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Competition and camaraderie, through the eyes of Kaua'i students

"ALOHA ATLANTA: HIKI NŌ AT THE STUDENT TELEVISION NETWORK COMPETITION"
PREMIERES SEPTEMBER 15 AT 7:30 PM ON PBS HAWAII

HONOLULU, HI – For a student from Kaua'i, what's it like to compete against other teenagers across the country, on the other side of the country? This experience is captured in a new PBS Hawai'i documentary. **Aloha Atlanta: HIKI NŌ at the Student Television Network Competition** premieres Thursday, September 15 at 7:30 pm on PBS Hawai'i. It will be online at pbshawaii.org after the broadcast premiere.

The half-hour documentary follows students from Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School in Lihu'e, Kaua'i, as they compete at the Student Television Network Convention, held last March in Atlanta, GA. Over three days, several thousand middle and high school students from across the U.S. compete in deadline-intensive competitions in digital media categories such as news stories, anchor presentations, short films and public service announcements.

For the past few years, Hawai'i schools have been the ones to beat at the annual convention. Last March, participating Hawai'i schools took home 34 awards, including 14 first-place trophies, after competing against students from states including California, New York and Florida.



Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School students are elated after learning they took first place in the Middle School PSA category at the Student Television Network Convention last March in Atlanta, GA. Photo: PBS Hawai'i

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Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School teacher Kevin Matsunaga (in blue shirt) looks on as his students scramble to meet a deadline. Photo: PBS Hawai'i

The Hawai'i schools are also in PBS Hawai'i's statewide student news network, HIKI NŌ. "Hitting the HIKI NŌ standard really helps with hitting the STN standards," says Chiefess student Kaycee Nakashima. "With HIKI NŌ, they expect you to put out your best."

The documentary follows the students as they're under intense stress to meet on-site competition deadlines. "In the last minutes, everyone's screaming at each other," says Chiefess seventh grader Taylor Nishimoto. "That's when all of the nerves come out and we're all just exploding."

The program also highlights the camaraderie between the Hawai'i schools, the only state that sits together at the awards ceremony. "If another school from Hawai'i beats us, they're still our family, and we still cheer them on," Taylor says.

"We are all from Hawai'i," says Chiefess eighth grader Kallen Wachi. "We are all as one team."

The students say that the reasons they attend the STN Convention extend beyond competition. "It's the many wonderful life's lessons you can learn from this challenge," says Kaycee. "You learn how to handle stress, you learn how to work with others and cooperate with them."

"Getting along is really important," says Chiefess eighth grader Nicole Matsushige. "Later on in life, I'm gonna have to know how to work with my co-workers and other people."

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HIKI NŌ is Hawai'i's first statewide student news network, made up of 90 public, private and charter schools from across the islands. Through the production of video news stories about their schools and communities, students gain valuable workforce and life skills, while teachers engage their students in hands-on, collaborative learning. Teachers also receive free ongoing professional development training.
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