



Keiki Steps to Kindergarten

A summer kindergarten transition program in Hawai'i's public schools. Implemented by the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE) with funding from the Kamehameha Schools. A demonstration of the P-3/SPARK Initiatives to bridge gaps and cultivate partnerships between public schools and early childhood education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The INPEACE Keiki Steps to Kindergarten (KSTK) transition model is a 3-week kindergarten summer transition program focusing on children with little or no preschool experience. KSTK began in 2003 as a kindergarten summer transition program with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's SPARK initiative with a handful of schools and has grown each year with the support of Kamehameha Schools.

After working with kindergarten teachers in the pilot schools on the Leeward O'ahu Coast and on the island of Hawai'i, the Keiki Steps staff became aware of the amount of children entering kindergarten with little or no preschool experience. Kindergarten teachers noticed that before academic issues could be addressed students with little or no preschool experience needed time to learn and adjust to: following classroom routines; participating in large and small group settings; socializing/interacting with other children; and making friends. Hawai'i research reinforced these observations. The research also revealed that 40% of 4-year-olds do not attend preschool and of those that do, only half (50%) of low-income students receive financial aid or subsidized services that allow them to participate in preschools. With this knowledge, the Keiki Steps staff and kindergarten teachers from pilot schools worked to develop the KSTK transition model. This model has evolved into a statewide collaboration between the Hawai'i Department of Education, INPEACE and Kamehameha Schools. In the summer of 2008 we focused on significantly increasing in the number of preschool educators in the program positively impacting state P-3 goals.



Now in its fifth year of implementation, the primary goal of KSTK is to prepare children, families and schools for a first time school experience with a focus on ensuring a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten. With funding from Kamehameha Schools, KSTK prepares children, families and schools for a smooth and successful transition into kindergarten.

This year across the state on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Maui and Hawai'i, 33 out of the 45 invited schools participated in the program with a total of 40 classrooms.

II. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Kamehameha Schools and INPEACE collaborated to develop a prioritized list of schools for inclusion in the KSTK program. The prioritized list was based on past KSTK participating schools from previous years and recommendations made by Kamehameha School's Ka'amōhala (community outreach workers). The priority schools are located in communities with a high population of Native Hawaiian students and have a high need for programs such as KSTK.

Within a five year period the KSTK model program has seen a gradual increase in school participation. KSTK began with 7 pilot schools in 2003 and in the summer of 2008 this number has increased to thirty-three (33) participating schools. The following schools were on the priority list but due to conflicts were unable to participate in the past and for the first time this year were able to implement KSTK: Ben Parker Elementary, 'Ele'ele Elementary, He'eia Elementary, Kekaha Elementary and Waiākea Elementary. In addition KSTK welcomed Chiefess Kapi'olani Elementary and Honoka'a Elementary as first time participants.

A total of 45 schools were invited to participate for KSTK 2008 and asked to respond by May 9, 2008. Of these 45 schools, 35 committed to the program. The ten schools that were unable to participate this year gave the following reasons: construction, remodeling, scheduling conflicts and unavailability of staff.

This year schools were given three options for dates of program implementation and were given the opportunity and flexibility to schedule their program's starting and ending dates based on what was most convenient and ideal for them. Preferably, the KSTK program should be implemented just before the beginning of school. Although it is the ideal time, it is not always possible due to classroom cleaning schedules, teacher vacations and professional development activities. We intend to address this in our KSTK Strategic Planning and Debrief session with principals in November. The role of the school was to provide clean and safe facilities, recruit and provide DOE kindergarten teachers and recruit children and their families for the KSTK program and INPEACE recruited and provided the preschool teachers. This was a shift from last year and was done in order to ensure a larger number of preschool teachers in the classroom.

Upon learning that funding was approved for summer 2008 immediate action was taken to invite schools to participate. A majority of schools contacted had implemented the KSTK program in previous years so initial contact was made to the principal by letter and email. Follow-up phone calls and emails were made to remind principals of due dates for their intent to participate and teacher training dates. Schools that did not reply by the due date were contacted directly for confirmation of their participation or non-participation.



This year INPEACE established a requirement of a 10 student minimum in order for a school to participate in KSTK. Schools were required to enroll at least 10 students with no more than 20 students per classroom. It was decided that classrooms with less than 10 students would not be economically feasible. If the enrollment went over the 20 student maximum however, INPEACE hired an aide to assist the kindergarten teacher and preschool teacher team. In past years some schools had enough students to fill two classrooms. These schools were guaranteed two classes this year as well, if the need persisted. Other schools anticipated two classrooms and were advised to contact INPEACE in order to accommodate their requests for additional personnel. For example, at

Keaukaha Elementary in Hilo, the number of students enrolled in KSTK was enough for two classes as they have had in the past. However, more students signed up than anticipated and rather than turn them away an extra aide was hired to help.

A number of schools did not meet the minimum student count requirement before the first day of class. Principals and teachers were told to run the program for two days and ask parents and families to spread the word about KSTK. This proved to be an effective strategy. Two examples of this are: Pū'ōhala Elementary started with six students the first day and by day three met the 10 student minimum and Pāhoa Elementary starting with eight students increased to 15 students within the first week of KSTK.

One school from each of the following districts did not meet the minimum required student count

- Leeward (two classrooms - one English and one Hawaiian language)
O'ahu
- Windward O'ahu
- Moloka'i

After careful review of the KSTK 2007 contact hours and looking at outcomes for children it was decided that schools would be required to provide the program daily for three weeks at three hours per day. Fifteen hours per week over three weeks provides a total of forty-five student contact hours of exposure to the program. Schools requested flexibility so we decided that if schools chose to do

implement a two week program, they would be required to have a four hour day/five days a week for a total of forty contact hours. Schools that were unable to fulfill the minimum number of contact hours (40) were asked to provide a rationale for shortening their program. For example, a school on Moloka'i combined their KSTK program with a County Parks and Recreation program at the community center. At the end of the KSTK day the County program provided bus transportation to their afternoon program.

This year INPEACE created a series of public service announcements advertising KSTK. This proved to be effective as the INPEACE office received inquiries and was able to direct interested families to KSTK schools in their respective districts. The program was also highlighted on the INPEACE website.

The Primary Student Adjustment Program (PSAP) at Chiefess Kapi'olani Elementary in Hilo became aware of KSTK through the INPEACE website and contacted the office to inquire about implementing the program at her school. Initially INPEACE was unable to accommodate them but eventually another school was unable to participate and Chiefess Kapi'olani Elementary was able to implement the program.



This year was the first for Honoka'a Elementary on the Hamakua coast. This school is part of the P-3 effort on Hawai'i Island and was recommended by Kamehameha Schools and Good beginnings Alliance (GBA). With the assistance of GBA staff Honoka'a Elementary was able to secure a highly qualified preschool teacher to work with a kindergarten teacher from the within school.

The principal of 'Ele'ele Elementary on Kaua'i combined P-3 grant monies and KSTK to create an innovative transition program for all incoming kindergarteners. Students who completed one to two years of preschool enrolled for a one week program. Students who had some preschool or attended parent-child interaction programs came for two weeks of the transition program. Lastly, students with no preschool experience attended for the full three week program. P-3 funds covered the cost of the one and two week programs while KSTK funds were utilized in the three week program.

III. PROGRAM STAFF

This year's program staff consisted of a program director, associate director and four area coordinators. Program Director, Catherine Arnold's responsibilities of overseeing the implementation of the KSTK program included, but were not limited to: the design, delivery, maintenance, and evaluation of the program, while maintaining a direct oversight of the budget. The duties of the Associate Director, Jammie Pratt included: the coordination of events, meetings, and correspondence; develop and maintain a file system; develop and maintain a computer database system; coordinate and process travel arrangements and program purchasing; distribution, collection, review, and processing of employment packets, timesheets, program forms; and assisting the program director.



Area coordinators assistance proved to be invaluable as they, like the Kamehameha Ka'amōhala staff, lived and worked in the communities they serviced. The area coordinators' familiarity with the communities greatly benefited the KSTK program by strengthening and expediting the implementation of the program, as the coordinators were familiar with the schools, the parents, the students and the community needs which enabled them to cater to and provide immediate assistance. Their responsibilities included the purchase and delivery of snacks and supplies based on teacher requests, assisting with communication between schools and INPEACE, supporting teachers during implementation, assisting with

coordination of teacher trainings, and collection and completion of all data, program forms, and employment forms. Area coordinators made visits to the sites to observe and provide program assistance.

Lilinoe Young and Aloha Bezilla of INPEACE's SPARK program that services the community of Keaukaha and the greater Hilo area worked closely with the school, the community association and the PTA to assist with student recruitment. Both ladies assisted parents with kindergarten registration and often made trips to Keaukaha's favorite family camp ground, Puhi Bay, to remind families to register their children for kindergarten and sign up for KSTK. Program director, Arnold, assisted with the Puna schools, meeting with the principals and assisting with recruitment of preschool teachers. Moloka'i area coordinator, Pi'ilani Augustiro, assisted schools with field trips to the fishponds by securing busses and following up with phone calls to parents to encourage their participation. Kaua'i coordinator Dora Hong, a retired DOE principal from Kapa'a Elementary,

mentored the new Kapa'a principal and introduced him to KSTK. She provided a vital link to new administrators at both 'Ele'ele Elementary and Kekaha Elementary schools. Hong was also able to secure an appointment with the new Complex Area Superintendent



Superintendent (CAS) for Kaua'i. On the island of O'ahu, Windward area coordinator Natasha Amano, assisted by Thomas Ka'ai'ai the Ka'amohala from Kamehameha Schools, worked with those teachers who had participated in the program for a number of years and those who were new to KSTK. She was instrumental in recruiting preschool teachers for the program and worked closely with them while they became familiar with KSTK. Shondell Palacio, the Leeward O'ahu coordinator, lives in Nānākuli and also works for Keiki Steps during the school year. She was very essential in recruiting students for classes in the Leeward communities.

IV. PRINCIPAL PRESENTATIONS

KSTK staff found it necessary to customize the principal orientations based on the principal's familiarity with the program and the need to address individual school's concerns. Having over thirty returning schools helped to expedite a few of the orientations since they were already familiar with the program having participated in the past one, two or more years. Principals of schools new to the program usually needed a more detailed description of the program and step-by-step guidance through the implementation process.

Principal orientations were scheduled and facilitated in the following ways:

- On Kaua'i, Area Coordinator Dora Hong facilitated two days of individual meetings with school principals. She was also able to set up an appointment with the Complex Area Superintendent (CAS). This was a great opportunity to explain the program goals to the superintendent who had recently been appointed to the position. The CAS was very supportive of the program.
- Moloka'i Area Coordinator Pi'ilani Augustiro met individually with the principals from each Moloka'i school. Each of these schools had previously participated in KSTK.
- In Hilo INPEACE-SPARK site manager, Lilinoe Young, took the lead by meeting with the principals in Keaukaha. She also provided assistance with recruitment of students in the area. The KSTK program director also met with principals from the three Puna schools of Pāhoa Elementary, Keonepoko Elementary and Kea'au Elementary. The director also met individually with the principals of both Honoka'a Elementary and Waimea Elementary.



- On O‘ahu all schools on the Leeward coast had implemented KSTK in previous years. KSTK staff dealt directly with principals on a one-to-one basis. Particularly effective for KSTK was Leeward Area Coordinator Shondell Palacio’s extensive experience on the coast as part of the Keiki Steps program. A large number of schools on the Windward side of O‘ahu participated and Area Coordinator Tasha Amano met with principals to assist with program implementation. Associate Director Jammie Pratt and INPEACE office staff assisted with these schools. Kamehameha Ka‘amōhala, Thomas Ka‘ai‘ai, provided valuable assistance with recruitment of teachers and campus visitations.
- Hāna was the only KSTK site on Maui and the program director and associate director met with the principal and teachers to provide assistance.

There were five schools new to the program this year:

- Chiefess Kapi‘olani Elementary (Hilo)
- Waiākea Elementary (Hilo; invited before but unable to participate)
- Honoka‘a Elementary (Hamākua)
- ‘Ele‘ele Elementary (Kaua‘i; invited before but unable to participate)
- Kekaha Elementary (Kaua‘i; invited before but unable to participate)

Every effort was made to work the administrators and staff of the schools to assist with the implementation of the KSTK initiative.

As the Department of Education staffing changes due to retirement and transfers it is important to maintain personal contact with current administrators and teachers at the schools.

V. TEACHER RECRUITMENT

This year KSTK staff made every effort to adhere to the intent of the program which was to have both a kindergarten teacher and a preschool teacher in every classroom. Schools were responsible for the recruitment of a kindergarten teacher from their school. Many of the returning schools were able to recruit their kindergarten teachers since many of them had participated previously. At other schools due to the shorter lead time this year, principals were not able to recruit a kindergarten teacher and often turned to a first or second grade teacher to lead the KSTK effort. Additionally, a number of schools had new administrators not familiar with the KSTK program. These principals often relied on other members of their staff to support the program. While these difficulties with teacher recruitment posed some challenges, schools were ultimately able to recruit teachers to participate in KSTK 2008. We anticipate that at our Debrief session in November we will be able to stress the importance of having a kindergarten teacher in the classroom so that if we are able to implement this program in 2009 we should be able to have a kindergarten teacher in every classroom.

Recruitment of preschool teachers for KSTK classrooms began by first asking principals for their suggestions. For example, Keonepoko Elementary in Puna, Hawai'i was able to recruit their Head Start teacher who was paired together with a new kindergarten teacher. At Honoka'a Elementary and Waimea Elementary the principals worked with Angela Thomas and Chelsea Ching of Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) to recruit preschool teachers for their schools. This successful collaboration with GBA brought three excellent and highly qualified preschool teachers into the program. On O'ahu at Pū'ōhala Elementary, the kindergarten teacher there worked with a preschool teacher from Waiāhole Elementary, another school that did not have enough students to have the KSTK program.

INPEACE with its many connections to other preschool organizations sent announcements by email regarding the preschool openings at KSTK schools. Among those agencies contacted were ALULIKE Inc., Head Start, Kaua'i Community College Preschool, Kama'āina Kids, Good Beginnings Alliance, Kamehameha Schools Early Education and INPEACE's Keiki Steps. Area Coordinators also recruited preschool teachers they knew in their communities. Of the 33 schools participating in KSTK, 23 of 40 (58%) classrooms had both a DOE teacher and a preschool teacher in their classrooms. Although not at 100%, this was considerably higher than the previous year.



Challenges in regard to preschool teacher recruitment seemed to be more difficult at schools that had previously participated in KSTK and had teams of elementary teachers from their schools. KSTK staff took the time to explain the intent of the program goals and how important it is to have both a kindergarten teacher and a preschool teacher in the classroom.

Classrooms with more than 20 students were offered the option of having an extra aide position to help with classroom management. This option served to ensure that every family could enroll their kindergartner in KSTK and that no child would be turned away from this opportunity.

VI. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Schools were responsible for student recruitment as part of the acceptance of KSTK program. Recruitment activities varied from school to school with assistance provided by KSTK staff. This year INPEACE implemented a radio ad campaign for KSTK. This radio advertising saw an increase in the number of inquiries from families about the program. Returning schools also received a KSTK banner to display at the school. Word-of-mouth, flyers posted throughout the community, phone calls, community newsletters and announcements at community events rounded out the recruitment process.



The variation in levels of student recruitment depended on and reflected the level of support provided by the school administrators. This level of support by school administrators can not be emphasized enough. Schools whose administrators took an active role in recruitment were oftentimes able to recruit a substantial amount of students, as well as reach the intended group of students—those with little or no preschool experience. Administrators set the tone and the sense of commitment by the school to the KSTK program. Principals often didn't have the time to do the recruiting themselves, however when this task was delegated to a committed person such as; someone from the office staff, the PCNC or a specific teacher in the school, recruiting efforts yielded positive results. In several schools where there was not very much administrative support, parents were oftentimes referred to the INPEACE office. In these instances, area coordinators stepped in to assist. Principals were notified that in order to have the program at their school each class had to have a minimum of 10 students. Schools that had less than 10 students by the first day of class were given two extra days to try to recruit more students. Those schools that managed to recruit more students to meet the minimum number were successful due to the concentrated efforts of administrators and teachers. For example, Principal

Alexis Kane of Pū'ōhala School worked with her KSTK teachers to recruit more students by meeting with the parents who had signed their children up and asking them to help spread the word. Within a two day period, there were enough students to implement the program.

As in previous years of KSTK, when the administrator, office staff and teachers worked collaboratively to recruit students, schools met the recruitment criteria. Some successful student recruitment stories follow:

- At Keaukaha Elementary, Area Coordinator Lilinoe Young worked with the school and in the community to help recruit students.
- At Pahoā Elementary, initial recruitment efforts did not begin until after the end of the school year due to staffing issues. Once the teacher and early childhood educator were on board, both teachers began a continuous recruitment effort well into the first two days of school and increased the number of students from 8 to 15 surpassing the minimum number of students required.
- New to the program this year was Chiefess Kapi'olani School in Hilo. Principal Lucia Stewart worked closely with her staff to recruit a teacher. She was assisted by the early childhood educators with recruitment. With her teacher on a scheduled vacation, both she and the KSTK early childhood educators recruited students for the program surpassing the minimum number and recruiting 13 students.

A challenge in the recruitment of students was brought to light at the end of KSTK. One of the KSTK kindergarten teachers noted that if a child lives in the school's district, the parents are not required to pre-register the child for kindergarten before the start of school. This teacher noted that these students can register just before or right after school starts. Many of these students are the targeted students who have not had preschool experience. The issue here is how to reach these families early so that their children can have the advantage of the KSTK program before they begin school. We have created a best practices video to share with principals at the strategic planning and debrief session that highlights the Keaukaha strategy of recruitment that will greatly improve recruitment efforts in the future.

Again as with the previous year, when KSTK is supported by the administration, office staff, and teachers, student enrollment is enhanced and the program is successful. Almost all of the participating schools cited the need for an earlier start of student recruitment with some schools advocating for the process to begin as early as January.

VII. TEACHER TRAINING

Similar to the principal orientations, teacher training sessions in each of the areas varied in format from large group formats to individual trainings at school sites. A total of 66 teachers and early childhood educators were trained in 2 to 3 hour sessions. Sessions were held on Moloka'i, Kaua'i, Hilo, Puna, Waimea, Honoka'a, Hana, Leeward and Windward O'ahu. Area Coordinators assisted the director and associate director with these training sessions. The training included information and suggestions for:

- Employment forms and requirements of INPEACE employees for the summer
- Examining and aligning preschool standards and kindergarten requirements
- Scheduling and content of parent workshops as required by the KSTK program
- Articulation of curriculum content in addition to the rituals and routines of kindergarten
- Requirements for KSTK as outlined in the teacher handbook
- Supporting children and their families through a first time school experience
- Teachers were encouraged to share effective curriculum and transition activities with each other. This was particularly effective in large and small group trainings where teachers had the opportunity to share and "talk story" about successful transition practices.

A majority of the schools that had previously participated in the KSTK program came to the trainings with their daily schedules and curriculum set in order to focus on the four following outcomes for KSTK.

Each student will:

- Be able to understand and follow classroom routines
- Learn how to participate in a group
- Find enjoyment in school and
- Be able to make friends

Based on sample curriculum activities, lesson plans and daily schedules submitted last year; teachers were given a curriculum and activity matrix to



document the implementation of the program in their classrooms. KSTK staff noted that schools with prior KSTK participation were able to set up their programs with very little or no assistance. New schools often expressed concerns about curriculum issues. Having the matrix and samples from experienced KSTK programs helped these new schools with these issues.

Particularly helpful for new schools that did not have a kindergarten teacher available was the input of the early childhood educator. For example, at Chiefess Kapi'olani Elementary in Hilo, none of the school's kindergarten teachers were available to do KSTK. The principal recruited a first grade teacher who asked the kindergarten teachers for assistance with planning. The early childhood educators who worked with him were able to set up his first grade classroom to be more conducive for incoming kindergarten students.

All participants at the trainings received a Teacher Handbook. The handbook included all the necessary program forms. Each school was furnished with a CD containing the forms so that teachers had the option of printing the forms from their computers. All forms were reviewed and a rationale provided for completion of the forms. Area coordinators assisted teachers at the training with planning for snacks and classroom supplies. Lastly, the coordinators set up dates for parent orientations and debriefing sessions with the teachers.

VIII. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This year KSTK staff emphasized the program parameters and strongly encouraged schools to:

- Have a kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator in the classroom
- Focus on the four outcomes of participation in KSTK (see section VII)
- Have a minimum of 40 to 45 hours student contact hours of exposure in the program

There were 21 schools with 3 week programs with a total of 42 student contact hours of exposure in the program. Eleven (11) schools operated a 2 week program with contact hours ranging from 35 to 40 total hours. As with last year, teachers' summer schedules and plans often dictated the duration of the program. Again, we see the strategic planning session as a critical opportunity to stress the importance of the length of the program. With the proposed change in the DOE summer break schedule next year we may see a positive change in teachers availability thereby affecting the length of the program in the future.

In the course of their classroom visits Area Coordinators highlighted effective programs, some of which did not meet the criterion of a 3-week program with 45 student contact hours. These effective programs varied in implementation, but the common threads through all of these successful programs were teamwork and collaboration between the principal, office staff and teachers. Area Coordinator Shondell Palacio from the Leeward coast shared about the KSTK program at Mākaha Elementary. Although this school ran the program for only 7 days at 3 hours per day, the school started early with recruitment and had two full classes of 20 students each. Daily attendance was between 18-20 students. Palacio noted that the teachers had a system and worked with students to make classroom rituals and routines a priority. Additionally, the early childhood educators from Keiki Steps had worked with the school staff in previous years which helped make the short duration more effective.

On Kaua'i, Area Coordinator Dora Hong observed that for the schools on that island the 3 week format worked the best. The quality of the teachers and their teaching helped to make the program a success at these schools. Hong also observed that these teachers generated excitement about coming to school for their students.



Parents also stated this in conversations with her. Hong observed that the successful teachers designed a curriculum based on the needs of the students, the school's curriculum and rituals/routines for their school's kindergarten classrooms. 'Ele'ele Elementary implemented the program in a unique and innovative manner. Principal Liela Nitta invited all incoming kindergarten students to attend Keiki Steps to Kindergarten. With additional funds from a P-3 grant she was able to fund two additional classes in order to accommodate all the school's kindergarten students. KSTK paid for the class with students who had never attended any kind of preschool program. This program ran for the full 3 weeks. Students who had "some" preschool or family-based programs came for two weeks while students who attended a regular preschool program came for a one week program. In addition, Nitta hired a part-time teacher to assist with preparing snacks, materials and cleaning up. This teacher worked with all three classes. Last year Kōloa Elementary implemented a one week program. This year the teachers increased KSTK to a 3 week program and planned for time for parent conferences during the last 2 days of KSTK. The school's SSC who is a year-round DOE employee volunteered to help with the students while the teachers held parent/teacher conferences with the parents. For this school the teachers felt it important to communicate with the parents as it afforded them a chance to get to know the parents and make them feel comfortable in a conference situation.

Windward Area Coordinator Natasha Amano spoke highly of the programs at all of her schools but was especially impressed with Hau'ula Elementary's KSTK program. Amano observed that the teacher in this classroom was organized and extended lessons with her students. Student work was bound into a booklet containing journals, drawings and practice sheets with their names. In addition, Amano spoke of the nurturing environment in the classroom evidenced by the

excitement the teacher conveyed to her students about school. For example if a student could only write one letter in his/her name she positively praised the student for what he/she could do. In her soft spoken way the teacher always talked to students at their level, worked one on one with them, and cultivated a nurturing atmosphere for her students.

Area Coordinator Lilinoe Young also noted the teamwork and collaboration between the principal and staff at Keaukaha Elementary. The team was led by kindergarten teacher Wendy Kimura who has successfully implemented the program for a number of years. Keaukaha again had two classes which surpassed the maximum number of 20 for both classes. Principal Lehua Vincent assumed the cost of hiring a teacher aide to assist with the overflow of students in both classes.

At Honoka'a Elementary Program Director Cathy Arnold highlighted the collaboration between Principal Kate Tolentino, the teachers and Good Beginnings Alliance. Principal Tolentino was able to recruit a very experienced kindergarten teacher to implement the program for the first time. Parents and students were so excited to come every day that most were there early. Using an effective strategy from the "Success For All" reading program used at the school, the teachers used an activity called the "Talking Stone" to encourage oral language while sitting in their morning circle. Teachers noticed that by the end of the program students were talking more and able to wait their turn to speak and were able to sit for an extended amount of time. At Waimea Elementary the KSTK program was expanded to two classes with the principal funding the second class with monies from a P-3 grant. Cooking and art were the theme basis for one class with students creating something almost everyday. The other class also followed a theme format.



All KSTK schools developed and implemented daily classroom routines pertinent to their specific school. Walking tours of the campus, trips to the library and cafeteria gave students a chance to become acquainted with their new environment. These on-campus walking field trips as well as field trips requiring bus rides served to familiarize students with field trip routines. For "first time" parents this also gave them a chance to

chaperone and become acquainted with these routines. Lastly, as in years past within the small group settings, teachers were able to observe potential student issues that warranted early referrals including speech and learning disabilities. Oftentimes teachers were able to call on the school's Student Services Coordinator (SSC) to come in and observe.

IX. PARENT ORIENTATION AND PARENT WORKSHOPS

As part of accepting the KSTK program at their schools, principals and teachers also agreed to provide parent orientation and workshops for their parents and students. Parents were also notified when they registered their children for KSTK that these activities were mandatory. The KSTK program director and area coordinators worked closely with schools to ensure that all sites provided their parents with an orientation to KSTK. At the orientation parents were given information on:

- What was to be expected during the KSTK program
- How to prepare and what to expect during the first weeks of school
- How families can prepare and support their child's education at home
- Expectations of kindergarten, the teachers, and the school



Each school had the ability to choose when and how they conducted their orientation. Schools chose to either do their orientation on the first day or within the first few days of the program. Most schools held the orientation in the morning when the parents brought their children to school. Others held the orientation in the early evening. At many orientations, schools reinforced reading aloud and helping children to learn the alphabet letter names. Schools also focused on drop-off and pick-up routines which were especially helpful for first time parents.

Each school was able to choose how they provided parent education and support. The intent of the parent activities was to help parents: feel comfortable in the school setting, provide an opportunity for parents to participate in the child's classroom, and allow them to learn activities on how they can support their child's learning at home. School sites varied in their topics, activities and venue for parent activities, some examples are:

Most schools designated one day a week as a parent workshop day and Keaukaha Elementary in Hilo was one of them. As with last year's program, family participation was an important component. They scheduled Fridays as Parent Workshop Day and parents were notified in advance so they could look forward and plan on attending in order to participate in their child's education.

On Moloka'i, Kilohana School visited the fishponds as part of their parent workshop activities. At Waimea Elementary parents came to school with their children for their parent workshops. Families came together to enjoy combination lessons which included cooking, art and writing built around the theme of "colors". Students were learning their colors in class, and in this lesson, assisted by their parents, students made handprints with blue and yellow paint. Then they rubbed their two hands together to combine the colors to make green. When this activity was completed, students then went to another station to mix blue and yellow frosting together. They used the green frosting to frost a cookie and a cupcake. Students then drew a picture and then wrote about the experience. The read aloud story for the day continued with the color theme. At Kea'au Elementary, teachers will be working with the Kamehameha Schools Kea'au Writing team during the regular school year. They had also planned a series of parent workshops with Kamehameha for the school year. KSTK teachers invited Kamehameha parent educator, Missy Agena to present a parent workshop for their kindergarten families. This workshop was very well-attended and enjoyed by all.



Parents, especially those sending their first child to school, and students enjoyed coming to school. Not only did the workshops provide educational activities for the families to do with their children at home, but parents felt comfortable coming into the school setting and they too became familiar with some of the rituals and routines of school. As their child's first

teacher it is important that parents understand how their excitement and support for education is important to the success of their child's education.

X. PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

A total of 647 children participated in KSTK this summer as compared to 571 in 2007 and 319 in 2006.

Of the 647 participants, 579 students were surveyed for prior preschool experience. Of these 248 students or 43% came to KSTK with little or no preschool experience while 331 or 57% had prior preschool experience. The schools with the highest number of students with little or no preschool were:

- Kapa'a (96%)
- Honoka'a (92%)
- 'Ele'ele (82%)

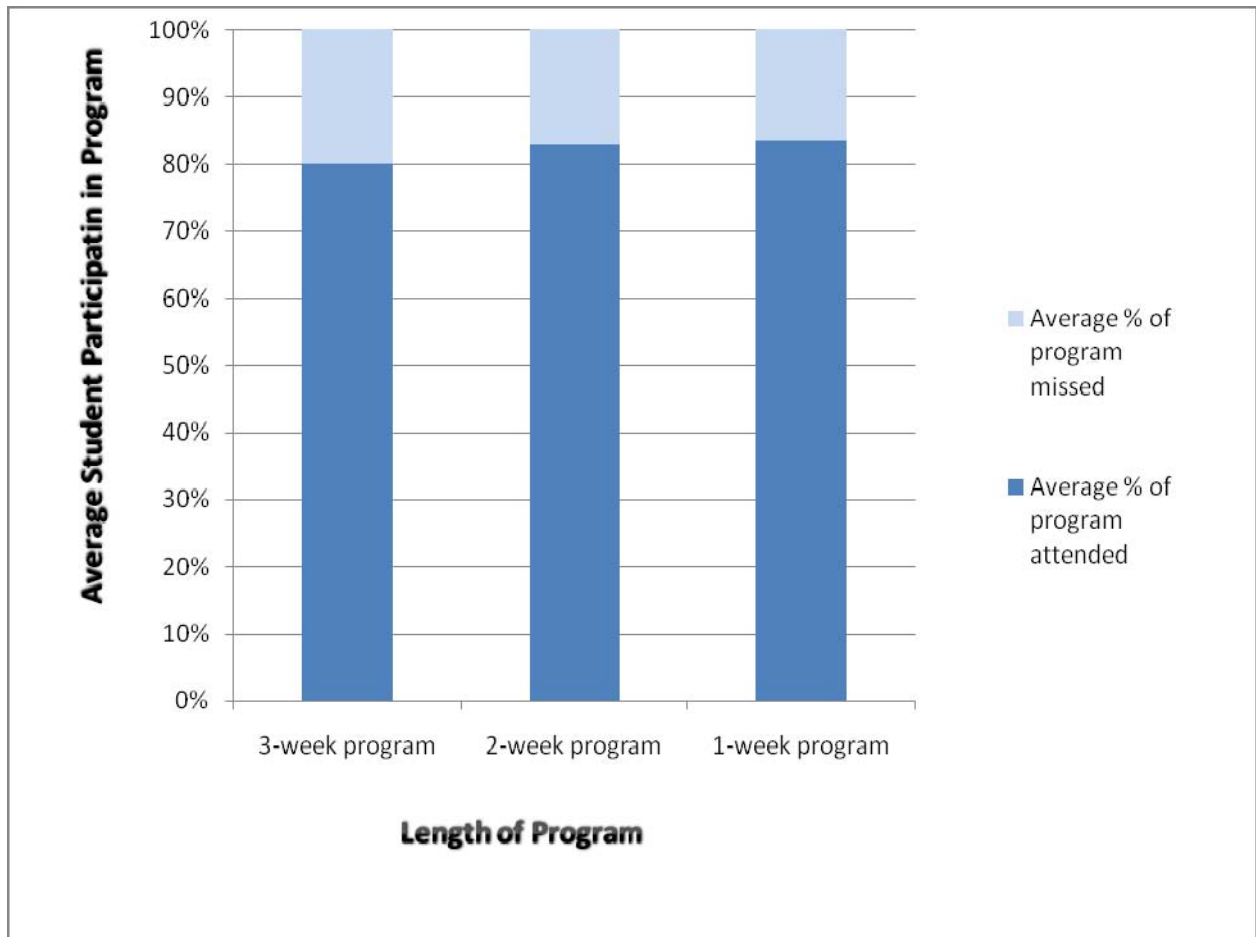


Again this year, recruitment of students from the target population of students with no preschool experience remained a difficult challenge to address. As noted in one of our teacher evaluations, oftentimes parents of students with no preschool experience do not register their children early in the year between January and June. These families who live in the school district can register their children anytime even after the school year begins. Beginning the KSTK recruitment process earlier may be helpful. For example, schools in small communities can connect with community organizations, home caregivers and even possibly sending home notices with older students in the school asking families to “spread” the word about KSTK. We are also interested in implementing a “kindergarten drive” in all the communities where KSTK would be next year. This kindergarten drive would be based on our SPARK experience in Wai'anae where we have seen a dramatic change in the number of children registered early for kindergarten. This coupled with the Keaukaha strategy of recruitment should have a significant impact on early registration of children with little or no preschool experience as well as their participation in KSTK.

Attendance averaged 80% for students in a 3 week program with students in a 2 week averaging 83% attendance. Although these percentages present a snapshot for attendance, it should be noted that schools often continued to accept students into their programs after the start of their program.

Student Attendance by Length of Program

Length of program	Average % of program attended	Average % of program missed
3-week program	80%	20%
2-week program	83%	17%
1-week program	83.50%	16.50%



Attendance by School

School	Attendance %	Length Program weeks	of by
HAWAII			
Chiefess Kapi'olani	82.67%	3	
Honoka'a	100%	3	
Kea'au	92.70%	2	
Keaukaha	83.88%	3	
Keonepoko	76.63%	2	
Pāhoa	64.29%	3	
Waiākea	81.79%	3	
Waimea	81.07%	3	
KAUA'I			
'Ele'ele	90.76%	3	
Kapa'a	86.09%	3	
Ke Kula Ni'ihau 'o Kekaha	75.89%	3	
Kekaha	78.06%	3	
Kōloa	95.25%	2	
MAUI / MOLOKA'I			
Hāna	63.77%	3	
Kaunakakai	61.25%	3	
Kilohana	86.51%	3	
Kualapu'u	70.00%	2	
LEEWARD O'AHU			
Barbers Point	88.02%	2	
Kamaile PCS	49.79%	3	
Leihōkū	84.77%	3	
Mā'ili	79.10%	3	
Mākaha	83.50%	1	
Nānāikapono	81.46%	2	
Wai'anae	80.30%	3	
WINDWARD O'AHU			
Ben Parker	82.94%	2	
Blanche Pope	78.55%	2	
Hau'ula	78.93%	3	
He'eia	92.86%	3	
Ka'a'awa	78.57%	3	
Kahuku	92.31%	3	
Lā'ie	79.41%	2	
Pū'ōhala	93.64%	2	
Waimānalo	77.37%	2	

XI. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Of the 647 student participants, 579 students were given a pre and post assessment. This observational instrument focused on twelve milestones within five developmental areas: Social-Emotional, Reading/Writing, Math, Gross Motor and Fine Motor. The milestones are:

1. Separates from parents easily
2. Able to follow classroom rules and routines
3. Participates in the group life of the class
4. Shows initiative and direction
5. Shows interest in books and print
6. Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, letters and words to convey meaning
7. Speaks clearly and conveys ideas effectively
8. Shows familiarity with how books work
9. Can count a set of five objects
10. Is able to sort and classify
11. Shows large muscle control
12. Shows small muscle control



Teachers observed and administered the assessment during the first two or three days of program (pre test) and again during the last two or three days (post test). Students were assessed using yes, no, and somewhat as indicators. A “no” assessment indicated that the student does not or cannot perform the milestone. A “yes” assessment indicated that the student can or is able to perform the milestone. A “somewhat” assessment indicated that the student was somewhat (about 50% of the time) able to perform the milestone.

The purpose of the assessment is to obtain baseline data on the students at the beginning of the KSTK and data at the end of the program. Based on this data collection, the assessment will be used to measure the growth of each student while participating in the KSTK program.

Student Assessment Improvement

Based on a "No" assessment

Milestones	Pre "No"	= Post "No"	= % Improvement	of
1	Separates from parents easily	63	5	93%
2	Follows classroom rules/routines	73	12	84%
3	Participate in group life of the class	52	23	56%
4	Shows initiative & self-direction	81	29	64%
5	Show interest in books & print	44	9	80%
6	Uses letter-like shapes & symbols	110	43	61%
7	Speaks clearly & conveys ideas	72	32	56%
8	Shows familiarity with how books work	52	13	75%
9	Can count a set of 5 objects	65	28	57%
10	Is able to sort & classify	90	33	63%
11	Shows large muscle control	20	4	80%
12	Shows small muscle control	74	11	85%

*Areas in blue represent largest improvements.

XII. FAMILY ASSESSMENT

Another important component of the program is the parent evaluation. At the conclusion of the individual KSTK programs, families were asked to evaluate their child's participation and progress while participating in the KSTK program. An overwhelming sense of gratitude was shared by parents who completed the evaluation. Many parents spoke highly of the program with comments such as: "You need to keep this program going because it's beneficial to not only the child but to parents as well." Another evaluation commended teachers on their "dedication to the program", and thanked them for "giving up part of their summer to be with the children". The following are examples of parent responses to the evaluation:



Family Evaluation

How has KSTK helped your child?

- ❖ Allowed child to socialize and interact with peers while creating friendships
- ❖ Enabled writing and motor skills when there was none to begin with
- ❖ Calmed fears and provided a familiar face knowing the teachers would be there
- ❖ Transitioned to learn the daily routines of kindergarten which gave students a head start

- ❖ Provided confidence in starting at the “big school” with older siblings
- ❖ Willingness to share and teach younger siblings what they learned

In what areas have you noticed growth in your child?

- ❖ Able to follow directions and complete tasks better
- ❖ Learning the difference between play and work time
- ❖ Changed and created good habits like going to bed and waking up early to brush teeth and wash face
- ❖ More independent and helpful at home
- ❖ Able to discover and experience different challenges
- ❖ Possess pride in work that is done
- ❖ Has become more patient and tolerant

How has KSTK been beneficial to you as a parent?

- ❖ Encouraged parent participation and involvement in the classroom
- ❖ Allowed teamwork between parents and teachers
- ❖ Awareness of areas where the child needs improvement
- ❖ Eased fears and nervousness especially for parents whose first child will be starting school
- ❖ Provided an opportunity to meet key staff at school.
- ❖ Formed better habits like bedtime routines and promptness
- ❖ Opened eyes and better prepared for projects and expectations of school

In what ways can KSTK change or improve?

- ❖ Getting the word out to everyone; it is a great program but many people don't know about it
- ❖ Having at least 2 “full” days, just like regular school, so the child can experience how an actual day goes including eating in the cafeteria
- ❖ Parent/teacher conference to check on child's progress or an evaluation that is given to parents with suggestions for activities that parents can do with their child
- ❖ Having a show and tell to maybe boost each child's confidence
- ❖ Have parent and child homework activities

XIII. TEACHER EVALUATION

As schools completed their programs, area coordinators met with teachers to debrief and collect paperwork. This was a time for the area coordinators and teachers from schools to meet and share insights and successes of the program. These debrief sessions were particularly helpful for teachers and schools new to the program. Sharing information and listening to other teachers proved to be beneficial for everyone. Teachers shared their thoughts and examples with each other and the area coordinators. As with previous KSTK programs, teachers were able to identify children who may need referral services such as speech therapy or referral to ELL services and/or PSAP.

What did you like best about KSTK?

- ❖ Being able to assess the incoming students and know what areas they need help in, and also let parents know where they can help.
- ❖ Parent-child interaction allowed for a connection to be made by the triangular points—parent, child, and teacher.
- ❖ Allowing the parents and child a glimpse of kindergarten so they have time to adjust and make new friends.
- ❖ Flexibility of the schedule and curriculum.
- ❖ Having the extra body in the classroom. One teacher can comfort the students who are having a difficult time adjusting, while the other teacher can focus on the rest of the students.
- ❖ Being able to see the students' progression from day one to the last day of KSTK.



From darkness to light—KSTK Successes:

- ❖ Watching the children adjust from separation anxieties the first couple of days to “Ok mom, you can leave already.”

- ❖ Going from needing a “security blanket” to confident and at ease student.
- ❖ Some keiki are only taught English at home, but to see how quickly they are able to pick up the Hawaiian language and routines is amazing. (Hawaiian immersion classroom)
- ❖ Being able to get the extra help/services for students who need it, diagnosing SPED students early with the help of other school personnel.
- ❖ Seeing students write their names or use scissors when they weren’t able to even hold a pencil in the beginning.

What didn’t work well?

- ❖ Timeline was too short. Teachers and other staff need time to make adjustments to schedules so classrooms can be cleaned or vacation can be taken, and lesson plans still needed to be made. (School that principal chose to have program at the end of the school year instead of right before school starts)
- ❖ Parent orientation was too short and would have liked it prior to the start of the program.
- ❖ Length of time – 8 to 12 is too long unless lunch is served. (2 week program)
- ❖ Not having access to all facilities like a copy machine when the school’s undergoing construction.
- ❖ Too short of time with the children, since there is some time spent comforting them and trying to adjust the parents as well. (2 week program)

Suggestions for the future:

- ❖ Advance notice of program will help with scheduling and recruitment.
- ❖ More advertisement to help with recruitment.
- ❖ Make the last week a full day so the students can experience lunch too.
- ❖ Find a way to stress importance of participating in the parent activity sessions.
- ❖ Incentives for students’ attendance in the program.
- ❖ Consider schools such as Maunaloa or Waiāhole as exceptions to low enrollment.
- ❖ Knowing budget so lesson plans can be made and snacks purchased accordingly.
- ❖ Higher pay and more prep time.

XIV. CURRICULUM

In keeping with the intent of the grant efforts were made to place a kindergarten and an early childhood educator into every classroom. As a result, teachers were able to collaborate when designing program curriculum. Teachers met daily and/or weekly to plan.

Each school tailored their program to their students' needs making adjustments along the way. This ensured that transitional activities planned for the KSTK program aligned with the rituals, routines, and academic practices for the expected school year.

With this year's program, teachers were asked to note what areas of curriculum were being taught in the classrooms. The areas of curriculum included:

- Time schedules
- Daily classroom schedule
- Thematic units
- Language arts
- Math
- Art
- Science
- Transitions
- Morning circle routines
- Pick-up and drop-off routines
- Sign-in and out routines
- Recess
- Bathroom hygiene
- Cafeteria routines
- In-class responsibilities
- Standards
- Homework



All 40 classrooms of KSTK used language arts as a common theme for instruction. Language arts included; spelling, writing, reading, comprehension, vocabulary and thinking skills. Rituals and routines were also stressed in the classroom. Teachers also included art activities in order to extend and enhance their lessons.

KSTK Curriculum in the classrooms

	Schedule-Fine	Schedule-Daily	Themes	L-Arts	Math	Art	Science	Transitions	Morning-Circle	Pick-Up/Drop-off	Recess	Bathroom-Hygiene	Cafeteria	In-Class	Social Skills	Sign In/out	Centers	Read-Aloud	Other (ie-cooking)	Responsibilities	Standards	Homework	Notes:
HAWAII																							
Chiefess Kapi'olani	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Honoka'a	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kea'au	*	*		*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*	*	*
Keaukaha 1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*		
Keaukaha 2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*		
Keonepoko	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*		
Pāhoa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*	*	*
Waiākea	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Waimea 1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Waimea 2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
KAUAI																							
Ele'ele	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kapa'a	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ke Kula Ni'ihau o Kekaha				*	*	*			*	*	*												
Kekaha	*	*		*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kōloa	*	*		*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
MAUI/MOLOKAI																							
Hāna	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kaunakakai	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kilohana	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kualapu'u	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEEWARD-OAHU																							
Barbers Point	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kamaile 1	*	*		*					*	*			*	*	*		*			*	*		
Kamaile 2	*	*		*					*	*			*	*	*		*			*	*		
Leihoku 1	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Leihoku 2	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mā'ili	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mākaha 1	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mākaha 2	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nānāikapono 1	*	*		*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nānāikapono 2	*	*		*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wai'anāe	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
WINDWARD-OAHU																							
Ben Parker	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Blanche Pope 1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Blanche Pope 2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hau'ula	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
He'eia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ka'a'awa	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kahuku	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
La'ie	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pū'ohala	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Waimānalo	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

XV. PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Each subsequent year of KSTK, program staff and schools have sought to improve program delivery based on evaluations and data. Since the summer of 2006 issues of assessment, hiring of area coordinators, transportation, kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator recruitment, prep time for teachers and parent orientations have been addressed and woven into the program making the program even more effective. This year as the program finishes its fifth year of implementation, it is important to note recommendations for the future expansion and funding of KSTK.

These recommendations include:

- ❖ Beginning earlier in the year to give schools more lead time to recruit students. Principals would also have more time to recruit teachers. With more lead time, KSTK staff would be able to plan for more publicity activities.
- ❖ Developing a plan to reach out to parents of children with no preschool experience and encouraging them to register their children. As a Hilo teacher noted in her debrief, students who live in their school district can register for kindergarten at any time, even after school begins. Many of these students are the ones with no preschool experience.
- ❖ Increasing the daily attendance at KSTK. Several schools noted that oftentimes parents of students without preschool experience did not send their children to KSTK on a regular basis.
- ❖ Expanding the KSTK model to include more schools.
- ❖ Exploring funding sources and how the DOE can support this program more effectively.
- ❖ Form and cultivate partnerships: school to school, school to community organizations, school to businesses.
- ❖ Develop an online database that teachers may access and input their assessments.



XVII. CONCLUSION

With the expansion in the number of participating schools and classrooms, the Keiki Steps to Kindergarten was a success. Families, teachers, and administrators saw the progress of each student and the increase in the level of family participation.

Hawai'i to implement this valuable transition program.

The KSTK model merits replication and is an example of how families, teachers, and communities can work together to support children and their families, easing the transition into kindergarten. This provides a strong foundation on which to begin the educational journey and is an exemplary model of P-3.

We look forward to improving KSTK via our Strategic Planning and Debrief Principals meeting in November. The purpose of this Principal's Conference is to:

- Examine best practices and areas for improvement in KSTK
- Explore avenues of sustainability and additional funding streams
- Brainstorm expansion of the program
- Get early commitment to KSTK 2009 in case funding is available



It has been a privilege to work with the principals, teachers, schools and Native Hawaiian communities to implement KSTK across the state. 'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia- No task is too large when done by all.