

Hawaiian name selection student worksheet

“In ancient Hawai‘i, and indeed, in most traditional societies, a name involved more than its sound...One’s inoa (name) was a precious personal possession and also a force in its own right.” (Hawaiian Names English Names; Root,;1,2)

At Kehulili O Kailani, we believe it a privilege and honor to work at selecting a Hawaiian name both for the haumana and the alaka‘i (helper/instructor). Because of this we ask that haumana show their respect, appreciation, and aloha for the Hawaiian culture by modeling and taking on the Aloha Spirit Law , committing to continuous hula instruction for at least three years, and completion of this worksheet to aid in the most appropriate selection of one’s inoa.

Names can suggest supernatural forces, trickery of the cultural Hawaiian gods, ancestry, ones spiritual heritage/path, one’s spirit, one’s desire for her, etc. Once chosen, it is her possession for a lifetime and no one else may use the name without permission; this is considered kapu (forbidden).

Please carefully consider your desires for yourself and speak with very dear friends and relatives to consider all that you are and all that you would like to be. When you have done this, turn in this completed worksheet to your alaka‘i and the process will begin. Please respond on the back of this sheet and use additional paper if needed.

1. What words would you use to describe yourself?
2. What are your desires for yourself?
3. What brings you life/joy/happiness ?
4. What do others close to you think of you?
5. What is your given name and what is the history of that name? Would you like some part of your name to be brought into your Hawaiian name?