

2022/2023 J-LEAP REPORT

By Mai Kuroda

Kamehameha Schools Maui Campus

Maui, HI



Aloha from the beautiful island of Maui! My name is Mai Kuroda. I am a participant of J-LEAP 2022-2024. I have currently been working with an excellent and enthusiastic Japanese teacher Andy Scott sensei at Kamehameha Schools Maui Campus. Today, I would like to tell you about Maui Island

where I live, Kamehameha Schools Maui where I work, my daily work as an assistant teacher (AT), and **my future goals** as a J-LEAP AT.

“The Valley Isle,” Maui

The island of Maui is one of the islands of the state of Hawaii. It is the second largest of the eight islands. Maui is known as “The Valley Isle” because Maui is composed of two volcanic mountains, West Maui Mountain and Haleakala Mountain. In between the two mountains is the valley, the center of the island. The island is a tropical paradise. It is beloved by many people from all over the world, and its beautiful coastlines, world-famous beaches along with stunning palm trees, and great nature, amazes me... Also, in the island, the “Aloha spirit” and thoughtfulness are cherished and placed of the highest importance by the people. Everywhere you go in the island, you will receive the warmest welcome. Maui is such an island that you will get the real taste of Hawaii!

Kamehameha Schools Maui

I currently work at Kamehameha schools Maui as a Japanese assistant teacher. Kamehameha schools Maui is a K-12 educational institution and has about 1,100 students. The school respects Hawaiian and Christian values. Also, by prioritizing

Hawaiian-Culture-Based-Education, Kamehameha schools takes pride in developing future leaders who have pride in their Hawaiian culture and heritage. With this in mind, all of the students enrolled at the school are of Hawaiian heritage and take compulsory Hawaiian language and culture classes. Besides that, the school offers two different language classes to develop next generation world-class/global leaders, which are Japanese and Spanish. To honor this exceptional opportunity of the school, my Lead Teacher Andy Scott sensei and I share and understand the importance of strengthening the Japanese language program at this school to help students to not only learn the Japanese language and culture, but also be able to reflect on their own cultures and deepen their knowledge of their own community through learning Japanese.

My daily work as an Assistant Teacher (AT)

The first day of the week starts with a Hawaiian chant “Oli” on Monday morning. In the “Oli,” students ask teachers for permission to come into classrooms and teachers answer and welcome them. After being part of such a beautiful school tradition, classes start. We have three Japanese classes every day, and each class is seventy



minutes long. In addition, we have one block for preparation. This school year, we have been facing challenges because we have three+ different levels in one class. We have been experimenting and finding improvements for the past few months and have developed new strategies to ensure that every student/level is able to get equal teaching time. For these new strategies to be successful, we often co-teach during instruction, and sometimes parallel-teach. We often swap the roles of LT/AT, and it is very natural. We are everywhere, back and forth, in the classroom, and respond to each students’ questions. After all the classes are done, we have about thirty minutes to debrief our day and classes.

My Future Goals as a J-LEAP AT

My personal goal as a J-LEAP AT is to bring good new energy to the Japanese program in Kamehameha schools. I would like to create new Japanese learning materials and

long-lasting traditions via such activities as the Japan Club, and Japan trip, among other activities, which I can leave behind as the things that I've done at the schools as a J-LEAP AT.

Also, another significant goal of Andy sensei and I is to make a connection between the high school Japanese program, and the middle school of Kamehameha schools, which currently does not offer Japanese/Spanish. We hope to offer a Japanese course in the middle school as we believe the Japanese program will become even stronger, as we would also be able to recruit students to come to high school Japanese.

It has been almost four months since I have come to Maui and started teaching Japanese with Andy sensei. Every single day, I've felt so lucky and grateful for this opportunity to be able to learn a lot about teaching, explore a lot about a different culture and have fun with a lot of amazing people in Maui, starting with Andy sensei, my host mother, and students. I would like to take this occasion to express my deepest appreciation to every one of the people who are involved with me and involved in the J-LEAP program. Aloha and Mahalo!