

## Nā Kumu o Kamehameha

To: Ka Wai Ola Editor

Date: July 16, 1997

### Kamehameha Teachers Call for Fundamental Changes

In early May, long-standing management problems at Kamehameha Schools Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate reached proportions that no longer could be kept from public awareness.

Hoping to address these problems within the Kamehameha 'ohana, Nā Kumu o Kamehameha, a group of over 200 faculty members, pre-school through grade 12 at the Kapālama campus, made repeated requests to meet with KSBE trustees. There was no response. We have therefore made our positions known in several public statements.

Our problems as a school community are pervasive: a climate of fear and the threat of personal intimidation, the undermining of the values we represent as educators, and the removal of authority from those most directly responsible for the care of students. We urge all those with pertinent information about such problems to communicate with the court-appointed fact-finder, Patrick Yim. This confidential disclosure will provide crucial evidence which will validate the need to resolve problems within KSBE.

A positive result of the current crisis is that teachers have joined together and are calling for a fresh and sincere examination of our school community. It is clear to us that the turmoil of the last months is deeply rooted in the status quo of our institution.

Kamehameha teachers are seeking a new set of school habits to replace the ones that have failed us.

All groups in KSBE must be involved in this process. An inclusive approach requires that change not be mandated by any one person or group. Genuine community growth will result from an open, evolving and collaborative process as challenges are met.

Some principles that guide our discussion and that we hope will be included in any future dialogue within the Kamehameha 'ohana are the following:

- **Honor Our Past** Everyone within the KSBE 'ohana must respect the distinctive culture, traditions, and history of Kamehameha Schools.

- **Live Our Values** We must all exemplify the values adopted by the trustees in our mission statement: *Pono, 'Imi 'Ike, Laulima, Na'au Pono, Malama* and *Ha'aha'a*. Let us add to these the overlying value of *Aloha*, a sense of warmth and respect for others.
- **Monitor Our Purpose** We must regularly re-evaluate what is most important to ensure the highest quality education for our students as needs and opportunities change.
- **Distribute Authority** We must rethink the model of top-down autocratic management and locate the authority for implementing the school's educational mission with those who are closest to students: the faculty, administrators and staff of the school.
- **Open Communication** We need lines of communication that move in a more horizontal direction and promise partnership in school operations. At present, students and faculty are *informed* of most decisions rather than being *involved* in their design.
- **Prevent Crises** We must respond to problems promptly and respect a group process in addressing them. This proactive approach will strengthen our collective responsibility, lead to shared ownership of solutions, and prevent crises like the one in which we now find ourselves.

Kamehameha teachers are calling for fundamental changes in the way our school is managed. We are committed to a long-term, cooperative process of rebuilding our learning community. We renew our pledge to continue faculty-student interaction of the highest quality and to work together to honor the vision of our beloved founder, *Ke Ali'i Pauahi*.

Gary Obrecht  
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Representatives for Nā Kumu o Kamehameha  
 Nā Kumu o Kamehameha is a faculty organization comprising more than 200 members