

## Hawai'i's Schools Need Funding!

Clarence T.C. Ching was a man who believed that everyone should be able to get a great education and he has helped so many get one. What if not everyone is getting a proper education? Hawai'i's public schools do not get the funding needed to renovate and improve their facilities. This is terrible because without a modern classroom, children are not always in an environment that can properly conduct learning. I believe that this is a very pressing matter in Hawaii and if it is not dealt with soon, as we jump ahead 50 years from today, students will still be learning using 20<sup>th</sup> century methods. I have a couple of ideas which I believe may be able to fix this dilemma.

One of the largest reasons that Hawai'i's public schools are not getting enough funding is because only 14% of Hawai'i's general fund goes toward public schools. Not only that, but this has to be split between 289 schools. This means that each school only receives about 0.0486% of the general fund. So if you do the math, each school receives about \$6.5 million without salaries or any other expenses taken out each year. If we take a look at the the salaries that need to be paid, there are about 50 teachers per school and the average annual salary of a teacher is \$49,000. That is already \$2,450,000 gone. Then, if you add on all of the other salaries of public school employees, about \$2,000,000 more are already spent. After all of the salaries are out of the way, the average public school in Hawai'i will only have about \$2,000,000 left, which is not very much money. Out of the remaining money some of it is spent on food for students who cannot afford a lunch, some of it may be spent on sports teams and equipment, and depending on the school, some of the money may be spent on an after school care program. All of these programs are great, but in total, schools spend about \$1,500,000 on programs like these each year. So when

paying all of these expenses, Hawai'i's public schools only have about a \$500,000 buffer zone that is usually spent on the upkeep of the school.

Here are some of the ideas that I think can fix the problem. At the moment \$5,160,000,000 of Hawai'i's general fund is taken up by the the rail. Once the rail is finished we could put some of this money toward renovating and improving Hawaii's public schools.

Another idea that I have is to increase the amount of taxpayer funds that go toward our public schools. If we increase the taxpayer funds that go toward our schools and decrease the amount that the state saves, the extra money could then be used for updates that need to be made at each school. Currently the state saves about 30% of taxpayer funds.

So, the only way that we can really get our dilapidated schools into better shape is to just budget the state's monies better so Hawai'i's public schools can have a golden future. If not the results on our economy and the next generation of our working force could be disastrous. As Clarence T.C. Ching used to say, "a good education was my key to success." Do you want your children to be able to say the same thing?