they talked a lot about what they learned over dinner.

LCPCS Cheer Team Revs Things Up

by Audrey Mills, 8th grade



"I'm super proud of the cheerleading team because every other cheerleading team on the island is made up of high schoolers. We are the only team to have middle school." Kumu Luz

*Pictured L to R: Jasmine Wanner, Abigail Nadeau, Mahina Nadeau, Ava-Amalia Aguirre, Jeniqua Nacnac and Solana Olival
Not pictured: Magdalena Madrid, Jade Reid, Cairi Salomon-Torres and Paris Salboro*

When middle school math teacher Mallory Romero (known here at LCPCS as Kumu Luz) attended some of the basketball games last year, she noticed something. "There was lots of silence," she said. The crowd didn't have much spirit. What could be done to fix this? Why, a cheerleading team, of course!

These ten cheerleaders, who just started in the second quarter, have memorized over 15 different cheers, taught cheer clinics to elementary students, and attended every home game, and one away game. After a performance (not only does the team cheer during a game, but they dance during halftime), the audience congratulates them. *"The crowd cheers us on. It feels good to be on the team and to be supported. You get to know everyone and you're comfortable around them."* — Jeniqua Nacnac-Lawrence (Jeniqua went to every game.)

Cheerleading, however, is not just about the cheer. It's the confidence, teamwork, and high self esteem that's the key. It's about building up a sense of pride in who you are. *"I used to be really nervous performing in front of people,"* said sixth-grader Jade Reid. *"Then I went to games and we had to perform, I became more comfortable, and my friends all supported me."* Cheerleading helps create a sense of belonging, and it encourages students to work together. The team spends one class period a day practicing, until all their moves are fluid and in sync. Though many people may not think of it this way, cheerleading is actually a sport. A sport that not only brings the team together, but everyone around them.

The goal for the team is to perform at the Music Festival this year. They may be small, but they have a lot of spirit!!

Seasider Spotlight



Bryson Anzai

Bryson Anzai says he got interested in auto mechanics in the auto shop at Laupāhoehoe High. Interested enough, in fact, to make a successful career out of the field. Mr. Anzai currently teaches auto shop at LCPCS one day a week, but his "real" job is at Firestone, where he has worked for nine years, and is currently a "lead tech" (essentially a foreman).

Mr. Anzai is a 2010 Laupāhoehoe graduate, having attended 10th, 11th and 12th grades here. After high school, he attended Honolulu Community College in diesel mechanics. "It's fun," he says of his class at LCPCS. "Everybody learns something."

His students are a mix of grades, and include one home-schooler. Many of the kids are hoping to race cars one day. "You'd be surprised how [many] race cars are on the Hāmākua Coast," he says. "Everybody knows someone who races: cousins, uncles, dads." He himself used to race, but he says, "all my [race] cars broke." Sounds like he's shifting his focus to inspiring students to choose careers and hobbies involving automobiles. Mahalo, Bryson!