CURRENT

AUGUST 2026 | INAUGURAL ISSUE



A new school year takes flight

Inaugural Issue of the Tradewinds Current: first month of curiosity, community, and learning at Tradewinds School.

Carl's Corner

Welcome to the First Edition of The *Tradewinds Current*!



CARL SABATINO
HEAD OF SCHOOL

"Like the tradewinds themselves... steady, dependable, and always moving us forward together."

AUGUST 2026

Aloha, families and friends,

It's hard to believe we're already putting together our very first edition of The Tradewinds Current — but here we are, and we couldn't be more excited to share it with you.

It would take hundreds of pages, thousands of photos, and countless notes to capture everything happening at Tradewinds on any given day, let alone over the past 3 weeks. Between the classroom assignments and all the small moments in between, there's simply too much good stuff to fit into one newsletter. So instead, we're pleased to bring you a snapshot — a glimpse of the energy, creativity, and community spirit that make our school what it is.

This newsletter is our way of keeping you connected to the day-to-day life of our students and staff. You'll find pictorial updates telling stories — as only photos can — that celebrate the hard work and achievements of our Tradewind community.

Like the tradewinds themselves, we hope this newsletter carries something fresh your way each edition — steady, dependable, and always moving us forward together.

Thank you for being part of our school family. We're glad you're here, and we hope you enjoy this first issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Mahalo,
Carl

P.S. I am working on sharing some interesting and thought-provoking information about the "careers of the future" with you in the next edition. You might be surprised.

Co-Founders Andy Szybalski & Heidi Meck

Welcome to the First Edition of The *Tradewinds Current*!





A Community is Born

Mission: Tradewinds School gives Hawai'i's gifted scholars an education equal to their potential. Through expert teaching and thoughtfully curated technology, they explore deeply, grow in confidence and character, and develop the purpose to lead meaningful lives and shape the world around them.

Aloha families—
A few months ago, Oliver told us that one lesson he's learned from creating Tradewinds is, "If you notice something's missing in the world, make it yourself."

Less than a year ago, we realized that we were missing something: a community of gifted kids and families in Hawai'i. Now that this community has come together, the most magical part is watching all our kids find each other: friends who understand their intensity, share their curiosity, and delight in their wonderfully unusual ideas.

Thanks to all of you for taking the leap with us and helping create the community we were all looking for. Here's to many great school years ahead.

Andy Szybalski & Heidi Meck
Co-founders

Andy's Advice

Ideas, technology, and what we're building together

Two weeks of doing hard things on Rabbithole

One of our goals at Tradewinds is helping gifted children learn to persevere at something they find genuinely challenging, which requires giving them something hard to do in the first place. In a typical classroom, gifted students spend close to none of the day working at the edge of what they can do. They finish early, they're right the first time, and they accumulate years of practice at being right and almost no practice at feeling stuck — which, for a lot of them, doesn't become a problem until college and beyond.

Over the last two weeks, we've used Rabbithole, the learning platform we built here, for daily math practice. Here are some stats:

- 3,100 math problems answered, exercising 315 distinct skills
- 78% answered correct on average
  - 39% on first contact with a new skill
  - 90% on fifth contact with the new skill
- 28 times Rabbithole summoned a teacher to support a student who was struggling productively

That 78% is the number to watch. Getting nearly everything right means the work is too easy; 78% means succeeding most of the time while still running into something genuinely beyond you several times a sitting. That's the zone of proximal development, and for many of these kids it's something they've rarely experienced at school. We built Rabbithole to find a child's edges and hold them there, regardless of chronological age, which is how one fourth grader spent part of these two weeks on graph theory and Euclid's algorithm, an eighth-grade topic, while he practiced fluency with subtraction facts within 20.

The same thing happens in humanities discussions. We built Rabbithole to push back rather than agree. After Ms. Spahn's class spent a week making decisions under a ruler, a council, and majority vote, a fifth grader argued the council was broken because a single holdout had blocked something everyone else wanted. Instead of correcting her, Rabbithole pushed her to consider whether the council was truly broken or working as intended, and how to tell the difference.

In a self-initiated quest about morphemes, another scholar asked: "Where do the dw words come from — dwarf, dweeb, dwindle, Dwayne, Dwight?" She wondered if she could test whether "dw" really signals "small," went and looked it up, and came back with a counterexample to her own theory: "Dwell is to live and dwelling is a home."

Two weeks is a small sample and none of this is settled. The real success comes when these students become comfortable sticking with something even after it gets hard, which will be a new experience for many of them. But in the meantime, the kids seem to be loving Rabbithole so much more than I expected!

Andy Szybalski, Founder

What We're Learning

A few notes from our teachers



LOWER ELEMENTARY

Ms. Spahn

I have loved watching our very first students dive in these first few weeks! In Humanities, we've been chasing a big question — what is culture? — and getting hands-on with it: students took on different roles to solve real-life government scenarios, then traced their favorite meal's ingredients across the world and built a live map of it right here in Rabbithole! In reading, we've been exploring genre — sorting stories, cracking what makes a mystery a mystery, and even writing "undercover" in secret genres for classmates to guess — before wrapping it all up with a fun classroom book tasting. What a joy it's been to watch this first group find their footing as readers and thinkers!



UPPER ELEMENTARY

Ms. Hunckler

I have absolutely loved getting to meet the students! I'm so excited to be part of such an awesome year with them, and I'm especially excited to have the opportunity to teach them science this year!



TA & Physical Education

Sensei Taylor

Our karate students are off to a great start this semester! During our first class, everyone was fitted in their Karate gis and excited to begin their training. Students have started learning the fundamentals of karate, including basic punches, kicks, and blocks. These foundational techniques will be practiced, memorized, and perfected as students work toward advancing to their next belt level. I'm looking forward to building everyone's confidence, coordination, and discipline throughout the semester while watching their skills and enthusiasm continue to grow!

What We're Learning

A few notes from our teachers



Cooking Japanese Style

Chef Momo

So far, the students have made miso soup, chicken katsu, and niku miso rice bowl (Japanese style ground pork cooked with miso flavor).

It's only been three classes, but they already seem much more confident and comfortable in the kitchen! It's been really fun to see them learning new cooking skills and enjoying the process. We'll keep cooking lots of yummy Japanese food together!



Art & Photography

Ms. Z

In Art, students have been exploring a variety of hands-on projects. They have been practicing drawing, painting, cutting, and creating with different materials while learning to slow down and add detail to their work.

In Photography, students have been learning the basics of photography through fun, hands-on challenges. They have practiced different angles and perspectives, explored composition, and worked on creative photo challenges such as telling a story through a pair of images. They are beginning to think more intentionally about how they frame and capture their subjects.

Learning Looks Like This

Everyday moments across Tradewinds
















Learning Looks Like This

Everyday moments across Tradewinds





















The People Behind Tradewinds

Faculty and staff at Tradewinds in the 2026 - 2027 Inaugural School Year.



Amber Spahn

Humanities & Language Arts



Julia Hunckler

Math & Science



Taylor Kaneshiro

Teachers Assistant & PE



Nicole Zimmerman

Art & Photography



Serena Legg

Admin/Operations Mgr & Robotics Coach



Carl Sabatino

Head of School



Andy Szybalski & Heidi Meck

Founders

We're all very excited to begin this incredible journey together.

Looking Ahead

Upcoming dates; check our school calendar for more upcoming events.

SEP · 03

Rabbithole for Teachers: Free workshop

Share this event with teachers who are interested in learning more about A Free AI Platform That Makes Students Think Harder. Click here to register on Eventbrite for or to share the event.

SEP · 07

Labor Day - NO SCHOOL

Enjoy your three-day weekend!

SEP · 18

Limeade Stand "Open for Business"

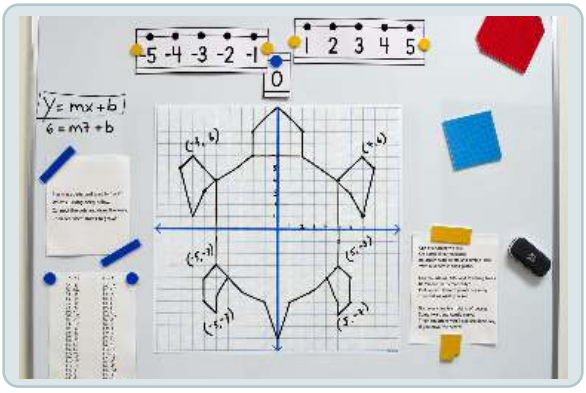
Visit the Tradewinds Limeade stand from 1 pm - 2 pm on Friday, September 18. Plans and execution all student-led through our Friday Enrichment cluster.

OCT · 06

Admissions Open House - New Students 2027-2028

Share this event with gifted scholars who may wish to enroll next school year – or mid-year 2026! This event is for prospective students only. Scan the QR code to share the event page.





TRADEWINDS

Designed for Extraordinary Minds

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