Learning Community Case Study/ED 290

James Ro
March 8, 2010

Responsibility...Fairness...Honesty...Cooperation...
Safety...Respect...Pride...Kindness...
“Take Care of Yourself. Take Care of Others. Take Care of this Place.”
Case Study: Students

Who are the Students at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

In my Professional Development paper I picked Aiea Elementary to be the school that I wanted to work at, but I decided to change the school to Pearl Ridge Elementary. I still want to teach the third grade and I’m very excited in becoming an Elementary/SPED Teacher. Of course besides from getting my Degree and gaining teaching experience will be very important factors in becoming a great educator, but so is knowing who your students are. I downloaded the Department of Education (DOE) School Status and Improvement Reports (SSIR) for Pearl Ridge Elementary from 2008-2009 and noticed that there enrollment has been about the same from 2006 to 2009 with an average of 580 students. Majority of the students who attend Pearl Ridge Elementary are Japanese (28.3%), Filipino (16.3%) and Part-Hawaiian (13.1%). The School Community has about 8% of the families with children living in poverty, which is pretty low and the average household income is at around $62,000. I did noticed the students at Pearl Ridge Elementary who receive free or reduced lunch was a little high at around 18% for a community who makes around $62,000 in the house hold. The number of Special Education (SPED) students did jump up a little bit from 29 students to 40 from 2007 to 2009. As for the English Limited Proficiency students (ELP), their average stayed the same at around 47 students for the pass three years. The retention rate at Pearl Ridge Elementary is pretty much perfect at 0%, which is awesome. A big thing that caught my eye was the percentage of Kindergartners who attended preschool, which was at around 74%. As a teacher, this is important to know because this shows you that about 7 out of 10 students had some time of experience in the school environment.

I couldn’t really find any Social problems at Pearl Ridge Elementary. The School Quality Survey (SQS) showed that the students satisfaction rates at Pearl Ridge Elementary (88%) were higher from the State (80%) by 8% and the student safety and well being rates for Pearl Ridge Elementary (81%) topped the State (70%) by 11%. I couldn’t find no signs of school violence and Pearl Ridge Elementary had a 100% “NO SUSPENSION” Rate, which I thought was great. There attendance percentage (96%) was above the minimum State Standard at 95%. Looking at the percentages
and the information I could gather, Pearl Ridge Elementary seems to be a safe school for there students to attended. The only thing that caught my eye that could be an issue was the percentage of families with children headed by a single mother which was at 17.2%. The State percentage was at 18.3%. Even though I couldn’t find any social issues at the school, I believe family issues could always arise in a single parent home. I think this is important to me because I know it was hard for me growing up when my parents got divorced. I always looked for that role model or someone that I could ask questions and get advice from. When I become a teacher, I hope to be that person for all my students.

Technology surrounds us every day and new inventions are being introduced into our society on a daily basis. The students at Pearl Ridge Elementary are passionate about technology and the School encourages student creativity through media and robotics. Speed Botz is the Robotic Programs at Pearl Ridge Elementary. The Robotics Program at pearl Ridge Elementary engages students in problem solving, investigation and inquiry, systems thinking and physics in hands-on real world application of science, math, and technology. Speed Botz Team members create and construct a robot using the LEGO MINDSTORMS education sets and software. Team members program these robots to complete required missions.

Our society is also surrounded by news media from all over the world. Another program that Pearl Ridge Elementary has is there award winning Kid Witness News Program, which provides the opportunity for 5th and 6th graders to learn the process of creating videos. The students at Pearl Ridge Elementary have many opportunities to express their creativity. The students go through the process of storyboarding, videoing, and editing to create the videos for the school broadcast. The school also broadcasts student activities, news, as well as public service announcements. They are sent out via closed circuit TV so that all classrooms may view it. On May 19, 2002, Pearl Ridge Elementary School students won the best documentary, best sound and best overall in Panasonic’s 12th annual Kid Witness News contest for a video they made about Pearl Harbor Veterans. The documentary was on the reconciliation of two war veterans on opposing sides of the Pearl Harbor attack, and learned a life lesson in the process.
The State of Hawaii Wellness Guidelines state that “healthy students are better able to learn.” It’s a very simple concept that the department of education (DOE) takes into consideration when developing standards to help increase student development. One of the standards state is that “all students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, during which schools must encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity. The State of Hawaii Wellness Guidelines also developed nutrition standards to ensure that every child has a great diet to stay healthy. The standard states, “All meals sold or served to students at school or at school sponsored functions must comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines.” One of the goals for the DOE is to increase the amount of school lunches served to students in Hawaii. In the Superintendent’s Annual Report for 2009, the State of Hawaii increased the number of school lunches and breakfast served to students during the year. The baseline for lunches in Hawaii is 19,378,879 and Hawaii served 20,324,708 school lunches to students in 2009. That’s over 945,829 School lunches served to students in 2009 over the baseline.

How have the Students at Pearl Ridge Elementary Changed?

As society changes throughout the years, so does the schools. The demographic of the students still remain the same from the 1999 SSIR to the 2009 Report. The majority of the students are still Japanese, Filipino and Part-Hawaiian. The only difference was the number of students enrolling in 1999 at 626 to the enrollment of 587 in 2009. Even in the areas of students receiving free or reduced-cost lunch, students in SPED and students in LEP remain about the same from 1999 to 2009. Over the ten years, I didn’t really notice any huge change. Even the income difference wasn’t that big over the ten years. In 1999, the household income was $53,215 compared to $61,817 in 2009.
What Laws protect the rights of Pearl Ridge Elementary Students?

The First Law that I wanted to learn and write about was the laws that protect student’s right to not be segregated by special needs (SPED). Since I’m going to be majoring in Elementary SPED, I wanted to know what rights my students have when I become a teacher. The students at Pearl Ridge Elementary have the right not to be discriminated against because of any disability that they may have. They have the right to the same education as any other student that attends Pearl Ridge Elementary. Many states have enacted special-needs legislation to keep students in the classroom. Congress passed the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 504 that states, “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.” I strongly believe that “All Children Can Learn” and should have the right to do so. In the end, we’re all equal no matter what disabilities we may have and we need programs such as SPED to help our students succeed in life.

The next Law I wanted to discuss about was the laws that protect students’ right to not be segregated by Language. Growing up I was in English as a Second Language (ESL) and students at Pearl Ridge Elementary have the right to receive adequate instruction regardless of their language or cultural background. In 1923, Meyer v. State of Nebraska, Robert Myers violated the 1919 law requiring english-only instruction in all public and private schools in the state. He was charged for teaching a student a story in the bible in German. The Supreme Court ruled in his favor. The use of languages other than English is permissible in the regular instruction of children. Another case was in 1974, in San Francisco, Lau v. Nichols, the school system’s didn’t provide any kind of english-language instruction to their 2,000 Chinese-speaking students. This violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. All students should have to the right to learn no matter what background or culture they’re from.
Case Study: Teachers

Who are the Teachers and Staff at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

The teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary plays a big part of how the school runs. Looking at the SSIR for 2009, Pearl Ridge Elementary had a total of 32 Full-time equivalent (FTE) instructors. Out of the 32 teachers, 28 were regular instructors and 4 were SPED instructors. Pearl Ridge Elementary didn’t have any supplemental instructors for 2009. One interesting fact that I found was the amount of teachers who had more than five years at Pearl Ridge Elementary. Less than half with 14 teachers had more than five years at the school and the average experience for the teachers was over 12 years. I liked the experience level of the teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary, but at the same time I didn’t like the low percentage of teachers who were there for over five years. Also adding onto the experience level was the amount of teachers with advanced degrees which was at 12. Another great fact was the 100% fully licensed teachers that were at the school.

When looking at the teacher/student ratio for the regular instruction, I thought it was pretty average with 19.5 and the SPED instruction with 10. I think those numbers are pretty reasonable in regards to teacher/student ratio. The Principal of Pearl Ridge Elementary is Laureen Dunn and the Vice Principal is Faye Furukawa. As for administrators, they have a SASA, two clerks and a health aide. They also have one librarian, two counselors and had two principals in the last five years.

92% of the teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary are satisfied from the 2009 SQS. Over 90% satisfaction rate is always good when looking at the state average of 74.4%. The teacher involvement could have been a little higher with 83.8%, but it was still higher than the state average of 76.6%. Two things that I noticed in the SQS was that the team work average for Pearl Ridge Elementary among teachers was 74.8%, which I thought was a little low. The state average was at 73.7% and the other fact that caught my attention was the survey return rate. The return rate for Pearl Ridge Elementary was at 53.1%, where as the state toped them at 76.8%.
How have the teachers changed over the years at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

The History of teaching dates back to 3000 B.C. and a lot have changed over the years. Society has always adapted to the new technologies that were introduced in our everyday lives and while the curriculum changes, so does the teachers. The teaching population has always been dominated by females, but the number of male teachers is starting to rise. Now looking at the SSIR between 1999 and 2009 report, the amount of FTE teachers are pretty much identical. In 1999, Pearl Ridge Elementary had 31 FTE teachers compared to 32 FTE teachers in 2009. As for SPED teachers, Pearl Ridge Elementary had two in 1999 compare to four in 2009. I did noticed an additional of four supplemental instructors in 1999 compared to 0 in 2009. An interesting fact that I noticed was the amount of teachers with 5 or more years of experience in the school. I saw that 87% of the teachers has had more than 5 years of experience at the school in 1999 compared to 44% in 2009. Also the average of teaching experience was higher in 1999 by about 3 1/2 years.

What laws protect the Teachers and Staff at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

When I started looking into the laws that protected teachers and staff I only could think of two laws that came to mind. The first law was the right that teachers had at Pearl Ridge Elementary when it came to due process. The Tenure was established for teachers who taught satisfactorily at their school for a number of years. Most school districts, teachers are tenured after 3-5 years of probationary status. Here in Hawaii, teachers are eligible for tenure after completing two consecutive semesters of probation. Once you’re tenured, a teacher can not be fired without cause. This pretty much gives the teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary the right to express their opinions without the fear reprisal. Of course, this doesn’t mean that a teacher can say what ever they want, professionalism still plays a big part of any job. Tenure just means that the only way you can get fired is if you are not fulfilling the duties as teacher.

The next law that I picked was how the teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary has the right to form and join unions and engage in collective bargaining. When I become a teacher, I will be joining the Hawaii State Teacher Association (HSTA). I believe this is very important because we need people to look out for us and protect us. The HSTA was established on January 1, 1971 with the soul intention of making school a better place for teachers and students alike. HSTA has been fighting for teacher rights for more than a quarter of a century.
Case Study: Parents, Guardians & Families

Who are the Families at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

After looking at the students and teachers of Pearl Ridge Elementary, the families are the next piece of the pie that we have to take account when dealing with student success. I know I want to bring that Ohana feeling into my classroom. Looking into the SSIR for 2009, the total population of Aiea was 41,276 people, which makes up about 18.2% of the population in Hawaii. The median age of the population was about 40 years old and about 38% of the families had children under the age of 18. The average family size was about 3.4 and I had to point out again the percentage of families with children headed by a single mother, which was at 17.2%. The average income for the families in Aiea was about $61,800 compared to the state at $49,800. This matched the poverty level in Aiea at around 8%. One thing that caught my eye was that the School Quality Survey for the parents at Pearl Ridge Elementary was cancelled in 2009. So I didn’t have any reports from the parents to go off from.

At Pearl Ridge Elementary, they do have a Parent Teacher Group (PTG) where parents and the school faculty can discuss matters pertaining to school events and etc... The school also has a Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) that encourages community and family involvement. Pearl Ridge Elementary is also a part of the Hawaii DOE School Community Council (SCC). The SCC is a place where school faculty, parents, students, and etc... can exchange ideas about how to improve student achievement.

Pearl Ridge Elementary is very family orientated and encourages community involvement. Here are some pictures from the Family Fun Fest 2009.
How have the Families changed over the years at Pearl Ridge Elementary?

Families over time has changed and adapted to multiple different cultures. Hawaii is by far I think the most diverse among the United States when it comes to family environment. I did want to touch up on the divorce rate only because of the 17.2% of single mothers that have children going to Pearl Ridge Elementary. I’m not saying the whole 17.2% are all from divorce because it could be a multiple of factors. Touch the Future Teach! states, “At the present time, it is estimated that 50% of all first marriages and 60% of all second marriages will end in divorce within 40 years.” I think this is important because divorce is more common now and as teachers we need to know the effects of divorce. I know for myself coming from a divorce family was very hard for me. Also the working class family is a lot different now than it was before. In the past, the traditional family is where the father goes to work and the mother tends to the children and didn’t work. Where now, it’s common where both parents work and might even have multiple jobs. Over the tens years, I didn’t really see any dramatic changes. Like I mentioned before even the income difference wasn’t that big over the ten years. As for the population report, I couldn’t get because the report comes out every ten years and the report for 2010 isn’t out yet. One interesting fact that I did find was the percentage of at risk kids between the ages of 4-19 was at 0% in 1999.

Case Study: Schools

Who is Pearl Ridge Elementary?

Pearl Ridge Elementary’s philosophy is to inspire and support everyone to become independent life-long learners and strive for success. There goal and mission is to ensure their students have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to contribute positively and successfully in a competitive world. The Academic and Financial Plan (AFP) shows what the school is going to do to improve for the 2007-2008 school year. Pearl Ridge Elementary will provide extra support to teachers and provide them with professional development for teacher success. The #1 goal at Pearl Ridge Elementary was to improve student achievement through standards-based education. The 2nd goal was to provide comprehensive support for all students following the last goal of continuously improve performance and quality.
School Culture

Pearl Ridge Elementary has a formal school culture. The school website is very easy to navigate through and has everything for the parent or student on the website. The School moto is stated at the bottom of the website, “Responsibility... Fairness... Honesty... Cooperation... Safety... Respect... Pride... Kindness... ‘Take Care of Yourself. Take Care of Others. Take Care of this Place.’” The School website has information about the school in regards to their history, values, mission statement, alma mater, calendar of events, polices and rules, student code of conduct, curriculum and instruction, student programs, and ways to contact the faculty and staff. The school logo consists of a porpoise (school mascot), a pearl (symbolizing part of the school name), Three ridge lines below the pearl (symbolizing second half of the school name) and the school colors being green and blue.

Also this is Pearl Ridge Elementary’s Alma Mater:

Nestled ‘neath the misty Ko’olau
Looking to the endless sea,
Stands a school, our Alma Mater
Full of pride and dignity.

We are so special
So mighty and dear,
Our porpoise leads us onward
Each year, after year

Colors green for the mountains
And blue for the sea
Ne Keiki O Pali Momi
Ne Keiki O Pali Momi

School Programs and Academic Progress (NCLB)

I really like the curriculum at Pearl Ridge Elementary. You can find the curriculum right on the school website for parents and students to see. Pearl Ridge Elementary adopted the Houghton Mifflin Reading program in 2003-04. The program features spelling, grammar and writing built into each lesson and is also integrated into the Hawaii state standards. I though it was cool because the program had a website for the parents and a separate one for the students. When it comes to writing, Pearl Ridge Elementary uses First Steps writing to insure that students are able to write using the different forms of writing. The First Step program starts the student at the level of where they are at and gradually moves them through the next phases of development.
For mathematics instruction, students at Pearl Ridge Elementary use Houghton Mifflin Mathematics along with teacher-created standards-based lessons to ensure that all students are addressed. This program also has a web site for the parents and students as well. Developmental Approaches in Science, Health & Technology (DASH) is used at Pearl Ridge Elementary. The program is a integrated, sequential, comprehensive, inquiry-based program that begins with basic concepts. Students in the 5th grade start the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program in conjunction with the Honolulu Police Department.

Social Studies is divided into eight strands: Historical Understanding, Political Science, Cultural Anthropology, Geography, and Economics. The teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary use the State of Hawaii Content and Performance Standards to drive focused area of study in the Social Studies curriculum. Art education is integrated across the the content areas and I found a great fact about Pearl Ridge Elementary where they give formal instruction to learn the techniques used by great masters like Matisse, Picasso, O’Keefe, etc... Each grade level focuses on the style of two different master artist. Music education is taught in various way throughout the grade level. These include the Hawaiian Studies program (ukulele, song, dance), Physical Education (dance), instruction using instruments (recorder).

Effectively integrating technology into the curriculum is the goal for all teachers at Pearl Ridge Elementary. This ties in with the Robotic Program and the Kid Witness News Program that’s available to students at Pearl Ridge Elementary. They also have a Junior Police Officers program for students to interact with the Honolulu Police Department. Pearl Ridge Elementary also have programs for students who need a little extra help in all areas. They have the comprehensive student support system (CSSS), Counselors for academic, social or career development and a primary school adjustment program. One thing I noticed about the school was that they had a Peer Mediation Program. This program is where volunteer students are trained in a four-step medication process so through this program, students find other ways to solve their problems. I thought this was a great idea and hope to see how the system works in the future. Another thing that noticed was in the SSIR for 2009, I saw that Pearl Ridge Elementary had 28 classroom available, but they were short of three classrooms.
When looking at the academic progress, Pearl Ridge Elementary is at about 80% in Reading and Math in regards to the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA). Pearl Ridge Elementary is above the state average in both Reading, Math and writing. In the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) school report, Pearl Ridge Elementary met all 13 targets in 2009.

How has Pearl Ridge Elementary Changed over the years?

As we look back in history when dealing with education, we see so many changes with curriculum, school environment, teachers, students, and families. Hawaii establish it’s first public school system on October 15, 1840 by King Kamehameha III. So much as changed over the 160 years of public education being provided to Hawaii students. One thing that has changed the number of schools from one to 289 schools statewide. When looking at Pearl Ridge Elementary, they first opened there doors on September of 1977. Little has changed at Pearl Ridge Elementary, they had 27 classrooms with one short in 1999 compared to 28 classrooms and three short in 2009 from the SSIR. There school facilities inspection was a little higher in 1999 as with a very good score compared to a satisfactory score in 2009.

How are Pearl Ridge Elementary’s finances and who controls Pearl Ridge Elementary?

Funding for schools usually come from local property taxes and from the federal government. Pearl Ridge Elementary has a total budget of $3,238,974 for the 2010 SY. Of course most of the budget will go to employee salaries, but the remaining funds will be used for direct student instruction. They intend to use about $2,300,000 on standards based education, $343,000 on quality student support, $20,000 on continuous Improvement, and $592,000 on school operations. Pearl Ridge Elementary has been very good with there finances. In 2009, Pearl Ridge Elementary had $40,749 left to carryover into there budget and almost $100,000 in 2007.

When looking at who controls Pearl Ridge Elementary, it all ends with us the tax payers. Now of course the teachers are on the front line when dealing with who controls Pearl Ridge Elementary. The next person in charge is going to be Faye Furukawa (vice Principal) and than Laureen Dunn (principal). Above the Principal is going to be the Aiea/Moanalua/Radford Complex Superintendent Teri Ushijima. Her job is to manage principals and the complex school
budgets. The boss of Teri Ushijima is going to be Hawaii’s DOE superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi who was appointed this year. Her job is to manage complex superintendents and all of DOE’s budget. The next person up the ladder is going to be a group of people called the Board of Education. Their job is to set policies and hire the DOE superintendent. Hawaii State Legislators are next in line and they set the DOE’s budget through taxes. And of course the Federal Government is the boss of everything. The federal government dictates where the moneys does from NCLB and makes new laws.

As teachers, parents, friends, and the community, we all have a huge part in a child's life. A child’s success doesn’t only depend on one factor but multiple factors from all areas of life. It’s very important to know your student not just academically, but outside the school as well. Knowing the community around your school is very important as well as family. And in the end, it’s always best to do some research about the school you’re trying to get a job at. It’s important that the school has the same values and philosophies that you hold dear to your heart. I’m very eager in this process of becoming a teacher and I see great things in the future for myself and my students.