

**WDC YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT for WDC BOARD MEETING**  
**Period of February 11, 2022 – May 12, 2022**

**Committee Chair: Ian Kitajima**  
**Committee Vice Chair: Winona Whitman**

The Youth Services Committee met on April 26, 2022. Members had a robust discussion on projects and goals. To recap, topics, ideas and concerns mentioned included:

- High school drop-out rate due to COVID-19;
- Retention of special education students and teachers;
- Redirecting students to stay and/or return to school to avoid youth violence and work with them to become employable;
- Address low graduation rate in Chuukese population;

The Committee also met on May 10, 2022 to continue discussion on short- and long-term goals and projects. Guest Joseph Passantino, Principal of Princess Ruth Keelikolani Middle School, formerly Central Middle School, was a guest and shared the school's unique population, activities, challenges and successes. Principal Passantino explained the school has a total population of 340 students with the highest population of Chuukese/Micronesians, of whom 8% graduate (8 out of 100 students), and 92 out of 100 do not earn a diploma. These students make money illegally and live in a violent environment. There is 50% absenteeism rate with many students unable to read and function at third grade level. During the time that Principal Passantino has been leading the school, there has been an increase in comprehension and test scores at levels of 8% in math, 7% in science, and 20% in language arts. He asked members, "how to we make the students successful and transition with learning and language deficits?" He invited members to attend Micronesian family night with entertainment by the Micronesian Clubs. These activities help to build relationship and trust with parents and families. Another event they've had are food drives – food donated by the Food Bank distributed to families. The school faculty and staff will be participating in computer literacy assessments. He wants to create people who are communicators. He also added that a new media class will start next year through a partnership with Olelo.

This meeting's discussion encompassed the following ideas:

- A digital media and entrepreneurial program as a way for students to tell stories using technology, action, developing captions, engaging in community, and so on. He mentioned film festivals and borderless school concepts.
- Partnering with organizations with existing grants and provide counseling programs and services.
- DOE's Career and Technical Education have new career pathways rolling out that involve sustainable hospitality and tourism, culinary, cultural arts and media entertainment, and artisan design and entrepreneurial. Recruit people to serve on Pathway Advisory Council with expertise to review school standards, align with industry needs, and post-secondary alignment.
- Goal to develop Princess Ruth Keelikolani Middle School into a school that you would have your family attend.

- When partnering with the Micronesian community, reminder to show appreciation, that they are important, valued and proud. They live day to day, so develop methods to allow them to look to the future with hope and identify role models within the community to grow as leaders.
- This is Mental Health Awareness Month so promote peer mentors, counselors, and adjusting to remote work and back to in-person work.

To continue the discussion and allow members to present proposals for consideration and action, another meeting has been scheduled for May 24 at 1pm.