

April 1, 2021

2021 NSPRA National School Communication Awards

Applicant: Hawaii State Department of Education, Drew Henmi

Category: Publication and Digital Media Excellence Awards

School District: Over 25,000 students

Social Media | Title of Entry: HIDOE Grow Our Own Teachers Initiative

One-page summary:

The program

The *Grow Our Own Teachers* initiative is a part of the Hawai'i State Department of Education's (HIDOE) multi-pronged approach to teacher retention and recruitment to address chronic teacher shortages throughout the state. A partnership between HIDOE and the University of Hawai'i's College of Education, the *Grow Our Own* initiative offers a full tuition reimbursement to Hawai'i residents in exchange for a three-year commitment to full-time teaching at a Hawai'i public or public charter school.

The need

Although the program launched in 2018, the application rates were reaching desired levels. As a result, the decision was made to execute a social media campaign to help bring awareness and drive applicants to the program.

The campaign

The social media campaign consisted of three social media posts, each highlighting a *Grow Our Own* alumnus currently teaching in the Hawai'i public school system. Two of the posts featured *Grow Our Own* alumnus photo testimonials, while the third featured an alumnus touting his personal experience with the program with HIDOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto on her weekly video series, "Talk Story with Dr. K."

The results

The campaign was highly successful, leading to a record number of applicants for the *Grow Our Own* program. Applications more than doubled from 2019 levels. The program received 89 applications for the 2021 cohort, compared with 62 and 44 applications in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

The engagement levels for the posts also reflect the efficacy of the social media campaign. Two of the Facebook posts achieved engagement levels of 89 and 74 (reactions, comments and shares), a significant increase over HIDOE's average of 21 Facebook engagements per post.

Additional statistics include:

- 731 clicks on the custom URL listed on each of the posts, which directed users to HIDOE's *Grow Our Own* website
- 65 total shares on Facebook, including from two state senators
- Total reach of 15,113 on Facebook