



WOO Academic Director Thomas Beran teaches with humor and respect, creating a special bond with WOO's 'homeschooled' students—Kao Mindoro (left) and Kaipo Paschoal (right).



Kaipo Paschoal (left) and Kao Mindoro, both 13 years old, smile about being successfully 'homeschooled' by the Windows Of Opportunity Tutoring and Homeschooling Agency.



Thomas Beran, WOO's academic director, provides individual attention to help 13-year-old Kao Mindoro navigate the steps of a difficult math problem.

Angeline Longshore

The latest policy brief from the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), a national policy, research and advocacy organization, shows how "improving Hawai'i's graduation rates could boost the economy."

According to the State of Hawai'i Department of Education's Systems Accountability Office, roughly 18 percent of Maui County high school students did not graduate in 2011.

"Without a high school diploma, individuals are far more likely than graduates to spend their lives periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or cycling in and out of the prison system," said AEE President Bob Wise, former governor of West Virginia.

For many students, both literacy and math inaptitude are the underlying problems. In the 2010-11 school year, roughly 34 percent of Maui County's high school students were not proficient in reading and 63 percent in math, while 82 percent of students passed on to graduate.

"Students are getting reading instruction in the early grades," Wise said. "Unfortunately they are not being supported in building vocabulary and comprehension skills needed to master the more complex materials they will encounter in middle and high school."

Kaipo Paschoal and Kao Mindoro, who are 13-year-old middle school students, were soon to be counted in these dismal high school statistics, al-

Opportunity Knocks

Tutoring and homeschooling agency makes a special connection with Maui students.

ready failing in math and doing poorly in other subjects. Both said the pressure to get the work done was the most distressing.

"You don't even have enough time to finish your work, and when you don't understand it, they don't help you that much," Mindoro grouched.

Paschoal attended the public 'Iao Intermediate School and Mindoro at the private St. An-

"My experience with WOO was the best move I made for my son..."

thony School. Both said they encountered similar distractions and couldn't focus.

Both boys chuckled with mixed emotions, "... talking, throwing stuff, [trying to] get the teacher mad."

"There are a lot of parents that fool themselves into saying, 'he'll be okay, he's gonna get it,' and come home every year at the

same place and it only gets harder for them to understand," said Mindoro's mother, Melina.

Both boys' concerned parents chose to "homeschool" their children instead. Kaipo's father, dean of students and athletic director at St. Anthony School, and Kao's parents, owners of a construction/landscaping company, busy with their jobs, turned to a full-service academic tutoring and homeschooling agency in Kihui called Windows Of Opportunity of Hawai'i (WOO). That is where Kaipo and Kao were paired up as homeschooled learning buddies and became fast friends attending WOO only three hours a day, three days a week.

"Here, I can focus better and get more work done in three hours than I can in seven hours [at school]," said Mindoro.

"My experience with WOO was the best move I made for my son," Kao's mother explained.

"Now he feels more confident in his studies than ever; his grades and test scores are higher; he is stress free. His homework is finished before I can even ask him if he is done."

"The public school system wasn't working for them," said David Barber, WOO's director of operations. "There wasn't enough accountability as far as the students went. We have [at most] four students to one tutor and usually a teaching assistant as well. In the public school system, you have one to 30."

With 87 students currently enrolled, WOO helps students with academic tutoring from



WOO Director of Operations David Barber (left) and Academic Director Thomas Beran (right) are happy to have helped 370 dropouts graduate since the start of WOO in 2006.

grades K through 12, and test prep for ASVAB, SAT, ACT and GED. They also service O'ahu and offer concierge tutoring for visiting students.

Most clients are homeschoolers and some are tutored part-time and/or online. WOO uses a multi-faceted approach with individually suited curriculum, advanced, diagnostic assessment tools and state-of-the-art technology, such as video conferencing with students at home and email communication with parents about each session.

"We teach organizational

ally didn't know how to do it, so I didn't like it. Now since I know, it feels really good!" Paschoal said with a smile.

"If I stayed at 'Iao, I probably would have flunked [out]," Paschoal added. "I imagine [I would have ended up] working at McDonald's or a really bad job. I'll probably be successful now. College baseball is possible [now]."

"We are the most affordable tutoring available on Maui," said Barber. "We can do that because of the quantity of students we are able to handle, and that's

Education Dollars and Sense

On average, a high school graduate in Hawai'i earns \$6,759 more each year than a high school dropout does.

Roughly 5,500 students in Hawai'i did not graduate from high school in 2011; the lost lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts alone total \$597 million.

If just half of Hawai'i's dropouts had graduated, they would likely have provided the following economic benefits to the state:

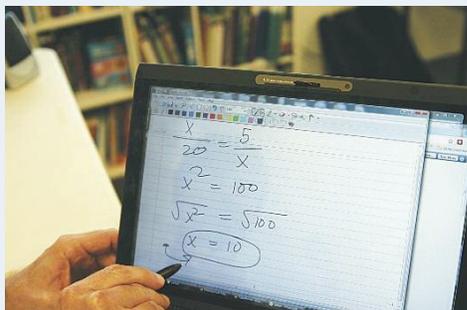
- \$123 million in increased home sales and \$4.1 million in increased annual auto sales
- 200 new jobs and a \$36

million increase in the gross state product

• \$2 million in increased annual state tax revenue

If Hawai'i's high schools were to graduate all students ready for college, the state would likely save as much as \$22 million in college remediation costs and lost earnings.

(Source: Alliance for Excellent Education)



WOO Academic Director Thomas Beran demonstrates how he teaches homeschooled students using state-of-the-art technology. Students can see him work out a math problem in real time while students write in answers from their home computers.

skills, dealing with ADD symptoms, teaching them to focus [addressing each student's individual needs]," said Academic Director Thomas Beran, noting that special connection with the student. "We have a database of 185 qualified, screened tutors with background checks on all of them. [We] treat the students with respect and humor and make it enjoyable."

Paschoal said in just two months, WOO changed his feelings about learning, as well as his future outlook. "I didn't really like math at first, but now it's one of my favorite subjects. I re-

ally didn't know how to do it, so I didn't like it. Now since I know, it feels really good!"

Both Barber and Beran said their hope is to improve our community by affecting the lives of future generations. Each contributes \$25,000 every year to a special hardship fund for families who can't pay full tuition.

"Tom and I are both dads, so at the end of the day, the decisions that we make are not always the best business decisions, it is what's going to be best for the kids."

For more information about Windows Of Opportunity of Hawai'i, call (808) 344-8468.