



**For Immediate Release**

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## **HIDOE partners with ClimbHI to connect students with career opportunities with new online platform**

HONOLULU — Under a new partnership between the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) and Hawai'i workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI, students at public high schools across the state are connecting with career opportunities through a state-of-the-art online portal.

ClimbHI Bridge directly links students and teachers with career, internship and mentorship opportunities at Hawai'i businesses and nonprofits. Participating companies and organizations can create a free account within minutes and post opportunities for students, as well as answer questions and participate in school activities. Students and teachers can review and apply, and track progress through the portal.

Opportunities include guest speaking and teaching, judging and coaching, mentorships, advisory boards, job shadowing, teacher externships, project-based learning, internships, career fair participation, site visits and job-readiness activities.

"This strategic partnership will enable students to access and acquire the skills needed to advance them toward career readiness and employability, including high-demand, specialized careers unique to Hawai'i," Superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto said. "It demonstrates what's possible when dedicated business and industry partners are truly invested in the future talent produced by our public schools."

Support is provided by the nonprofit Hawai'i Executive Collaborative, which has committed to funding the program for five years. ClimbHI Bridge was conceived at the 2018 Hawai'i Executive Conference and originally funded by 17 local businesses and nonprofits.

"We're pleased to be able to support this innovative platform that will help to give students the opportunity to learn directly from professionals in our community," said Duane Kurisu, board chairman of the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative. "Our hope is that by connecting with local businesses, nonprofits and individuals, our youth will discover the potential and their ability to build successful careers in Hawaii."

ClimbHI is working with the Department to provide virtual training for teachers and administrators and is also encouraging participation from businesses and nonprofits

statewide. ClimbHI Bridge will roll out at all HIDOE high schools by the end of 2021, reaching thousands of students.

"ClimbHI Bridge connects our schools with workforce opportunities safely and efficiently, inspiring our keiki from all districts to achieve economic self-sufficiency through the exploration of careers and entrepreneurial opportunities," ClimbHI President Julie Morikawa said. "Creating awareness around viable career paths in Hawai'i is of critical importance to helping the next generation thrive right here at home."

More than 200 Hawaii businesses and nonprofit organizations are currently offering over 200 opportunities to participating schools on ClimbHI Bridge.

"Participating in ClimbHi Bridge provides us with another way to connect with teachers and students across Hawai'i. Our hope is that through our participation, we inspire students to discover the wide range of rewarding opportunities and careers in health care," Jill Hoggard Green, president and CEO of The Queen's Health Systems, said.

HIDOE Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Coordinator Fern White recently used the ClimbHI Bridge portal to host a virtual career fair for students on Hawai'i Island. She nearly doubled her initial goal of 10 participating speakers and had approximately 200 students register.

"Educators can now easily access business and nonprofit leaders throughout the state, all in a seamless virtual format," said White, who is a West Hawaii Complex Area CTE district resource teacher. "This new tool represents a huge step forward for what we can accomplish together in preparing our students for their continued education and career success."

For more information and to participate, visit [climbhi.org/portals](http://climbhi.org/portals) or e-mail [info@climbhi.org](mailto:info@climbhi.org).

#### **About the Hawaii State Department of Education**

Hawai'i's public school system was founded on Oct. 15, 1840, by King Kamehameha III. It is the oldest public school system west of the Mississippi and one of the largest in the country – 294 unique schools on seven islands, with more than 22,000 full-time and 20,000 part-time/casual employees serving about 180,000 students, their families and the community. Our vision: Hawai'i's students are educated, healthy and joyful lifelong learners who contribute positively to our community and global society. Learn more at [hawaiipublicschools.org](http://hawaiipublicschools.org).

#### **About the Hawaii Executive Collaborative**

The Hawai'i Executive Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is comprised of a group of leaders from all sectors committed to driving collective action to address our community's toughest challenges. For more, visit [hec.org](http://hec.org).

#### **About ClimbHI**

Founded in 2011, the Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit ClimbHI seeks to inspire students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. For more, visit [climbhi.org](http://climbhi.org).

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