



## **Kawaiaha'o Church School Celebrates Successful Accreditation**

*It's the 'best kept secret' and serves as a haven for downtown working families*



*The Kawaiaha'o Church School 'ohana held a celebration lunch on Friday, March 3, 2017 in appreciation of all those who contributed to a successful accreditation.*

Honolulu, HI- Kawaiaha'o Church School (KCS) received the gold-star of accreditation, as it was granted Seven-Year Accreditation Status by the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The school, located in the heart of downtown Honolulu, serves children from 2 years old through grade 5, providing a Christian, Montessori, Native Hawaiian culture-based curriculum.

In order to receive accreditation status by WASC, the school needs to complete a comprehensive review and demonstrate its ongoing commitment to education excellence. The school was evaluated in 16 areas through school visits, in-depth reports, and by conducting interviews with the Board of Trustees, the Kawaiaha'o Church and School leadership team, faculty, and parents. The accreditation standards included evaluation of the school's educational program, student learning experience, finances, safety, advancement, and facilities.

"The HAIS and WASC evaluation of Kawaiaha'o Church School as a gold-star member is no surprise to us and now it's vital to share with our community this well kept secret," said Kawaiaha'o Church Pastor (Kahu) Curt Kekuna. "However, we will not rest upon the successes of our past, but seek to build an even better school to serve all people."

“Our school started from humble beginnings in 1975 and has since grown leaps and bounds,” said Dean Yokotake, Executive Director of Kawaiaha‘o Church. “I’d like to thank everyone, past and present, for their contribution to this milestone. I’d especially like to thank the Kawaiaha‘o Church Board of Trustees for their gracious support of the school through the years.”

“This is an exciting affirmation of the good work happening at Kawaiaha‘o Church School,” said Jon Yasuda, KCS Director. “We are fortunate for our school’s teachers and staff who were commended by the Accreditation Team for their devotion, care, and commitment to our keiki. The church community has also been instrumental in the advancement of the school and we are grateful for its support. Mahalo i ke Akua.”

KCS is a Christian program whose mission is to provide children, their families, and teachers with an appropriate Montessori educational experience emphasizing Hawaiian cultural values and language.

The Accreditation Report noted that the institutional core value, purpose, and aspirations are clearly evident throughout the school. The evaluators noted that the school begins each day with prayer and dedication in both English and Hawaiian; and the Montessori philosophy is applied throughout the day in how teachers work and engage with children, as well as how they design their daily lessons.

“KCS has created a positive school climate that can be felt from the very moment you walk onto the school property. This warm and caring environment fosters parent connections, teacher collaboration, and student growth. It is the fertile soil from which the school’s current mission will bloom and thrive,” the report states.

Each classroom weaves together the philosophies and instructional practices of Christianity, Hawaiian language and culture, and the Montessori methodology. KCS also offers the option to enroll in the dual-language Primary class (which serves ages 3-6). This class was deemed as “uniquely innovative” and meets the need of parents who are looking to provide this special opportunity for their children to learn the Hawaiian language. Parents have the opportunity to enroll their keiki in the dual-language class at no additional cost.

“KCS has created a school climate which reflects the values of aloha and ‘ohana. Teachers feel supported, families feel accepted, and most importantly, children are loved,” the report states.

Parents interviewed for the Accreditation Report expressed their love for the school, respect and trust for the teachers, and pride of their children’s progress at KCS. The parents reported good communication with the teachers through emails, conferences, and reports.

“I would like to thank our school’s parents for your support both at home and at school,” said Yasuda. “Your love provides the foundation and helps to foster a sense of community for our keiki, and all of us. I’d like to acknowledge our dedicated Kawaiaha‘o Church School Parents Group and those who took the time to participate in the accreditation interviews. We look forward to continued work and partnership with the accreditation team and HAIS,” said Yasuda. “We appreciate the time and thoughtful reflection they put into their evaluation of

our school, and look forward to continuing to build upon the foundation we have now, and aspiring to be source of life-giving waters Kawaiaha'o was created to be, to nourish the keiki and community we serve."