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Harold K.L. Castle Foundation gives \$1.3M grant to Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education

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The Harold K.L. Castle Foundation has approved a \$1.3 million grant to Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education, an organization with a goal of helping 55 percent of Hawaii's youth complete some form of higher education by 2025 in a program called 55 by 25.

About \$483,000 of the grant will support executive leadership functions over a two-year span.

The remainder of the grant, \$828,000, will go to seven partnerships between high schools and community colleges for a new program called the Early College Initiative. The program is meant to help high school students to graduate with at least six college credits before continuing on the higher education. The schools will be chosen through a competitive selection process.

"We expect that the payoff of the Early College Initiative will about 1,400 students that we expect to be graduating high school with at least six college credits," says Alex Harris, the foundation's senior program officer for education. "The research shows that if you have six college credits that are on a path to something, you're much more likely to go to college, persist and graduate on time."

The Harold K.L. Castle Foundation is the largest private foundation in Hawaii, and is currently focusing grants on public education redesign and enhancement, near shore marine resource conservation and working with the Windward Oahu community.

Terry George, the foundation's president and CEO, hopes the funds will help students go to school to get the jobs that they enjoy and that can sustain them financially.

"It's a very different Hawaii than it was 40 years ago, when you could get a pretty good job with just a high school degree, but that Hawaii is gone," he said. "This [grant] is part of a long-term goal that the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation has."