



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
HILO-WAIAKEA COMPLEX  
75 AUPUNI STREET, RM. 203  
HILO, HAWAII 96720

HILO-WAIAKEA COMPLEX

April 6, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians of the Hilo-Waiakea Complex,

There have been recent news reports about a video featuring a father and his two sons sharing their story about bullying in Hilo. We are addressing the claims raised in that video and realize the issue of bullying goes beyond our schools.

The Department of Education is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all of our students, families and educators. As such, our schools make every effort to address bullying and harassment. Bullying is a Chapter 19 offense. It is also a community issue, and it can only be prevented when the power of a community is brought together. School staff can do a great deal to prevent bullying and protect students, but they can't do it alone. Families, the community and students also have a role to play in preventing bullying at school.

We recommend that parents and guardians do the following:

- Talk to your child about respecting diversity of all including addressing sexual orientation and gender identity and name-calling.
- Learn the procedures for reporting incidents of bullying and harassment (please contact the school principal).
- If your child is being bullied:
  1. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying. Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. **Do not** encourage physical retaliation. For example: Do not say, "Just hit them back."
  2. Contact your child's teacher, counselor or principal. Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school in finding a solution.
  3. Help to develop your child's talents or positive attributes. Teach him or her how to seek help from an adult when feeling threatened by a bully.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Valerie Takata  
Complex Area Superintendent  
Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area