Think for a second about a paddling club/team (insert any team here). Each club has its own roots and history. Each club has its leaders, workers, and new members. Each club has its strong members, its thoughtful members and its weaker links. Together they must work together as one `Ohana to accomplish their task, whether it is to win a race, catch some fish, or cross the sea. In order to develop this teamwork, people must have roles, responsibilities, and ideas to follow. They have a culture. Those with a strong culture have solid results.

Before we go any further into teaching we should briefly examine the environment and organizational culture that surrounds the teacher’s professional team life. An effective and successful teacher will make the best of his/her environment and make sure that they contribute to the mission of the school and community (The TEAM). In order to make the best of your environment and contribute to it in a positive way, you must understand how it is structured and the roles that various people play in schools. There are certain foundations of all schools.

What are some of the things that all schools have? Who are some of the people that play important roles in schools?
Generally speaking:

All schools have a number of things (culture and structure) that allow them to operate in a smooth and functional way (which means that they can effectively provide education for students).

1. **History, mission and philosophy.** Someone started the school for some reason. Whether it is private schools which might offer a Christian based education, or public schools that are built to handle population expansion, they were all built to serve a purpose.
2. **Buildings.** Each school was constructed in a particular manner. Some have open classrooms, open campuses, gymnasiums, administration buildings, main office, cafeteria, playground, bathrooms, classrooms, libraries, etc.
3. **Schedules.** It would be impossible to manage numbers of children without them. The help to structure the day, month or school year.
4. **Teachers.** Each and every school has people whose job is to transfer, transmit or teach knowledge, values and experiences.
5. **Staff.** These are the people who help to ensure that students receive an appropriate education. From the cleaning of the janitor to the wisdom of the principal, all staff are necessary to schools.
6. **Rules and Procedures.** We have to know what to do and how to do it, as well as to know what is not acceptable for schools and communities.
7. **Events and extracurricular activities.** Schools are the foundation for children in society. Students need to develop relationships outside of the classroom. Schools also need to provide students with opportunities to showcase their talents for parents and caretakers.

8. **Assessments.** This piece (AKA TESTING) ensures that the school and their students are doing their respective jobs.
“Tower of Power” to help you understand who is in the school from day-to-day.

The Tower of Power
Organizational Structure of Schools

Board of Education (BOE)

Department of Education (DOE)
Superintendent- Pat Hamamoto

Complex area superintendents (Oahu has nine complex areas)

Administration

School Principal

Vice Principal (Dean of students, disciplinarian)

Curriculum Coordinator

Special Education Coordinator/Student Services

Staff

Grade Level Chair (GLC) Administrative Assistant Paraprofessional (PPT)
Clerk Custodian Teachers
Special Education Part Time Teacher (PTT) Educational aides (EA)

Support Staff

Social worker School counselor Nurse
Coaches School psychologist Speech pathologist
Occupational therapist Behavior specialist Literacy specialist
Assessment liaison officer after-school program coordinator Parent Community Network Coordinator (PCNC)
Pay particular attention to the fact that the Board of Education, an elected governing body, rules the top layer of school politics, though this may change to an appointed board. The board consists of members from Hawaii and the mainland. Some of these people are former educators, but many of them come from the business community. This board sets a majority of general school policies and is the foundation of school philosophy. The BOE appoints the DOE superintendent. Notice that there is a large structure before you even get to the school level. You can find out enormous amounts of information about the DOE from their website, http://doe.k12.hi.us/.

Once you arrive at the school level you should note who the boss is......

**I bet that most of you think that the principal is in charge right?  **WRONG!**

**The Administrative Assistant is the boss!!!!! No matter what she is called (I have never seen a male after visiting over 150 schools) secretary or clerk or whatever, she runs the show!!!!**

Just kidding... the reality is that she is a very important and influential person on the day to day operations of the school. She knows just about everyone, and in Hawai‘i, you know how important this is. She sees students, parents, teachers, administrators, special guests, all staff and visitors. Just remember that. Also, remember that the custodians are very important people as well. I still send flowers and gifts to these staff people at the school that I taught.

The other position to pay close attention to is the Educational Assistant (EA). These staff members can make or break a classroom. If you build a meaningful and appropriate
relationship with them, they will be a great asset. They are an important professional, just like the teacher. The more training they receive, the better equipped they will be to deal with all varieties of educational issues, from management to discipline to curriculum development and lesson implementation.

If you are interested in what each and every individual does on the “Tower”, do some research on the WWW (internet).

One of the other most important foundations of a school is the educational philosophy. This is the one thing that is supposed to give meaning and purpose to the school and hopefully get all of the administration and staff into the same mindset. These are the ideas that support the mission of a school. As far as the state of Hawai‘i is concerned, the schools are developed for the purpose of 6 General Learner Outcomes (GLOs).

http://doe.k12.hi.us/curriculum/GLO_rubric.htm

**General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) Rubrics**

General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) are the over-arching goals of standards-based learning for all students in all grade levels. Observable behaviors, which are demonstrated in daily classroom activities, are evidence of GLOs. Student effort, work habits, and behavior are important and they must be evaluated separately from academic performance in the content areas (in accordance with Board of Education Policy 4501: Assessing/Grading Student Performance).

The GLOs should be an integral part of the school culture as the GLOs do not exist in isolation. The six GLOs are:

- **Self-directed Learner** (The ability to be responsible for one's own learning)
- **Community Contributor** (The understanding that it is essential for human beings to work together)
- **Complex Thinker** (The ability to demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving)
- **Quality Producer** (The ability to recognize and produce quality performance and quality products)
- **Effective Communicator** (The ability to communicate effectively)
- **Effective and Ethical User of Technology** (The ability to use a variety of technologies effectively and ethically)

The GLO rubric serves as a guideline for teachers and students. Elementary teachers use this rubric and classroom-based evidence to determine a student's rating for each GLO, which is then communicated to parents via the elementary standards-based report card. Secondary teachers incorporate the GLOs into their content instruction; however, as of July 2009 the secondary report card does not include a GLO assessment.

And supported by the mission of:

*The Hawaii Department of Education, in partnership with the family and the community, is committed to having all public school graduates achieve the General Learner Outcomes and content and performance standards in order to realize their individual goals and aspirations.*

*High school students will have opportunities, not limited by time, for college-level coursework and program endorsements to prepare them to be successful in a global society.*

*Therefore, all graduates will be fully prepared for post-secondary education and/or careers and their role as a responsible citizen.*

*Source: Developed from the work session “Profile of a Hawaii High School Graduate: The Journey Continues” on March 7, 2002.*

Now that we have discussed school level philosophy, I want you to start thinking about culture and values on the classroom level. Recognize that all of the things that we say and do impact our students.

I am sure that you have heard, “students are like sponges. They absorb everything.”
I like to take my thinking a step further and say, “Students are like mirrors, whatever they see; they are likely to behave like.”

Take a look at your readings. Remember, as educators, the single most important thing we can do is create a positive balance in children lives.

**Positively Positivity**