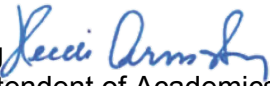


STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF ACADEMICS

May 14, 2026

TO: The Honorable William Arakaki
Chairperson, Student Achievement Committee

FROM: Heidi Armstrong 
Deputy Superintendent of Academics

SUBJECT: Department of Education presentation on Goal 1.3 (All students graduate high school prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement): Castle-Kahuku Complex Area work-based learning and K-12 workforce development alignment

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Castle-Kahuku Complex Area has prioritized an alignment with Goal 1.3.1 of the Hawai'i Public Education 2023–2029 Strategic Plan, ensuring that all students engage in a range of career preparation experiences throughout their K–12 journey. Work-based learning is a key component of this effort, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of education by connecting classroom instruction to real-world applications. These experiences provide students with meaningful opportunities to explore careers while gaining practical, hands-on knowledge across various industries. In addition, work-based learning supports the development of essential employability skills valued by employers. Through mock interviews, internships, performance-based assessments, and job shadowing, students strengthen their communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management abilities. As a result, students graduate with increased confidence, practical experience, professional connections, and a clearer understanding of workplace expectations, better preparing them for postsecondary education and career pathways.

2. DESCRIPTION

The presentation will highlight the Castle-Kahuku Complex Area's initiative to foster a progression from early career awareness to specialized work-based learning experiences. The presenters will provide examples of the career-connected learning opportunities and

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four-stage developmental pathway used to guide students from initial career awareness in elementary school through intensive skill-based learning experiences with community and industry partners at the high school level.

3. PRESENTATION

Department of Education presentation on Goal 1.3 (All students graduate high school prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement):
Castle-Kahuku Complex Area work-based learning and K-12 workforce development alignment

HA:si
Attachment

c: Castle-Kahuku Complex Area



HAWAI'I STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Department of Education presentation on Goal 1.3 (All students graduate high school prepared for college and career success and community and civic engagement): Castle-Kahuku Complex Area work-based learning and K-12 workforce development alignment

Hawai'i State Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
May 14.2026

Sam Izumi, *Complex Area Superintendent, Castle-Kahuku Complex Area*
Trisha Kim, *Career & Technical Education Resource Teacher, Windward District*
Walter Santiago, *Principal, Kahuku High & Intermediate School*
Bernadette Tyrell, *Principal, Castle High School*



Demographics



- **Number of schools:** 16 total schools (13 Title I)
 - Elementary: 13 total Elementary Schools
 - 8 within the Castle Complex
 - 5 within the Kahuku Complex
 - Middle: 1 Intermediate School
 - 1 within the Castle Complex
 - High: 1 High School
 - 1 within the Castle Complex
 - Combination: 1 Intermediate & High School
 - 1 within the Kahuku Complex
- **Student enrollment:** 7,232
- **Total staff:**
 - School level: 1,022 total employees
 - Complex area level: 42 total employees



The Castle-Kahuku (CK) Complex Area services all of the communities that feed into Kāneʻohe Elementary School through Sunset Beach Elementary School.



Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlights



To support students' learning, their academic growth, and college/career readiness, our CK schools utilize the following strategies:



Positive Relationships & Connections

We believe that strong, positive relationships are the bedrock of a thriving school community. By nurturing these relationships and connections to our schools, we are building a foundation of trust and support that motivates engagement, fosters well-being, and ultimately drives success for all. Also, when feasible, we will form partnerships with our community to extend the learning opportunities and experiences for our students.



Intentional Decisions

Every decision made regarding our students' academic and social-emotional growth must be deliberate and impactful. We are committed to making purposeful, data-driven decisions that target specific learning needs, builds essential skills, and ensures students receive the support and interventions they need through thoughtful planning, strategic implementation, and continuous reflection.



Alignment of Resources & Supports

To achieve our goals and prepare our students, we must ensure our resources are leveraged effectively and efficiently to develop cohesive systems and structures. This focus on strategic alignment will provide consistent support for our schools, teams, and students we serve as well as address our ongoing improvement and growth efforts.

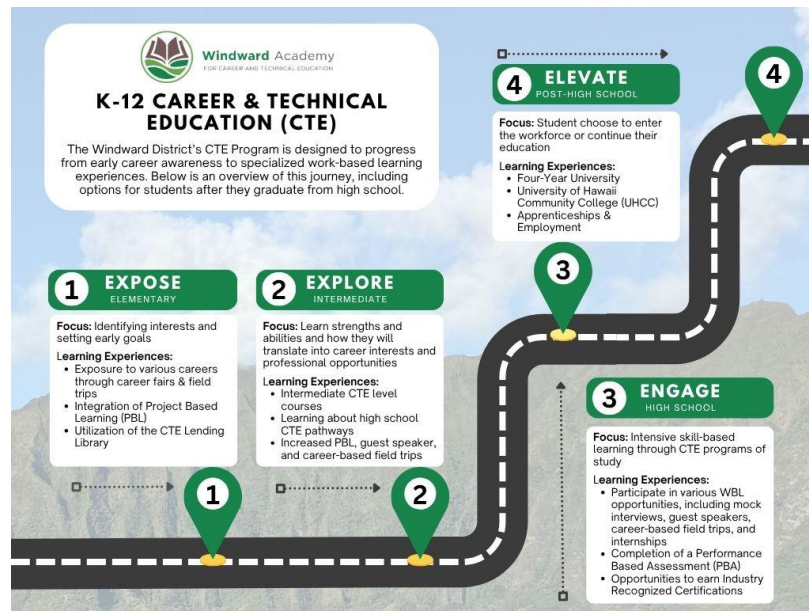


Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlights



K-12 College and Career-Connected Learning Alignment

- The accompanying infographic presents a K-12 Career and Technical Education (CTE) program.
- This infographic outlines a structured, four-stage developmental pathway—Expose, Explore, Engage and Elevate—designed to guide students from initial career awareness in elementary school through post-secondary.
- We intend to continue this alignment work during the 2026–27 school year, which includes a continued focus on the integration of career preparation and a workforce development mindset at all CK schools (Grades K-12).





Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlights



Castle High School

In addition to Career Pathways, Castle High School has a Work-Based Learning Continuum in-place:



All Freshmen

Meet & Greet event: 90+ industry and community volunteers



All Sophomores

Mock Interviews with Industry Partners



All Juniors

Junior Job Shadow Event



Seniors

Pathway Internship, Certification, Apprenticeship

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

Kahuku High and Intermediate School is bridging the gap between academics & professional execution through:



Real World Experience

Classroom to workplace:
Students to Professional Contributors



Modern Tech Skills

Hands-on, Industry Standards Skills Development



Leadership Training

Project leads in the school and community



Empowering the Community

Rooted in the community, Serving the world



Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlight



Windward District High School Career and Technical Education Performance Based Assessment (PBA)

[PBA Video Link](#)

- Students create a product or solution to a design-based or problem-based challenge developed by an industry partner.
- 115 students in nine School Career and Technical Education Programs of Study:
 - Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
 - Culinary Arts
 - Digital Design
 - Engineering
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Film and Media Production
 - Health Services
 - Information Technology and Digital Transformation
 - Residential and Commercial Construction



Top Picture: Kahuku culinary students demonstrate their knife skills and prep work.

Bottom Picture: Industry judges provide feedback on their bridge model to Castle engineering students.



Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlight



Learning Through Internships/Interests (LTI)

[LTI Video Link](#)

- **LTI Framework:** A highly structured, interest-driven experience aligned with their CTE program of study and career goals.
- **LTI Gateway:** A mandatory pre-internship course ensuring professionalism and soft-skill mastery.
 - Serves as a readiness filter to ensure students represent their school effectively in the community.
 - Onboarding to master industry safety, protocols, and scope of services.
- **LTI Project:** A project of your design, based on your interests, that helps you learn more about this career or job sector. The project also should be related to and/or provide value to your internship site.



Kahuku student, Vaenui Peck, designed and built a hydroponic farming system at her Kualoa Ranch internship.



Castle-Kahuku Complex Area Highlight

Elementary Career and Technical Education Summer Camp



[Elementary CTE Summer Camp Video Link](#)

- Fifth grade students explore three different careers in three days.
- Taught by secondary CTE teachers to bridge the K-12 CTE continuum.
- Career-specific, hands-on experiences that teach real-world skills.



Students connect with Hawai'i's natural resources and cultural traditions by making ti leaf lei.



Over 60 Windward District elementary students attended the CTE summer camp for the past two years.



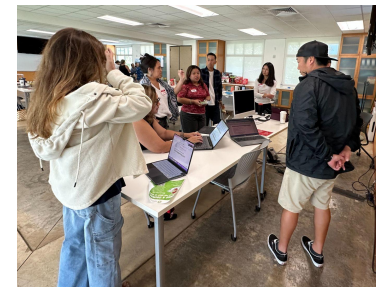
Future chefs get hands-on experience in the kitchen, collaborating to master essential culinary techniques and prep fresh ingredients.



Target Areas of Focus

K-12 College and Career-Connected Learning Alignment

- Aligning College and Career-Connected Learning experiences across elementary, intermediate and high schools.
- Analyzing College and Career-Connect Learning elements, identifying gaps, and setting both priorities and actionable next steps.
- Building relationships and strengthening inter-school networks to develop shared, and measurable, student outcomes.



Castle-Kahuku Complex Area intermediate and high schools met throughout the 2025-26 school year to continue to align college- and career-connected learning opportunities.



Target Areas of Focus

K-12 CTE Support System for Teachers



Teacher Professional Development Support

- Training on integrating academic content with relevant, hands-on learning:
 - Career and Technical Education
 - Computer Science
 - English Language Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Project Based Learning

Student and Teacher Opportunities and Resources

- Over 700 requests a school year for our [Lending Library resources](#) to support hands-on learning and integration
[Lending Library Video Link](#)
- Over 400 requests a school year for our [Windward District CTE vehicles](#)

Windward District CTE Intermediary

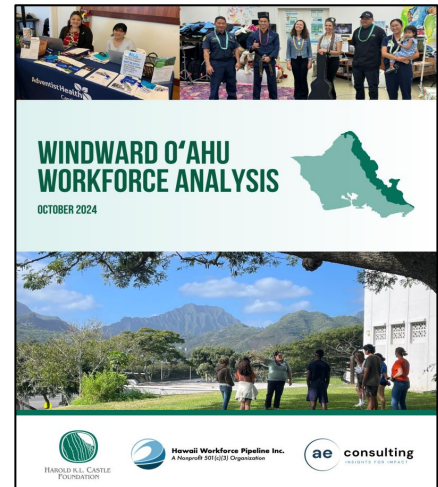
[Hawai'i Workforce Pipeline](#) connects teachers and students with industry and community partners to make learning relevant to careers for grades K-12.



Other Highlights

Windward O‘ahu Economic Leaders Group

- Regional Workforce Partnership led by Hawai‘i Workforce Pipeline and funded by the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.
 - The group consisted of a coalition of prominent employers, educational leaders, and community partners in Windward O‘ahu.
- [The Windward O‘ahu Workforce Analysis](#) evaluated the region’s labor market to improve the alignment of Windward K-12 education, Windward Community College, and Workforce/Employers.
- Group decided to focus on two priorities:
 - Enhance Career Awareness; and
 - Foster Alignment and Collaboration Between Education & Industry



The Windward O‘ahu Workforce Analysis identifies key labor market trends and strategic priorities to improve the alignment between K-12 education, Windward Community College, and the local workforce.



What Support Can the Board Provide?



- Continue to support and promote the need for Workforce Development funding and intermediaries.
- Assist the Department in creating incentives to attract new CTE teachers (to be competitive with industry pay).
- Continue to be a champion for Castle High School and Kahuku High & Intermediate School, as well as share how both schools are preparing their students to be college and career ready.



Top Picture: Castle automotive teacher, Noel Alarcon, received National Life Group's Life Changer of the Year award.

Bottom Picture: Kahuku's Film and Media Production students at the Windward District PBA.