

1 work in the morning; we also do our work in the evening because
2 that's the coolest time of the day. So I know that these guys
3 are fully charged to talk to you this afternoon. Joanna.

4 DOE School/Home Assistants with ESL

5 BY MS. JOANNA JACOB:

6 (Indiscernible, not speaking in microphone.) As a
7 bilingual home/school assistant with the Department of
8 Education, I'm going to speak from my own personal perspective
9 that doesn't reflect the Department of Education at all or the
10 ESL program, ELL program. (Indiscernible.)

11 What I wanted to talk to you about is the kind of work
12 that we do and what we're being able to accomplish as far as
13 working with Micronesian families. Currently, there are about
14 five school/home assistants on O`ahu. Four of them are from the
15 Marshall Islands. And you can guess the other one; that's me,
16 from Chuuk.

17 Our roles, as program assistants, basically to
18 facilitate communications between the school, the homes, and the
19 community -- also to help with the development of programs that
20 would be affected in working with families -- to also conduct --
21 well, I guess part of the presentation of communication is to
22 conduct workshops with parents; to talk to them about the
23 school's rules, policies, and just to cover, like, basic things
24 that is needed for the parents to understand.

25 We also -- some of us have developed what we call a

1 parents learning center. Not all of us do. And I know the
2 Marshallese school/home assistant at Royal School, Mrs. Lani, is
3 doing something there at the Royal School.

4 I can't go into details on what she does; but just one
5 of the things that she do is make herself available for parents
6 to come and see her, if they need questions answered, or if they
7 have pressing concerns that they want the school to know. Go to
8 her, and she will then communicate back with the school, and
9 then, I guess, the other way around too.

10 Sometimes we do home visits -- not all the time.
11 Because in Micronesia, it's not a problem to knock on people's
12 door. Like if you want to go, you just go. Here we also
13 learned that there is something called liability. We don't want
14 to be liable for any accidents or any attacks if you go to the
15 house.

16 So with that said, the home visits are done when there
17 is an administrator, a school personnel, to come with us. That
18 person is gonna be the one, the main person to go to the homes
19 and talk to the families. And we are just there to, you know,
20 sort of guide them on what kind of cultural things, procedures
21 or things that they need to know when approaching families of
22 Micronesian ancestry or from Micronesia.

23 So basically that's what we do. And issues that we
24 work with, of course, language, culture, home versus here
25 culture. School culture is different; social skills for

1 children; how to conduct themselves in school.

2 And also parental involvement. These parental
3 involvement is a little bit of a challenge because we -- coming
4 from Micronesia, we know that it's not something that is done
5 back home. So we really have to figure out ways to bring the
6 parents to the school for have them take part in school
7 activities because that's very important.

8 I can say -- and I'm going to say it here because I
9 want the parents, the Micronesian parents who will be watching
10 this, to also hear me say it -- you are your children's best
11 advocates. And the cost of your time in the schools is much
12 more valuable than ignorance, and we do want to understand what
13 rights we have in the schools so that our children can also
14 succeed. We can support them in whatever, education or
15 whatever -- in life, actually.

16 What has been successful for many of us who work as
17 bilingual school/home liaison -- I can't even pronounce my own
18 title. I was supposed to be fired from this panel -- well, no,
19 not fired. But for some reason there were some errors, and then
20 I thought I wasn't gonna be here on the panel. And forgive me
21 if sometime I refer back to the Micronesian Cultural Awareness
22 thing because I wear so many hats. I get confused between them,
23 and it's all to do with education.

24 Okay. So collaborating with other programs like MCN,
25 NU, and this Cultural Awareness project. It's proven to be very

1 helpful in working with families.

2 Like I said, I'm the only Chuukese in there. And
3 sometimes, you know, for me to approach parents, it's a
4 challenge even in the Chuukese community because we think that
5 just because I'm Chuukese, I can connect with every Chuukese
6 there is out there.

7 We have our own differences, and sometimes we don't
8 like each other. And I have to learn to, you know, work with
9 them, like, try to find ways to address those differences and to
10 find a common ground where we can start from.

11 Also, having all these programs and connecting with
12 people -- like these guys here from different entities, like
13 Micronesian entities or even Chuukese, from different islands in
14 Chuuk -- has proven to be very helpful because I come in to talk
15 to a person from Lagoon, Chuuk, I'm a foreigner to them. So to
16 have somebody from their place to work with me in connecting
17 with them, that seems to be very helpful.

18 One other thing is that the schools do -- I've seen
19 only two schools that did this. But they have, like, many
20 cultural festivals. And it seems, like, parents are very
21 interested. Sometimes it's the language barrier that kind of
22 keeps them away from participating in the school.

23 But this festival is a mini festival, really bring out
24 some or, if not, a lot of parents. And it's proven at Linapuni
25 Elementary School where there's a lot of Chuukese parents over

1 there. They all come. A lot of them come just to see their
2 kids perform. That's also a way that you can engage parents in
3 planning those mini festivals.

4 Sometimes we tend to think of people with limited
5 language skills as a liability. (Indiscernible) a liability.
6 But actually, if we learn to work with these parents, they can
7 actually be an asset to the school and they can enrich the
8 educational experience of our children.

9 Okay. What needs to be done still? There's a lot.
10 There's a lot to be done. And I would be working with this
11 (indiscernible) what government can do, I think I would like to
12 see another, maybe another Chuukese person to help me. 'Cause
13 sometimes I cannot cover all the schools. And right now, we
14 just had a change in policy where now I'm gonna be servicing, if
15 requested, from the neighbor islands. Then I will have to do
16 that. That's kind of a big responsibility to do. I need to
17 share it with somebody.

18 Okay. So anyways, I just want -- I was gonna close
19 with this earlier, but I think I got (indiscernible) that I
20 forgot to say. But what I'd like to say is that we, as
21 Micronesians, also need to educate ourselves about this culture
22 and how to succeed in this culture.

23 And it goes with the other service providers to also
24 learn to understand. And we will help you to learn to
25 understand our families and our kids. Because, like, as said by

1 somebody, in every child there is a brilliant student
2 (indiscernible) there somewhere. They just need to be nurtured.

3 And with no public education on Micronesian cultures
4 and if we don't educate ourselves, then our (indiscernible)
5 language, attitudes, ignorance, frustration, (indiscernible),
6 and those are (indiscernible) added on to the social problems
7 that are already here. It's no win-win situation for anybody.

8 Thank you.

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10 (Applause.)

11 MS. HOWARD: Thank you so much, Joanna. And so what I
12 have learned from you is that the success that your program has
13 done to help Micronesians students here in Hawai`i
14 (indiscernible) involvement (indiscernible) establishing
15 partnership and parenting (indiscernible). Did I say that
16 already?

17 Very good. All right. So let's hear from Mary
18 tell about her program and what her program does, some of the
19 (indiscernible) of her program, challenges, what still needs to
20 be done (indiscernible).

21 Bilingual Coordinators at Central Middle School

22 BY MS. MARY MILNE:

23 Thank you, Josie. I'm here on behalf of the
24 (indiscernible) ELL project. And what is that is a pilot
25 program about the principals from the McKinley came together to