

Hickam Elementary School 'Strives HI'

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Located at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam with historic Pearl Harbor as its "back yard," Hickam Elementary School was one of 14 public schools in Hawaii recognized for its outstanding performance in education. The school is comprised of more than 99 percent military dependent students. It achieved a "Strive HI" performance system score of 384 out of a possible 400 points, the second highest out of 295 public schools statewide.

"Strive HI" is the state's redesigned school accountability and performance system, measuring key success indicators and providing rewards to demonstrating the highest progress in raising student achievement, graduation rates, and closing the achievement gap for school year 2012-13.



Rich Shimabukuro, acting principal at Hickam Elementary School, gives "high fives" to Jessica Jones (right foreground), student body president, and Sierra Williams (right back), student body vice president, in observance of the school's outstanding accomplishments and achieving a "Strive HI" performance. Photo courtesy of Hickam Elementary School

At the "Strive HI" recognition ceremony held Sept. 10, Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie, State Board of Education Chairman Don Horner, and Hawaii Department of Education School Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi presented a check for \$75,000 to Hickam Elementary as an award-winning school. "These exemplary educators, staff, students and their families share a belief and commitment to always 'Strive HI,'" said Abercrombie. "I applaud their resilience and dedication to provide the very best opportunities to all children."

Rich Shimabukuro, acting school principal, has been an administrator at this top tier school for four years. "While we always knew how well we were functioning as a total school community, it is truly gratifying to see the recognition now bestowed upon our outstanding families, professional and dedicated faculty and staff, and amazing students. If any school can, Hickam Elementary will," Shimabukuro said.

Jessica Jones, student council president, shared her thoughts about the school.

"This is my second year at Hickam Elementary after previously attending school in Tennessee. I have learned a lot at this school. The gifted and talented program is awesome, and I love the after school activities offered," Jones said.

Sierra Williams, student council vice president, has also been at Hickam Elementary for two years and said she was elated to learn of this high level recognition.

"This is a very good school, and I am very proud of everything it does – especially the recent 9-11 commemoration parade. The students are nice, and the teachers do a great job teaching us what we need

to learn,” Williams said.

Tamsen Velazquez, the mother of two students attending Hickam Elementary, weighed in.

“We arrived in Hawaii in 2012, and my children previously attended a DoDDS school. I was concerned about the quality of the schools before coming here. However, it’s great to know that our kids go to one of the finest schools in the state,” she said.

“This award will help the school improve on its solid programs and support new endeavors and is something every military parent will appreciate,” Velazquez added.

John Erickson, current acting complex area superintendent and the school’s principal until a month ago, noted that the award validates the high quality education the school is providing.

“I have always believed that our school was a top-tier school in the state, and for our school to recently be honored and recognized under the new ‘Strive HI’ system helps to confirm and validate that belief,” he said.

“To receive the top tier designation and be recognized as one of only a handful of schools to receive this high ‘recognition’ status is certainly something for all of us at Hickam to be proud of. The award is truly a testament to the hard work that is put in each day on the Hickam campus by our outstanding students and a staff/faculty that is second to none.

“Our goal and mission from this day forward is to always maintain this high ranking and designation. By continuing to strive for excellence each day, we will make this happen,” Erickson said.