

Better Education for Our Future Leaders

Imagine this: You are eleven years old again and just moved from a public school in Hawaii to a public school in Massachusetts because your parents had an irresistible job offer there. One period into your first day of school, and you already know that you will have to work hard to catch up to your classmates who have been in the Massachusetts public school system their whole lives—one of the best in the nation. According to the Hawaii State Teachers Association, Hawaii's public school system ranked 42nd on the list of best states for education in 2018, which was an improvement from past years. Looking at the statistics, it is very clear that the system needs to change. Students are being put at a disadvantage to their peers across the nation and will have to work even harder to get into their college of choice.

U.S. News reported that Hawaii was among four other states who didn't see any public high school graduate 100 percent of its senior class in 2019. If Hawaii's education system continues to fail to properly educate the youth for the next 50 years, we may never see a single school have a 100 percent graduation rate; the state will see an increase in high school dropout rates and a decrease in graduation rates. Students will continue to not be motivated to go to school because they are not being pushed hard enough by their peers and teachers to get the education needed to succeed. If the system stays the same, the students who do graduate may not be deserving of their diplomas. PBS Hawaii reporter, William Galston, wrote, "Too many are receiving high school diplomas that do not certify academic confidence in basic subjects. Too many are being left unprepared for the world of work," pointing out yet another consequence: a weak work field, an even more detrimental problem to our state. There could be two outcomes to this: a shortage of professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.) or professional jobs being filled by people who don't necessarily know what they are doing. Customers will be quick to realize this

and those people will be fired in a heartbeat, which also contributes to the high unemployment rate. This chain reaction then adds to the homeless population that doesn't need more people to join it, especially with the increase from the Covid-19 shutdowns.

The Coronavirus (or COVID-19) pandemic has forced schools to find different ways to hold classes other than in-person. Many schools around the world have chosen to use a site called Zoom, which allows teachers and students to communicate using a Facetime-like platform, and lets people in the meeting share their screens to show visual learning aids, students to communicate with teachers privately via text, and many more features. This site can be used to host online tutoring sessions between students who need help with homework and volunteers who are willing to tutor them. Both sides of the equation benefit: the student can understand his or her schoolwork better and the volunteer earns community service hours, as well as the privilege of feeling good because they were able to be of service to others in their community. Another solution is pushing the DOE to offer more AP and IB programs, which are college-level classes that help to not only boost GPA but help high school students earn college credits early on. Although the DOE is currently offering many AP classes online, it would be more convenient for students to take the classes at their respective schools during the school day instead of having to stress about an extra class in addition to their regular workload. Students also need to pass an in-class exam to qualify for the college credits, which poses a problem when schools don't offer the exam; the students either have to find another school that is offering it, causing them to miss classes, or have their hard work wasted. These classes are very challenging, therefore they also help students look like more viable applicants to college admissions officers. This is already starting to happen at Hawaii's own Waipahu High School, under the direction of

principal Keith Hayashi, who has helped his students get accepted into top universities and earn Associate's Degrees before graduation.

Mr. Ching was dedicated to helping students in Hawaii get the education they deserved. He strived to aid students in earning a degree and always wished for them to become successful. If he was alive right now, Mr. Ching would make sure that every child living in Hawaii is challenged with a curriculum that prepares them for the future. He only wanted the best for his community and to see it thrive. He tried his best to solve as many issues as he could in his neighborhood and worked toward creating equal opportunities to succeed for everyone.

If the Hawaii DOE were to begin advancements to the public education system now, students will be able to perform on the same level as their peers on the mainland. In the years to come, Hawaii high schools will see a sharp increase in attendance, participation, graduation rates, and college enrollment. As a result, more students will go on to have higher-paying jobs that can support them, even with the ever-increasing costs of living. It has also been proven that “societies with high rates of education completion have lower crime rates, better overall health, and civic involvement,” according to the University of the People. Overall, improving the public education system will contribute to creating equal opportunities for everybody and our state will benefit tremendously in the end.

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