Four years ago, we made a commitment to improve teacher retention by launching three key initiatives:

**Improve teacher compensation.** Teachers may not be attracted to the profession by money, but many of them leave when they can't afford to support a family. Although we have raised teacher salaries by 33 percent since 2003, our pay scale still lags behind public schools for most experience levels.

**Expand professional development opportunities.** We added more professional development days to bring teachers together for collaborative work, began a comprehensive K-12 curriculum-mapping project, added opportunities to share ideas at faculty meetings, and sought increased funding for our teachers to attend more conferences on the mainland.

**Provide additional housing for faculty.** One reason for high turnover at boarding schools is the all-consuming nature of the job. Our teachers are with the students in the classroom, on the playing fields, in the auditorium, at meals, at night during study hall, and on weekends. We hired more teachers in order to better allocate the workload and we added eight small cottages on campus to accommodate them.

It is this third initiative that I'd like to emphasize, especially for school leaders in places like California, Hawaii, and New York, where housing costs make it difficult to attract and retain teachers. With the new cottages, I was able to hire eight “first choices” instead of losing qualified candidates who couldn't afford to live in my community. I was also able to accommodate teaching couples and those with families.

Having served as a public school administrator for nearly half my career, I believe providing housing for teachers is both possible and highly promising as a strategy for recruiting and keeping excellent teachers. In fact, some districts nationwide have invested in low-cost apartment projects, and ample opportunities exist in many communities to build relationships with construction companies, mortgage lending agencies, banks, real estate agents, and others to make such projects possible. In addition, public schools can take a lesson from private schools, which can tap alumni in construction-related fields for help in building affordable faculty housing.

Thanks to our initiatives, especially providing inexpensive housing, we anticipate our teacher turnover this year to be less than half the school's 10-year average.

Olaf Jorgenson, Headmaster
Hawaii Preparatory Academy
Kamuela, Hawaii
ojorgenson@hpa.edu
Kids Changing the World

One of your hardest challenges as an educator is finding creative ways to make a strong impact on young, impressionable minds. March of Dimes Change for America’s Babies school guide can help.

- Promotes teacher-approved curriculum for healthy eating and exercise
- Provides valuable lessons about teamwork and helping others
- Helps the March of Dimes mission to give babies a healthy start

“We have completed our coin fundraiser with the largest collection of coins I’ve ever seen. I have had so many positive remarks about this year’s campaign. It has been our greatest March of Dimes fundraiser ever!”
—Sharla H.
Dover, Arkansas

“I’ve taught students for 36 years. This curriculum makes it really easy to show kids the value of a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their community.”
—Rose P.
New York, New York

get your free kit at marchofdimes.com/change