The 312-acre Kamehameha Schools Hawai’i Campus is located in Kea’au, eight miles south of Hilo in a remote, heavily forested and beautiful area. The school currently enrolls 976 students in grades K–11. In addition to classroom buildings at the elementary and middle school divisions, shared buildings include a learning center, administration building and a cafeteria/band facility. At the high school division, classroom buildings, vocational/technology buildings as well as athletic facilities are completed. Career academies emphasize the school’s commitment to provide students with a challenging, coherent sequence of courses that act as a roadmap in setting educational and career goals.

This year, 2004–2005, KS Hawai’i Campus welcomed its first eleventh grade class, the continuation of its high school division. Next year grade 12 will be added. Additional facilities will be constructed over the next year, including a multi-purpose facility for performing arts and chapel services.

The school serves the entire island, however, students on the western side between Pa’auilo and Na’alehu, have the option to apply to either the Hawai’i Campus or the Kapālama Campus. In addition to providing a comprehensive curriculum, a focus on Hawaiian language and culture, and career academies, the school will draw upon the unique resources of the island, including branches of the University of Hawai’i and Hawai’i Community College, as well as astronomical observatories.

The forestry, geologic, marine life, and agricultural aspects of the island will also play an important role in the curriculum.

Construction on the $225 million campus will be completed by next year. By 2005, the school will be enrolling 1,120 students in grades K-12 and employ 183 teachers, administrators and support staff members.

The Kea’au campus is located on land formerly owned by W.H. Shipman, who, along with Captain Elderts and Samuel M. Damon, acquired the property in 1881 when it was auctioned by the estate of King Lunalilo, a grandnephew of Kamehameha I. It is fitting that land once held by Hawaiian royalty is again owned by an ali’i trust, and is being used to educate new generations of Hawaiian youth.

Kamehameha’s Educational System

Kamehameha Schools (KS) was founded in 1887 by the will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-granddaughter and last royal descendant of Kamehameha the Great.

Today, in addition to the Hawai’i campus, KS encompasses the 600-acre Kapālama campus on O’ahu with 3,200 K-12 students (530 of them boarders); a 180-acre Maui campus enrolling 976 K-11 students; 32 preschool sites serving more than a thousand children; and an Extension Education program including Hawaiian Studies, Literacy Enhancement and Enrichment Programs.
The combined 6,500 preschool through grade 12 student enrollment makes Kamehameha the largest independent school in the United States. KS gives preference to children of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law.

Kamehameha Schools is the largest private landowner in the state of Hawai‘i. Income generated from its residential, commercial and resort leases, as well as diverse investments, fund the schools’ maintenance and educational services. KS subsidizes a substantial portion of the cost to educate every student. Families of students pay a modest tuition to cover the remaining cost. Special financial aid is available to students who demonstrate additional need.

Since its founding, Kamehameha Schools has graduated more than 20,500 good and industrious young men and women—a worthy legacy of a visionary princess.