

Ka Lau

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The Academy



Academy students offer an oli prior to class Friday morning.

In January, LCPCS introduced a new program for secondary students. It is called “The Academy,” and according to Director of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Scott Smith, it is “our response to the needs of kids who are ready for challenges beyond the ones in the regular classroom.”

The introduction of the on-line curriculum, GradPoint, has been successful on many levels. Reading comprehension is way up; disciplinary referrals have dropped; students are more focused in class; and many of the students who have long struggled in a more conventional learning environment have blossomed. But interaction with the teachers and options for out-of-the-box

learning is limited with an on-line system. The Academy is designed for kids who desire a little more creativity and interactivity.

The key is, the students have to want to participate. “Students nominate themselves,” said Mr. Smith. Then, a team of teachers and staff assess each applicant’s suitability for the program, using a variety of criteria. The Academy meets each Friday for the full day, and students in the program have to be willing and able to keep up with their GradPoint lessons, despite missing that entire day of on-line time.

Mr. Smith stresses that LCPCS was not looking for a typical gifted and talented program. “There is no IQ component,” he said. The Academy is better suited to an overall vision of where LCPCS is headed. Mr. Smith and Director Okoye agreed: “What The Academy is now is what we’d like LCPCS to be in a few years.”

So what are the classes like? Each week, a different secondary teacher takes the lead. The teachers don’t necessarily teach within their own subject, and can be as creative as they like, although they do submit a lesson plan to Mr. Smith beforehand. For instance, Mr. Hurat, the secondary math teacher, did a unit on logic. The students worked on some basic logic puzzles. (Do you remember that one where you have a goat, a cabbage and a wolf, and you have to cross a river, but the wolf will eat the goat, and the goat will eat the cabbage, and you can only take one thing in the boat at a time? How do you avoid leaving the goat and the wolf, or the goat and the cabbage, alone at any point?) Then the kids discussed common logic fallacies, and created mini-debates to demonstrate weakness of argument. Eventually, they created their own logic puzzles.

On another occasion, social studies teacher Mr. Sherer had students design their own societies. Students had to make sure that food systems and economies were appropriate to whatever environment was chosen. They developed political systems, and even described the physical characteristics of the inhabitants (e.g. big lungs for high altitude).

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Calendar

- Wednesday, April 13 — preschool and grades 1 through 4 to Kahilu Theater
- Thursday, April 14 — “Work with Me” Day: parents and guardians are invited to join their pre-schoolers in class
- Friday, April 22 — Music Festival preparation, selected secondary students, Laupāhoehoe Point
- Friday, April 22 — preschool, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade to UH Hilo Earth Day celebration
- Saturday, April 23 — **11th Annual Laupāhoehoe Music Festival**

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Feedback on The Academy has been very good. The students are asked to assess each lesson, so they have a lot of input to the program. Teachers enjoy having a classroom full of students who have chosen to be there, and are eager to learn. Furthermore, the mixing of ages has not been as challenging as the teachers expected. “They’ve actually blended really well,” said Mr. Smith. In fact, they seem to bring out the best in each other.

11th Annual Laupāhoehoe Music Festival



The 11th Annual Laupāhoehoe Music Festival will be held Saturday, April 23, from 9 to 5. Featured performers this year include: Chance ‘um Trio, Times 5, Ho`o Nanea, Lito Arkangel, MEDIA, Ryan Hiraoka, Princess Ilona Irvine, and more. Traditional artists will perform early in the program, and more modern, local-style music will be featured later in the afternoon. “This year we want to make it a little bit more kid friendly,” says Gerry Delgado, one of the event organizers, so there will be more games and activities for kids than last year.

As always, there will be `ono food, snacks, crafts, information booths, games, memorabilia for sale, and an incredible silent auction run by Hui Kāko`o O Laupāhoehoe, the non-profit that supports LCPCS. Proceeds from the event fund the agriculture and tech programs at the school, the wood and auto shops, art and music, and much more.

Did you know that responsibility for the Music Festival has this year shifted entirely to the school? Five people you know have stepped forward to make it happen: parent Niki Hubbard, and school staff Gerry Delgado, Rochelle Evangelista, Loida Navalta and Shantell Urbanozo. When do these people sleep? LCPCS is hugely indebted to them for their dedication and hours of effort. Say mahalo next time you see one of them (or ask how you can help!), and, above all, grab some tickets and your dancing shoes and head down to the point on the 23rd!

For more information and tickets to the event, go to www.laupahoehoemusicfestival.org, and to see a list of auction items, go to www.thehui.net. Don’t miss this annual tradition, and the chance to support LCPCS!