

# Community partnership works for Kohala students

Hawaii Resources for School Success is flagship program of the nonprofit North Hawaii Women and Children's Services

Hawaii Resources for School Success (HRSS) and Kohala Elementary School (KES) renewed their contract of partnership on Oct. 22.

HRSS is the flagship program of North Hawaii Women and Children's Services (NHWCS), a Waimea-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1997, whose vision is to ensure that "Hawaii students and families have access to research-based education practices."

HRSS' mission is to "help and empower diverse learners in school and life," and HRSS first partnered with KES in August 2007, to train the school's teachers in the national, evidence-based Schools Attuned Teacher Professional Development model. This model, from the All Kinds of Minds Institute, focuses on increasing student success via early identification of and effective intervention for capable students who struggle in school.

The overarching goal of the HRSS/KES partnership is to assure all KES teachers are trained and provided with ongoing support through 2009. The partnership is made possible by support from the Atherton Family Foundation, the Helen and Charles Schwab Foundation, and the G.N. Wilcox Trust.

Present at the contract renewal signing were Beth Custer, HRSS Program director; Esther Hughes, DOE Kohala-Honokaa CSSS resource teacher and NHWCS Board secretary; Eleanor Laszlo, KES principal, and Mary Ann Baron, coordinator of the Schools Attuned Site.

Food was provided by two community partners, KTA in Waimea and Luke's Place in Hawi.

"It is exciting to be part of formalizing this partnership between HRSS and Kohala Elementary with support from the DOE and Art Souza, complex area superintendent," said Hughes.

"Today we can share in the pride of our accomplishments of the past year with our purposeful teaching using the Schools Attuned model.

"I'd like to congratulate our leaders, Beth Custer and Ele Laszlo, along with the entire Kohala Elementary faculty, staff, families and community for helping our organization, HRSS, fulfill our mission," said Hughes.

Laszlo said, "HRSS brings us a comprehensive professional development program through Schools Attuned. Helping teachers to address our students' challenges through a focus on their strengths should result in a positive outcome for teacher and student. Our teachers and staff are using the same vocabulary and strategies, which means consistency for our students. Schools Attuned brings a researched-based guide to help our teachers help our students."

There are some new highlights of the continuing partnership. Now posters of the Schools Attuned constructs and of Bloom's Taxonomy will be hung in every KES classroom.

The constructs are the eight major ways in which brains learn, such as "attention," "temporal-sequential ordering" and "memory." Bloom's Taxonomy is the classic educational objectives map of the "affective," "psychomotor" and "cognitive" learning domains. The purpose of these posters is to remind educators and students of the many viable ways students learn.

As there is no state fund-

ing for physical education, music and art in Hawaii public schools, with the renewed agreement, HRSS will continue to provide KES with resource teachers in those subjects. Research has shown that students who participate in physical education, music and art show improvement in academic performance, said project coordinators.

The time allotted for those special subjects also affords KES grade level teachers time to meet and collaborate once a week, and the entire staff to collaborate once a month.

"These meetings will be led by Custer and Baron and comply with one of Mr. Souza's focuses for all West Hawaii schools: Professional Learning Communities," said Hughes.

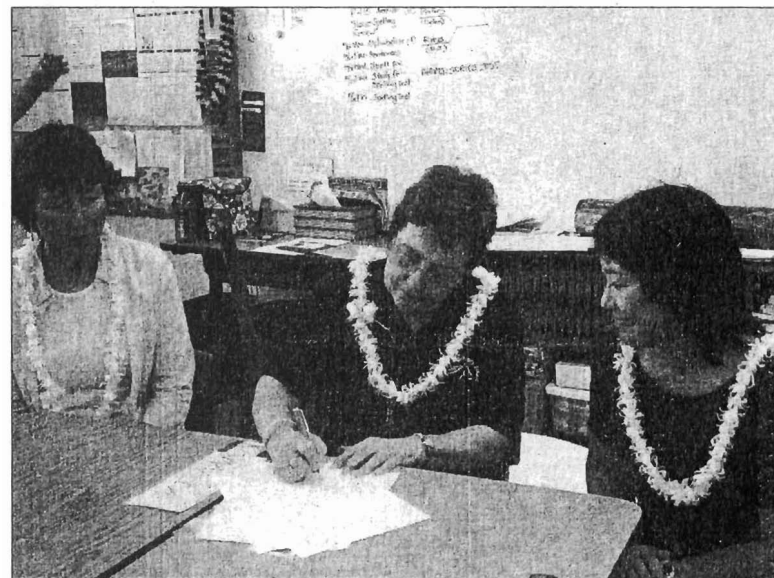
Another important aspect of the new agreement will be the incorporation of the Schools Attuned framework and language into the KES school community. This will include protocol for students requesting assistance and parent-teacher communications.

In addition to the above provisions, HRSS will be hiring WestEd as an independent evaluator to initiate a formal assessment of the impact of Schools Attuned on KES students, teachers and families in January 2009.

This has been made possible by a generous \$25,000 grant recently awarded to HRSS by the Cooke Foundation.

In the meantime, KES teachers have seen firsthand the positive results of their partnership with HRSS over the past year.

"It has helped me to understand that each and every student deserves to be taught to their strengths, not everyone else's strengths,"



Courtesy photo

Mary Ann Baron, at left, coordinator of the Kohala Elementary Schools Attuned Site, and Esther Hughes, at right, a state Department of Education Honokaa-Kohala resource teacher and North Hawaii Women and Children's Services Board secretary, look on as Eleanor Laszlo, Kohala Elementary School principal, signs the partnership contract between Hawaii Resources for School Success and Kohala Elementary.

said Donovan Aiona, KES fourth-grade teacher.

"Schools Attuned has really enriched my third-grade math classes. I'm inventing more and more pneumonics to help students remember such things as line segments, rays, angles, lines, perimeter, area, rows, columns. It's a delight to see their emerging understanding of difficult to remember geometry concepts," said KES third-grade teacher Jean De Mercer-Breese.

One teacher credits Schools Attuned for her decision to pursue a master's degree in education that focuses on the implications and practical applications of brain research in the classroom.

"Schools Attuned has brought joy back into teaching and learning. I can focus on the students' learning differences and not on standardized test scores. I can teach students about

learning to learn and help them to better advocate for themselves," said Elizabeth Bauer, KES fourth-grade teacher.

Beth Custer, HRSS program director, said, "It's exciting to continue this partnership that connects schools and families with the resources that can really

make a difference in students' success in school and life. Our commitment to providing all students with the support they need remains steadfast."

For more information about HRSS and/or KES, please visit [www.hawaiischoolsuccess.org](http://www.hawaiischoolsuccess.org) or call 885-9318.