

# Ka Lau

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## LCPCS Students Grapple with Complex Current Issues

The starting point of any project-based learning (PBL) adventure is the *essential question*, and judging by the essential questions floating around LCPCS, students are taking on some pretty heavy issues this semester. Third-grade teacher, Josie Harding, and fifth-grade teacher, Cheryl Borsh, for example, have combined their classes to address this question: “How can we develop healthy eating choices from the food we grow in the Big Island?”

To answer that question, students will read articles, visit with local experts (like farmers, nutritionists and Blue Zones Project Manager Megan Yarberry), develop menus, and prepare foods for their classmates. “It’s fun and engaging,” says Ms. Harding, who has been coordinating PBL projects for several years. Specific learning objectives include understanding the importance of healthy eating habits; identifying major nutrients; designing a healthy menu; reading and following written recipes; correctly measuring ingredients in a recipe; and measuring correct portion sizes for kids.

In Jackie Gomes’s middle school science classes, the essential question is “How will the complete rollout of 5G in Hawaii affect human health?” Her students are completing a variety of tasks to answer this thorny question, including measuring background radiation around electronic devices on the school campus.



Wyatt Campbell, 3rd grade,  
eviscerates some mushrooms.



Third-grade teacher Josie Harding with (L to R):  
3rd-grader Keenan Kaneshiro and 5th-graders  
Raelee Salas-Cariaga and Kingsteine Dela Cruz

Meanwhile, the sixth-graders are asking “In school and at home, how can I promote island sustainability?” They spent a lot of time in the first quarter grappling with questions of waste, recycling and reuse, and will be turning their focus to local agriculture as the semester moves on.

Ms. Harding, Ms. Borsh, Ms. Gomes and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher Autumn Encinas-Domingcil all attended a four-day Deeper Learning workshop through Kupu Hau Academy on O’ahu this summer. “I am inspired every day by my colleagues and by the students [and] see how engaged and excited everyone is about their own PBL projects,” says Ms. Borsh.

## Director's Corner



*Kurt and Julie Rix*

It is my pleasure to be a part of the rebirth of our school newsletter. I hope all of you find it to be an informative and inspiring look at some of the wonderful things that go on here at Laupāhoehoe. Part of each issue will be dedicated to showcasing some of our wonderful staff members. We will start with someone not as wonderful as our fantastic teachers and staff. Rather, I've been asked to write about myself.

As most of you already know, I come to Laupāhoehoe via California, Central Asia, and China. My experiences include degrees from California State University and Kansas State University and two decades in public education in Northern California,

followed by stays at international schools overseas in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Sichuan (China), and Almaty (Kazakhstan). Laupāhoehoe marks the first time I've ever been lucky enough to enjoy living in Hawaii instead of just vacationing.

Away from school, I enjoy life with my wife, Julie, a former teacher, and with my youngest son, Grant, a high school student in Hilo. I also have two older sons, Kevin, 23, and Matthew, 27. Kevin works construction atop tall skyscrapers in Chicago, and is engaged to be married. Matthew is a paramedic, married, and a father to Olivia, our granddaughter. Some of my favorite things are camping, hiking, kayaking, traveling, golf, and my beloved SF Giants and 49ers. In a past life, I was a pretty fair artist, worked construction, and grew up on a farm, but I always and only wanted to be a teacher.

I am having a terrific experience here at LCPCS and am enjoying getting to know the Laupāhoehoe community. I am taken aback by the commitment our parents, staff, and community members have for this place, its history, and its future. Many of you have made time to stop by the office to introduce yourselves. It has been a pleasure meeting you. If we haven't met, please come and chat.



*LCPCS director Kurt Rix (far right) and family  
in front of Notre Dame, Paris  
December 2018*

*Almaty  
International  
School,  
Almaty,  
Kazakhstan  
where Mr. Rix  
was Director of  
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