

# Ka Lau

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## Teacher Da Kine Days: What are they exactly?

So what are all those teacher-kine days? There were two in the last two weeks. It is perhaps confusing to some parents what those days are, and what they're used for, so here's the scoop.



*LCPCS teachers Carrie Edgil and Sky Stressman work on an exercise at a recent teacher training.*

There are actually three kinds of “teacher” days on which students don’t attend school. There are teacher work days, professional development days, and teacher institute days.

Teacher work days are typically at the beginning and the ends of semesters, and are for teachers to prepare their classrooms, finalize curriculum, and submit grades.

Teacher institute days are set and run by the teachers’ union. These occur only once a year, and the day is not identified as far in advance as other training days. That is why it sometimes comes as a bit of a surprise to parents. This year’s teacher institute day was last Thursday, February 16. LCPCS teachers went to Keaau to discuss updates on negotiation, details of the bargaining, and other union business.

The third category is composed of teacher professional development (PD). According to LCPCS Office Manager Tracy Jardine, twenty-one hours of professional development are “embedded” in a teacher’s annual

schedule. These hours fall both on full days, when students don’t attend school, and on the short day (Monday), after the students leave. This time is devoted to a variety of things. Sometimes, a teacher who has been to a workshop or training will share what he or she has learned with the other teachers. Other times, teachers discuss new initiatives, or review individual student progress, or coordinate on logistical details for upcoming events like the winter Hō’ike. Middle school science teacher Aaron Mickelson confirms that it is “really valuable to plan with colleagues.”

At LCPCS, Monday PD meetings loosely follow a schedule. The first Monday of each month is an all-staff meeting with Director Garcia. On the second, teachers meet by department (elementary, middle and high school). On the third, they meet by subject area. And on the fourth Monday of the month, the teachers take on special topics: for example, communication and school unity.

Professional development has the added bonus of helping teachers gain re-classification. Once they gain three PD credits, which they earn as a combination of PD hours at school and outside on-line or other types of classes, they can advance a classification level, and earn more pay.



*LCPCS teachers at a recent teacher training in Waimea.*

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A couple of weeks ago, on February 5<sup>th</sup>, there was a rare, unscheduled PD day. All LCPCS teachers went to a training called “Classroom Instruction That Works,” which was sponsored by the Hawai‘i State Public Charter School Commission and the HIDOE School Transformation Branch. The session featured a presenter from McRel, which is an international, non-profit education research and development organization devoted to providing “practical and effective guidance for teachers.” LCPCS teachers learned about and discussed ways to set objectives, to create a classroom environment conducive to learning, and to use “collaborative strategies” to group students in ways to help them learn effectively.

## Science Lab Undergoes Renovation



*Drake Olaso from Stan's Contracting mixes drywall joint compound in the science lab.*

It may come as a surprise to some that last year's massive school renovation is not quite complete. Hidden around behind the offices is the science lab, which is still a hive of activity.

“The science classroom is being upgraded with new cabinets and chemical resistant counter tops, sinks, new white boards, and lighting,” reports Cheryl Sumida, Administrative Services Assistant with the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE). The fume hood and cabinet are also being replaced, and the classroom will be ADA accessible. The original contracted price for the work was \$373,300, but apparently there have been a few additional costs. HIDOE is picking up the bill, and, after several delays, the work is supposed to be finished in March.

High school science teacher Bob Zellner says the kids are anxious to get into the lab. He and his students vacated the room last spring, and have been making do in the band room this year. Most of the lab equipment is in storage, so Mr. Zellner has had to get creative with the chemistry experiments. He's a little concerned that a lot of his storage areas in the lab seem to have disappeared in the renovation, but, he says, “we will emphasize the positive and make it work.”

## Seasider Spotlight



*Tech and robotics teacher Marc Roberts stands in front of some coding intelligible only to him and his students!*

LCPCS's tech coordinator and robotics teacher is a bundle of energy, and his background reveals that he has been energetic for some time! Mr. Roberts speaks five languages, having taught English in Japan and Korea, and physics and chemistry at a middle school in Vietnam. After a couple of years of teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Hilo Union and Honoka'a, he signed on with UHH as a physics instructor and physics lab coordinator. There, he started a robotics team that regularly competes in national competitions; his team took second place at a NASA competition in 2017.

Mr. Roberts continues to teach both physics and robotics at UHH, but has also come to LCPCS as its tech coordinator, and middle school robotics teacher. Besides clearing out storerooms of outdated computer equipment (“there's equipment here going back 30 years!” he says), and salvaging parts for the robotics projects, Mr. Roberts' main emphasis right now is building a server for the school. The in-house server will allow LCPCS to run its own phone system, store its own student and teacher data, more efficiently manage the standardized tests and their results, administer a student information system, and host the website.