

# Ka Lau

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## GradPoint — Secondary Classes Take on a New Direction

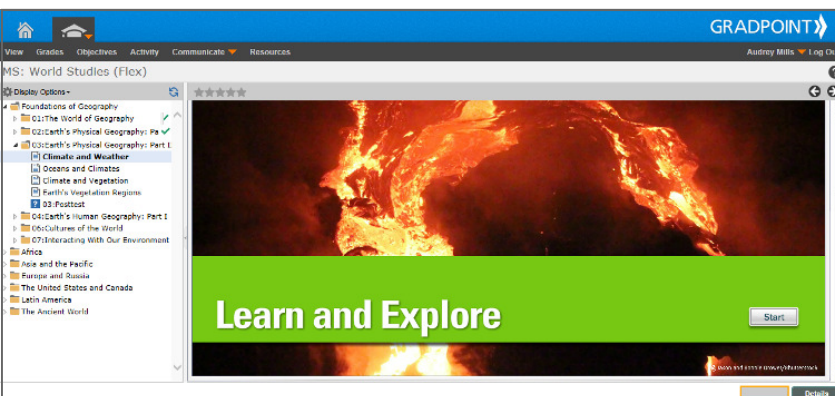
There's been a major change in the secondary curriculum at LCPCS this year, and that is the adoption of GradPoint, a series of self-paced, comprehensive, award-winning online courses that are largely replacing stand-in-front-of-the-room-and-lecture style teaching. In classes including math, science, social studies and language arts, GradPoint provides a series of lessons through which each student progresses at his or her own pace. Quizzes and tests monitor the students' progress, and prevent them from advancing to the next level until a minimum of 80% mastery is achieved. Teachers assist and clarify whenever students have questions, as well as continue to mentor students in more traditional ways. "It's a really rigorous program," commented Bob Zellner, secondary science teacher. "It's about the best that's out there."



7th-grader Ethan Smith working on a GradPoint lesson.

Several teachers have observed that the educational environment at LCPCS has changed distinctly, and for the better. In general, students are quieter and more focused. Because students have to read their lessons, Zellner said, teachers have already noticed an increase in reading skills.

LCPCS, like many other schools across the country, has a lot of students who are performing far below grade level in at least one subject. These students have trouble maintaining the pace of a whole-group lesson, plus, they are often too embarrassed to speak up and ask for help. GradPoint is well suited for these students, said school Director Nahale-a recently. The clear objectives, along with the satisfaction of achieving them and moving to the next level, is helping many students perform better. Students who are ahead of their peers also benefit from the self-paced lessons.



The adoption of GradPoint is a big change for teachers too. Secondary language arts teacher Liana Honda said that at first she wondered what she was supposed to do, if the students are getting their instruction via computer. But in fact, she said, her one-on-one time with the students has actually increased. In addition,

teaching teams use statistics generated by GradPoint to make sure that each student is getting the support he or she needs to succeed. As students use the program, data is gathered on how long it takes them to complete the lessons, how many times they take the quizzes, what concepts are problematic and more. Teachers can even tell, through the statistics, if a kid is trying, or simply not engaged.

After just a few weeks of school, students, teachers and parents are all still adjusting. Some parents are concerned that the kids may become overloaded with the amount of on-screen time, and get restless and bored. Others are wondering what happened to the project-based learning concept. "We tried the project-based approach last year," observed Director Nahale-a, "but most of our kids just weren't

## GradPoint, continued

ready, so we're taking a step back and trying to establish more self-direction in our students, more responsibility for their own learning. Once we do that, we can eventually get back to a more hands-on approach."

However, most teachers are already prioritizing time each week for the students to put away their computers and take on a short project, book study or activity. "Computers are fantastic," said Scott Smith, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for secondary grades, "and the students are responding incredibly well to GradPoint. Behavior issues have dropped to nearly zero. But no computer or textbook or any other system can replace the value of developing real relationships with our students. We don't have everything figured out perfectly yet, but with GradPoint, we are absolutely moving in the right direction."

## Foodland/Sack N Save Donations

LCPCS' non profit organization Hui Kāko'o O Laupāhoehoe is participating in Foodland's *Give Aloha* campaign.

From September 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30, donations to Hui Kāko'o O Laupāhoehoe will be accepted at all Foodland and Sack N Save stores. All you need to do is show your Maika'i card when you check out, and tell the cashier how much you would like to donate (up to \$249 per person).

*Foodland will match a portion of your donation to help support LCPCS programs such as art and dance for elementary grades, and wood and auto shop for upper classes. Mahalo nui.*

## A+ Seeking Participants

*The A+ Program is now taking applications.* This DOE after-school program provides supervision for students until 5:30 pm every day, making it ideal for working families. Students receive a snack, homework help and supervised play time. There is a monthly fee for the program and financial subsidies are available.

Twenty students must be signed up in order for A+ to be available at LCPCS. "We are hoping to have this number by the end of September," says parent Bari Russo. Contact Ms. Myra at 838-0876 if you have questions, or stop by the front office to pick up an application.

## Seasider Spotlight



Liana Honda with 6th-graders Chidike Onyeabor and Ela Kowardy before school last week.

Often out front greeting parents in the mornings, that new face is Liana Honda, who now teaches English to 6th and 7th graders at LCPCS, and also serves as Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the elementary grades. Originally from Wai'anae, O'ahu, Kumu Honda is the product of a Hawaiian-Chinese father and a Danish mother. Throughout her career she has focused on Hawaiian and English literacy in a variety of schools and assignments, having taught Hawaiian language, culture and history to students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. She has worked in a Hawaiian immersion setting, as well as served as a literacy resource teacher in both DOE and native Hawaiian charter schools. In addition, she has taught technology at the elementary level; managed a 1:1 iPad initiative; worked as a teacher trainer and evaluator; and, most recently, served as Elementary Vice-Principal at Kamehameha Schools.

Kumu Honda has four children and four grandchildren, and enjoys spending her time reading, toiling (her word!) in the kitchen, and gardening. A country girl at heart, she is enjoying Laupāhoehoe's rural setting, along with meeting and working with the staff and families of LCPCS.