



The Superintendent's Annual Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawai'i

FOREWORD

The Superintendent's Annual Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawai'i is one of two major reports in the state's system of school accountability. This report contains collective data on our schools for school year 1997-98, showing trends over time and, where appropriate, comparisons with data from other states. The other major report, the *School Status and Improvement Report*, is prepared annually for each school. These reports contain school data and summaries of the schools' improvement priorities and activities. They are available at public libraries and online at <http://arch.k12.hi.us> on the world wide web.

These two reports are the most visible parts of the Department of Education's assessment and accountability system, the purpose of which is to hold everyone in the department, including me, responsible for student learning. These reports grew out of the department's initiative, early in this decade, to develop a comprehensive accountability system for the public schools of Hawai'i. The department's efforts thus far have laid a foundation for the system, but they are only a start.

During the last year—the first of my tenure as superintendent—we have conducted a thorough assessment of the public school system's needs, and have initiated a refocusing of the department's efforts on full implementation of the revised Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards. These standards represent our common expectations for students and will be the central focus both of our efforts and those of our students.

Out of our assessment of the public school system's needs, we have developed a strategic plan for standards-based reform. At the core of the strategic plan are plans for the implementation of a truly statewide assessment and accountability system. This system will include provisions for school and system accountability, as well as sound, standards-based student assessment. The latter is needed to guide instruction and to shape the department's support for classrooms and schools and policymaking. It is our hope and belief that a sound system of accountability will stimulate improved performance by delineating clear roles and responsibilities linked to necessary authority and resources, by using fair and adequate assessment against agreed-upon goals, and by invoking consequences accurately and fairly related to performance. Future editions of both this *Superintendent's Report on School Performance and Improvement* and the *School Status and Improvement Reports* should reflect our progress toward both a sound system of accountability and the achievement of the standards we have set for our children's education in public schools.

Paul G. LeMahieu, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Education



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Preparation of *The Superintendent's Annual Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawai'i* requires the cooperative effort of a number of people. The report is prepared by Dr. Thomas Gans of the Evaluation Section of the Department of Education's Office of Accountability and School Instructional Support under the supervision of Michael W. Heim, Director of the Planning and Evaluation Group, and Dr. Glenn T. Hirata, Administrator of the Evaluation Section. In the course of its preparation the report is critically reviewed by a number of individuals including Mr. Heim, Dr. Hirata, and Jerald D. Plett of the Evaluation Section.

The Superintendent's Annual Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawai'i requires accurate and consistent data, and a number of people in the Department of Education have contributed to the report by providing the needed data. The assistance provided by Richard Asato and the staff of the Information Systems Services Branch and by Karl Yoshida and the staff of the Information Resource Management Branch is gratefully acknowledged.



Report Highlights

- **SCOPE.** The report for school year 1997-98 covers public education in kindergarten through 12th grade, including data from all 248 public schools in the seven administrative districts in Hawai'i.
- **ENROLLMENT.** Enrollment growth, which had exceeded 1.5% for the five years from 1991-92 through 1995-96, declined sharply over the last two years to 0.4% in 1997-98. (Pages 3-5)
- **SPECIAL NEEDS.** The numbers of students in need of special services are increasing much more rapidly than is the population of students at large. These students are those from poor economic circumstances, those with limited English proficiency, and those who need special education services. The growth in the numbers and proportions of students with these special needs means that the task facing the public schools is steadily becoming more difficult and potentially more costly. (Pages 5-7)
- **STAFFING.** In 1987-88, Hawai'i ranked 48th among the states in pupil-to-teacher ratio. Through concerted effort, by 1992-93 the state had lowered its pupil-to-teacher ratio enough to tie for 35th. Fiscal constraints that began in 1994-95 have halted the state's progress on this indicator. On a positive note, Hawai'i is well *below* the national average in the proportion of its professional staff whose functions are administrative. (Pages 9-11)
- **FINANCE.** After improving during the early 1990s, the state's financial commitment to public education has taken a marked downturn. Although Hawai'i ranks 3rd among the states in tax collections per capita, it ranks **last** in the percentage of state and local revenue allocated to public schools. (Pages 11-13)
- **FACILITIES.** School facility problems in Hawai'i are chronic. Over half of the state's schools need additional classrooms. Ninety-four of the state's schools were operating with enrollment at or above their rated capacity. Schools' support facilities, such as libraries and cafeterias, are chronically underdeveloped. Over half of the schools in Hawai'i have substandard library facilities. The state's secondary and elementary schools averaged **second largest** and **fourth largest** in the nation respectively. (Pages 13-17)
- **NAEP.** On the National Assessments of Educational Progress, the state's 4th grade and 8th grade scores ranked low on the reading assessment (1998), but higher on the mathematics assessment (1996), especially for the 8th graders. (Pages 20-21)
- **DROPOUTS AND SCHOOL COMPLETION.** Dropout rates for students in grades 9-12 average about 4.7% per year. The estimated cumulative dropout rate is just over 17%, a decline of 1.5% from 1996-97. Almost 80% of public school seniors intend to continue their formal education. (Pages 21-24)
- **STUDENT DISCIPLINE.** The incidence rates of disciplinary suspension decreased in 1997-98, both overall and in each category of threat to safety. Suspensions for the most serious (Type A) offenses increased slightly, but suspensions in the other three categories declined markedly. (Pages 25-27)



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