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Feds deny state schools millions

Furloughs not a factor, Lingle adviser says

By HERBERT A. SAMPLE
Associated Press

HONOLULU — A top aide to Gov. Linda Lingle expressed disappointment but not surprise Thursday that Hawaii was passed over for as much as \$77 million in new federal education funds called "Race to the Top."

Hawaii was one of 40 states that applied for the funds along

with the District of Columbia. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced 16 finalists Thursday, including New York, Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida and Pennsylvania.

"These states are an example for the country of what is possible when adults come together to do the right thing for children," Duncan said in a statement.

The length of a state's school year was not a formal criteria considered by federal officials, Lingle policy adviser Linda Smith said at a news conference. Thus, Hawaii's 90-page application

was not hampered by teacher furloughs, a moneysaving plan that has shuttered schools for 11 days so far this school year and will close them another 17 days next



year, she said.

But Hawaii's application in a second competition for federal funds this summer could be hurt if the furloughs aren't ended, Smith added.

"All of us, I think, recognize that furloughs are not good — not good for kids, not good for the state, not good for our reputation," she said. "So the sooner we can get rid of furloughs, the better everybody's going to be, particularly the children."

Duncan was particularly critical of the furloughs last year, calling the plan mind-boggling. "I don't know anyone who can make a case that eliminating 10 percent

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ONE SMALL STEP FOR KEIKI



Kevin Caruso, kneeling, deploys an air compressor to inflate Hilo Union School fourth-grader Syrex Tatsutani's NASA spacesuit until he looks like the Pillsbury Doughboy. At left, teachers Erin Kaneko and Donna Banks take pictures. The demonstration before Kaneko's 20 students was part of a presentation on "Building a Human Presence in Space" by Caruso, a Chicago-based electrical engineer. He was among some 50 astronomers and technical personnel from the Mauna Kea Observatories interacting with more than 8,000 Big Island students during this week's 6th annual Journey Through the Universe. Caruso's talk included hands-on demonstrations about gravity and rocket launching.

Erin Kaneko's fourth-graders react as 20 plastic film canisters rain down upon the classroom after a simultaneous tabletop launch moments before. The tiny missiles were powered by the explosive fizz of Alka-Seltzer tablets and water.



Photos by
WILLIAM ING/
Tribune-Herald

Isle dealership defends Toyota

GM: Fed sought boost for U.S. firms

By COLIN M. STEWART
Tribune-Herald staff writer

Big Island Toyota General Manager Jan Whiteside defended the automaker this week, calling the Congressional hearings into Toyota's recalls a "witch hunt."

Meanwhile, The Associated Press said reports continued to mount suggesting that the manufacturer's unintended acceleration problem may not be due solely to faulty gas pedals.

Whiteside, who sounded off in an e-mail to the Tribune-Herald, and later by phone, described the recalls as "unfortunate" and "inconvenient," but added that they are part of doing business.

"This is not the first, or last, time an automobile will need to be brought back to the shop for a quick fix. ... It's unreasonable to expect that any manufacturer is going to make a per-

fect vehicle every single time," she said.

"One might think this is the first auto recall in decades from the way government

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officials and Congressional committees have pounced on Toyota."

Whiteside pointed out a pair of recalls affecting Toyota's competitors, including last month's recall of 646,000 Honda Fits over the possibility of electrical fires, and last year's recall of 4 million Fords for problems with the cruise control.

"There was no government outcry and no demand for Congressional hearings over these recent recalls. So why has Toyota suddenly become the target of a government-led witch

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Bill to ease jobless tax hike fastracked

By GREG WILES
Honolulu Advertiser

A hurried legislative effort to reduce a huge increase in unemployment taxes ended Wednesday when the Senate passed a measure and sent it to Gov. Linda Lingle for consideration.

The Legislature approved a bill that cuts the pending increase by about half. The per-employee tax, which was \$90 last year, was set to jump to

\$1,070 in April if no action was taken. The bill sent to Lingle, who favors relief for businesses, would cut the payment this year to \$630 per employee.

"I don't think I have ever seen a bill move this quickly through the session," said Tim Lyons, who lobbies on behalf of about 1,100 businesses belonging to the Hawaii Business League. "I give untold amount of credit to them for

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