



Konawaena High School Senior Brings His Vision For Sustainable Education to Hawaii's Capitol

These days most high school seniors are busy with finishing up their courses, deciding on colleges (Hawaii and mainland, if so, how far from home), searching for scholarships, playing sports, and having fun with friends they may not see for awhile. For Konawaena High School Trevor Tanaka, he is doing all that.... while realizing a dream that will help others for years to come.

For the last year Trevor has been vigilantly working on a Sustainable Education Resolution that would prepare future students to help build sustainable islands.

It all began when Trevor was asked at the APEC Youth Summit in 2011 -- "What Does Sustainability Mean To You?" It dawned on him that he'd never studied sustainability in school. Since he prided himself on being a good student, especially in science, he imagined that other students were missing out too. "We all know that sustainability and clean energy are essential to Hawaii due to our location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Our current dependence on imports threatens our resources and our way of life," says Trevor. "We also know that Hawaii is rich in renewable energy sources that have the potential to decrease our dependence on imports, especially imported oil. I really believe that our ability to educate ourselves about finding the right balance of growing our economy, keeping our land healthy, and preserving our natural resources and culture is essential to our survival. In fact, our state is in a unique position to become a leader in our nation and possibly the world."

Last June Trevor was nominated by Nancy Redfeather to serve as a youth delegate to the **8th Annual Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development on Martha's Vineyard**. At the Summit, Trevor made a presentation on his Sustainable Education Resolution. He also appeared on the national radio program, ***Keep it Moving with Marsha Reeves-Jews***. Following the Summit, Trevor became a founding member of the **Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative (SHYLI)** yearlong fellowship where he worked tirelessly to create strategies and trouble-shoot challenges. He wrote and SHYLI published articles in the *Honolulu Civil Beat* and *Hawaii 24/7*. Trevor and his Resolution were featured on SHYLI's website and Facebook pages.

In January Trevor made an inspiring presentation at **SHYLI's Youth Leadership Forum** and invited leaders from business, government, education and civic community to brainstorm ways to support his Sustainable Education Resolution. Trevor's workgroup included **Nem Lau, CTE, West Hawai'i District's Department of Education, Katie Schwind, Rivertop Solutions, Kristine Kubat, Recycle Hawaii, Hannah Brittany, Maui Huliau Foundation and Ian Kitajima, Oceanit**. After the Forum, Trevor found a champion for his Resolution in **Representative Denny Coffman**. Trevor then had an intensive learning experience in how to work with the legislative process.

Then everything started happening – fast! Once the House gave the Resolution an official number, HCR178, the Senate followed (SCR192). While other students were enjoying their school vacation, Trevor had to quickly get testimonials from youth, friends and friends of SHYLI including educators, community and business leaders – from Hawaii and as far away as the prestigious Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education. Teachers who use school gardens as a teaching tool cheered Trevor on, saying they had wanted this for many years!

“I first met Trevor Tanaka at the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative’s Forum in Waimea,” said Ian Kitajima, Vice President of Oceanit.” As a member of his workgroup, I was impressed with his vision – a resolution to incorporate sustainability education into the science curriculum – and harness the hands-on excitement of aquaponics, wind and solar energy projects, school gardens, and even robotics to engage and inspire our young people. Trevor doesn't want sustainability to be just an extracurricular after school program. He wants to engage, inspire, and educate students in innovative programs -- fully incorporated into the education curriculum. The answer for how we can create sustainable islands is right in front of us! I full support Trevor’s vision that sustainability is in our local DNA, it's what engages and inspires the next generation, and will help students connect with their education. I am in full support of **HCR178** and **SCR192**. Go Trevor!”

Then on Monday, Trevor traveled with his mentor Nancy Redfeather and Representative Denny Coffman to Hawaii’s Capitol. The hearings were to both be held at the House and the Senate on the very same day!

Representative Coffman’s staff welcomed them with leis and warm words of encouragement. Trevor stayed poised, calm and prepared – accompanied by his 3” inch notebook with all of his research. While he was aware of the DOE’s policy on sustainability from the 1980’s, he knew it referred to only to buildings. So when questions were asked, Trevor was ready to respond: “It doesn’t address the educational curriculum,” he said. Trevor was really pleased when Chairperson Jill Tokuda’s suggested that his Resolution be added to the current policy. This would ease its implementation – and reach students asap!

"Representative Coffman and the Committee's we spoke with all embraced Trevor and his ideas and ideals for a more sustainable world," said Nancy Redfeather. "It was very heartening, and may the intent of this Resolution be translated into action to create sustainability curriculum in Hawaii's public schools K-12."

“Trevor serves as a great example to both his classmates and to our fellow citizens of Hawaii as to the power and importance of one’s voice. I wholeheartedly agree that there is a need for sustainability curriculum in our classrooms, and will continue to support Trevor’s resolution as it moves through the legislative process,” said Representative Denny Coffman. It has been a pleasure getting to know Trevor, and if the passion and work ethic I’ve seen thus far are any testament, I am sure his future will shine bright.”

Good news came on Thursday when Trevor was back in school. First the Education Committee of the House then the full House of Representatives passed the Resolution **HCR178**. The Senate had a joint hearing Education Committee and Committee on Water and Land passed **SCR192**.

On April 2 it was adopted by the full House of Representatives. The next step is a hearing is being scheduled by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM). Trevor invites everyone to submit a testimonial – about why the Resolution is important and timely. You can be sure that Trevor will be back in Honolulu again soon! He’s so close – and every step counts. He’s committed to making the Resolution happen – for future students and for the future of his Island.

For questions and assistance in submitting a testimonial, please contact n.young@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative’s mission is to train young people from Hawaii to envision their dreams for their lives, and build a more sustainable island and world. SHYLI began on the Island of Hawaii in 2010. SHYLI is a project of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute, a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1997. www.shyli.org