



Instructional Philosophy

Kaua'i Pacific School (KPS) has created a custom inquiry and discovery based curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, curiosity, creativity, and research skills including accessing, analyzing and presenting information. Every unit of inquiry and discovery includes articulated essential understandings and guiding questions. Students are encouraged to ask their own questions and to explore areas of interest within the units of study. We understand that learning is in essence a social experience and that children bring much knowledge and wisdom to the classroom every day. Thus our teachers are "Knowledge Facilitators" rather than "Knowledge Dispensers". We aim to inspire curiosity and a passion for lifelong learning. Process and project based learning is emphasized but all modes of instruction are used depending on the needs & interests of the students. Independent and cooperative learning strategies are intertwined in order to teach children both the value of learning from others and the value of individual mastery and reflection. Kaua'i Pacific teachers recognize that self-management, collaboration, research, communication, and thinking skills are the keys to success in the 21st century. Please see our Units of Discovery on our website for more specific grade level curriculum details.

Community Building

At Kaua'i Pacific School, children are key and equal members of the school community. At the beginning of each year, teachers devote a great deal of time to developing healthy learning communities. Students formulate their own class guidelines and mechanisms are in place to ensure that every child feels like a valued member of the class community. Morning meetings, tribal circles and peace meetings are held regularly. Students participate daily in school-wide kokua activities. Our weekly Aloha Monday morning and Friday afternoon assemblies provide a forum for sharing and appreciation. Student conflicts are handled using a method that promotes understanding, taking responsibility, empathy, and reconciliation. A "love and reason" approach is favored over a "rewards and consequences" approach although at times the latter approach is employed when the former does not seem to be improving a situation. Kaua'i Pacific School is a safe haven where children are appreciated and cared for with love and reverence. Most importantly children are honored at Kaua'i Pacific School as active participants in the development and maintenance of a healthy community.

THE CORE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Language Arts: Throughout Kaua‘i Pacific’s eight-year program, students strengthen their literacy skills through a variety of reading experiences that encourage comprehension, analysis and a love for reading. We strive for a balance between teacher-facilitated group reading, shared reading in student-facilitated groups, independent reading, and read-aloud experiences with the teacher. The Foundations Reading and Write Source Writing Programs are supplemented with rich, authentic literature that supports the units of inquiry. Integral to Kaua‘i Pacific’s curriculum are the fundamentals of reading instruction and vocabulary development, as well as language mechanics and spelling instruction. Structuring ideas, creating drafts, revising and editing, and publishing finished works will help to emphasize the importance of writing as a process. Oral language experiences are used to develop appropriate speaking and listening skills in order to promote self-confidence and overall communication skills.

Mathematics: Kaua‘i Pacific’s mathematics curriculum prepares students for more complex, abstract courses in secondary school, while at the same time instilling in children an understanding of the important role mathematics plays in everyday life. Students progress sequentially in mathematical understanding, reasoning, problem solving, and application of learned skills through grade-appropriate practice and applications. Topics include: number sense, measurement, geometry, patterns, sequences, algebra, relations, functions, data analysis, statistics, and probability. Students across the grades use the Everyday Math program from the University of Chicago.

Social Studies: Students at Kaua‘i Pacific are exposed to a wide variety of past and present cultures from around the world to help them understand and accept the diversity and the connectedness among humans. Central to this is the importance of becoming humble global citizens. Children grow in their understanding of history and geography starting with their own communities and expanding outward to all the continents. Emphasis is placed on how people from all cultures have tried to make sense of the world around them and how they have worked together throughout history to achieve common goals. We explore the roots of conflict between humans and explore various ways in which humans have tried to solve and resolve conflicts. Hawaiian history and culture is an integral part of our program. Students learn about innovators and contributors from around the globe. The social studies curriculum is designed to introduce concepts and skills that are explored in greater detail during the secondary school years.

Science: Each year at Kaua‘i Pacific children grow in their understanding of scientific terminology, concepts, and applications. A variety of topics are introduced in physical science, life science, and earth/space science during the eight-year span. We use the FOSS Science Kits to support this program. Students engage in hands-on experiences to promote exploration of the scientific process. Students are also exposed to the idea that scientific innovations have helped to change and shape our knowledge of how the world works. Students learn how we can utilize our scientific knowledge to encourage responsible stewardship of the earth. Sustainability will be an ongoing theme throughout the entire Kaua‘i Pacific experience. The students’ range of scientific

investigations and explorations during their elementary years at Kaua‘i Pacific prepare them for focused study of specific topics in science during secondary courses.

SPECIALTY CLASSES

Music Education: Music at Kaua‘i Pacific School integrates history, choral, and instrumental music. The central question is “How do we express ourselves through music?” Our kindergarten approach to teaching music begins with singing. Rhythm patterns, expressed through walking and body percussion are introduced as the fundamentals for developing students’ musical intelligence. In grades one through three, students develop ear training that lays the foundation for sight-reading. Third and fourth grade students begin composing simple melodies based on repetition and rounds. In all grades, folk music, cultural story songs, street calls and world music enrich our students with global music appreciation. Students learn about musicians from various times and places who have had great impact on the evolution of music around the world. In addition to choral work, students are exposed to instruments such as the recorder and ukulele.

Creative Dance/Storytelling: As the elements of dance address the questions what, how, where, and how long, so can they help students to address similar questions that will sharpen their skills in language arts. A kinesthetic approach to learning vocabulary can deepen a child’s understanding and appreciation of words helping to make the understanding a lasting one. In Storytelling and Creative Dance, students from PK-6 will be taught the basic elements of dance, a process for creating simple choreography based on stories, skills for deepening reading comprehension and techniques for enriching vocabulary and writing creatively. Students are guided to discuss and retell stories using reading comprehension skills of inference, prediction, questioning, determining importance and relating the text to their own personal experiences or other texts. As well, they are encouraged to use the elements of dance to explore vocabulary, mood, characters, action and settings of stories. They have the opportunity to plan and perform simple choreography based on stories they hear, read and create.

Hawaiian Studies: In all grade levels, children are introduced to Hawaiian culture through chants, songs, dances, stories and games. In lower elementary grades, students learn Hawaiian vocabulary about the body, numbers, colors, the surrounding environment and Hawaiian values. As students progress through the grades they learn more sophisticated vocabulary. Upper level students memorize many songs and chants, also learning about the content of the material. Topics covered in Hawaiian Studies include historical events, ruling chiefs and chieftesses, geological formations, and significant places of great beauty. Hula is introduced in kindergarten and is an integral part of the program. By third grade children perform standing dances using a variety of steps. Younger students do hula or seated dances. Grade level appropriate craft activities use materials from nature to complement the academic curriculum. Field trips enable students to appreciate the unique power and beauty of their island home.

Marine Science: Ocean Pulse is a course in partnership with Save Our Seas on The Living Ocean and Fluid Earth: Hawaiian Coral Reef Ecology, symbiosis on the reef, species identification and classification, reproduction, productivity and growth. Emphasis is on experiential labs to survey and monitor coral reefs using international research protocols at Anini Beach. Students learn ecological principles, conservation

issues related to the Hawaiian Ahupua'a system and resource management methods. Most importantly, students realize the impact and consequences of anthropogenic (human caused) activities on oceanic ecosystems. Other topics include: Global Ecology, Plankton, Oceanography, Atmospheric and Oceanic Circulation, Plate tectonics, Sediments, Ocean Basins, Waves, Beaches, Tsunamis, Technology, Environmental Pollution and the multifaceted world of science.

Studio Art: Emphasizing exploration and self-expression, studio projects involve techniques to educate students in the six fundamental elements of art: line, value, form, space, texture and color. As students progress in age and gain stronger hand/eye coordination, new techniques and artistic media are introduced. Students explore spatial relationships through proportion and perspective, and work with three-dimensional forms. While artistic processes are the priority, students refine their talents and create finished pieces. Students also investigate the importance of art from a historical perspective.

Gardening: Gardening brings many scientific concepts to life as students explore the full life cycle loop from seed to table. Students participate in hands on activities designed to ensure that they learn important elements related to sustainable food production. This includes observing, describing, and comparing the physical properties of seeds, plants, soil, water retention, layer formation, and decomposition of materials. This year we are excited to be able to have our own plot at nearby Kauapea Farms which is a Community Supported Agricultural project. Students learn from actual gardeners and are exposed to all elements of gardening. Gardening and plant-based learning open a door to discovery of the living world. It stimulates even as it focuses and calms. Within the school environment, a garden offers an unparalleled platform to help kids achieve learning goals in ways that are recommended by the National Science Standards and crosses all subject areas. Gardening offers the chance to get out into the world and make a difference while offering an opportunity to become more self-aware and empowered.

Technology: Students use technology to help them learn more about the world that surrounds them. They will learn how to conduct searches to find useful information. They will then learn how to use various software applications in order to express what they have learned from their research, class discussions and other experiences provided for them in their classroom. Technology is viewed as a tool to help students construct knowledge and stimulate student creativity while creating connections with the greater community. We also aim to integrate the use of digital tools seamlessly so that they are seen as an integral part of learning rather than a separate "add-on" component.

Physical Education: Students in all grades have ample time for physical activity during the day as we have two breaks for eating and play every day. We also have time built in at least once during the week for more formal physical education activities. Both collaborative and team sports will be integrated into the program. Emphasis will be on trust-building, cooperation and individual development of skills. Students will also be taught about the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy life style with the ultimate goal of having students intrinsically motivated to stay fit and healthy through regular physical activity that they enjoy.