

Aloha TECC attendees!

Thank you all for coming together for this virtual forum. Special mahalo to the co-chairs, Dean Nathan Murata of the UH College of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto, for asking me to provide some remarks for the event.

I am Senator Michelle N. Kidani. I represent Senate District 18 which is comprised of Mililani Town, part of Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Royal Kunia, and Village Park. I serve as the Vice-President of the Senate as well as the Chair of the Education Committee.

I am so excited that so many of you are looking at teaching as a profession. Teaching is one of the most difficult jobs out there, but I know that each and everyone of you look at this as the greatest opportunity. And that is because you will have the chance to light a spark into thousands of students over your career. A spark that can be all the difference in a student's life.

We hear a lot about the difficulties and hardships that teachers endure, especially over this last year. But teachers also have a growing support system to not only to stay in teaching, but also to encourage our next generation of teachers. I'm sure you can all remember a teacher who went out of their way to help you – I do!

That's why I am proud to support, and will continue to support, not just teachers in the classroom today, but also the programs and institutions that produce the teachers we so desperately need. I'm very appreciative to Dean Murata and the UH College of Education for all they've done to support and expand the Grow Our Own program. I am also thrilled that Leeward Community College has been able to offer and graduate more SPED teachers through their partnership with INPEACE and Chaminade.

Mahalo for all you do and don't forget...It's great to be a teacher!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Kidani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senate District 18
Vice-President of the Hawaii State Senate
Chair, Senate Committee on Education