

# HAWAII'S MISSION TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER SUCCESS

Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education offers students and families across the state the critical tools necessary for college and career planning via the My Future Hawai'i platform, powered by ConnectEDU

Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education is a statewide alliance led by the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Hawai'i State Department of Education, and the University of Hawai'i System. Its mission is to strengthen the education pipeline from early childhood through higher education so that all of Hawai'i's students achieve college and career success.

Executive Director Karen Lee states that Hawai'i P-20 and its partners have set ambitious college and career readiness goals for the state. "By 2025 our goal is that 55% of Hawai'i's working age adults will have a two- or four-year college degree," she says, "and 100% will be career-ready."

## Mending A Fragmented Process

Angela Jackson, Hawai'i P-20 Associate Director, says, "If you ask a room of sixth-graders which of them plan to attend college, almost all the hands go up. Five years later, ask those same students, and fewer hands go up. It begs the question - where do they lose their enthusiasm? What additional resources could we give them along the way?"

Lee and her Hawai'i P-20 team quickly recognized that information, or lack of it, posed a critical challenge to engaging students and families. On the front end, student access to college- and career-planning resources was inconsistent and fragmented. "Students were searching through a patchwork of four to five websites, each with a different login," Lee points out. "Some of the sites didn't even save student information, so users had to start from scratch each time they logged in. It was so confusing and impersonal for kids—especially those from families that had never navigated the college process before."

On the back end, lack of interoperability was a challenge, too. "Systems didn't always talk to one another. One system didn't have student data. Another didn't have career data. And the college



Karen Lee

application process was entirely separate, too." Lee continues, "It wasn't only a problem for students; parents, educators, and policy-makers didn't have all the information they needed, either."

Hawai'i P-20 wanted to develop a robust, unified platform, and one provider made it possible. "We had looked at the lay of the land—there are so many products out there," Jackson explains. "But working with ConnectEDU to develop My Future Hawai'i has allowed us to bring it all together in a single location."

## A Holistic Approach

Launched as a pilot program in the Spring of 2012 in fifteen Hawai'i public high schools representing all seven islands, My Future Hawai'i will be available statewide in 2013-14.

My Future Hawai'i puts the relevant information within reach for every stakeholder. High school students and adult learners can explore their interests and skills, in alignment with their preferences and academic achievements—and then learn about colleges and occupations which may be a good fit. They can investigate two- and four-year colleges and training programs, learn about financial aid, and explore career pathways thanks to an integration with Career Kokua, the state's online

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— Karen Lee,  
Executive Director,  
Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships  
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system of localized career information. In addition, their parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and academic advisors can also access My Future Hawai'i to guide students through the process.

"I see My Future Hawai'i as a game changer," says Lee. "Students now have more college and career information at their fingertips. They can access it in real time and make informed decisions about their future."

## ConnectEDU Platform - Customized to Hawai'i

Tailoring the platform to Hawai'i's unique environment and variety of stakeholders has been essential. "Our state is a little different," says Lee with a laugh. "With any change in the education system in Hawai'i you may get local pushback that 'this may work in Alabama or Massachusetts, but not here.' At the same time, we recognize that our core educational challenges are very similar, too."



As information from all those systems comes together, and ConnectEDU leverages best practices and cutting-edge technology, the customized solutions bring Hawai'i P-20's goals within sight. The My Future Hawai'i platform will provide qualified data that can be leveraged by educational and workforce partners across the state. "These huge batches of demographic information, course enrollment figures, grades, and workforce information will transform our organization from being reactive to being more proactive in college and career planning," says Lee.

Along the way, Lee adds, the professionalism of the ConnectEDU team has made the progress possible. "I've been impressed with the tremendous effort ConnectEDU has made in really getting to know us as a state—getting to know what our schools, our people and partners need on a daily basis. Each step of the way, when we've asked for things like extra training or Hawai'i-specific customization, they've listened closely."

## Collaboration for the Future

The college class of 2025 is already in elementary school today, and the next step forward for those young students is a little clearer now. As more students use the platform, they will help build a stronger college pipeline for themselves and those who follow.

"This is going to be a big, big, positive change for our state," Jackson says proudly. "With a project of this magnitude, you have bumps in the road, stops and starts. But we've moved steadily forward together. We have a mission here, and P-20 and ConnectEDU have developed a powerful platform to help students in Hawai'i achieve their educational and career dreams."

"So when the students are asked who will be attending those future college classes, we think a lot more hands will be going up," Lee emphasizes with satisfaction. "Not only will those kids each have brighter futures, but across Hawai'i, we're empowering a 21st-century workforce—one that's truly ready to capitalize on the state's economic opportunities."



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## FAST FACTS

- My Future Hawai'i offers students, counselors, parents, and adult learners a single point for college and career planning.
- Hawai'i P-20 partnered with ConnectEDU to create a unified technology platform with local customization—fostering cross-agency collaboration.
- With ConnectEDU's platform as leverage, Hawai'i P-20 will empower smart planning for individual students, the education system, and the future workforce of Hawai'i.

## MY FUTURE HAWAII: PARTNERS

- Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education
- Executive Office on Early Learning
- Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE)
- University of Hawai'i System (UH)
- Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) & Workforce Development Council (WDC)